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### *Human Rights and Citizenship: The Emergence of Human Rights Education*

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**Human Rights and Citizenship: The Emergence of Human Rights Education**

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## **Introduction**

A recurring theme in the sociology of education is that schooling produces citizenship or a sense of membership in the nation-state. Much of the literature on civic education explores this theme, either lamenting school failures in this arena or fearing that hyper-successful schools will create massive conformity. Different though these perspectives are they share the premise that schooling is designed to produce national citizens with the national heritage and the nation-state as the crucial and bounded referential standards. This premise is challenged by the development of the human rights movement and its more recent human rights education focus. Human rights has emerged as an influential discourse and this discourse is changing from a solely legal to a broader human rights education focus. Civic education, once the central curricular area for teaching national citizenship, now teaches global citizenship and incorporates a rights discourse that extend beyond national borders.

Human rights education (HRE) is increasingly a major theme in educational systems around the world. The topic is advanced in world organizations, professional associations, and international advocacy groups. Moreover, human rights education principles have increasingly penetrated curricular plans, policies, and practices in many national societies. National history and civics courses in varying degrees adapt to the human rights education revolution. The rise and spread of human rights education reflects broad processes of cultural globalization over recent decades. Cultural globalization involves the worldwide spread of models or blueprints of progress and the networks of organizations and experts that transmit these logics of appropriateness to nation-states and other collectivities. The changing state of the world and of national

linkages to world society account for the rise in human rights education organization and discourse. As cultural globalization continues, human rights concepts will become more prevalent in national curricula<sup>1</sup>.

Human rights education is a developing field and a curricular movement that the United Nations defined as “training, dissemination, and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the moulding of attitudes” (United Nations 1998, pg 3). Human rights education began with the work of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in informal education and popular education, but in recent decades human rights education has become much more prevalent in a variety of settings throughout the world. Human rights education is developing in formal education systems for students at different levels (primary, secondary, and tertiary) as well as in training for diverse professional groups (teachers, lawyers, police officers, psychologists). Moreover, a variety of organizations, groups, and actors have become involved in the movement (intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), foundations, religious organizations, professional organizations, and academic organizations). By 1995 human rights education had gained enough momentum that the United Nations proclaimed this year the beginning of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004).

Cultural globalization has produced two dramatic worldwide changes that fuel this movement for human rights education. One is the human rights movement itself and the degree to which this brings about a shift in perspective from the individual as a citizen and a member of the nation to the person as a human member of world society. A second

shift is the enormous expansion of education and its diffuse empowerment of individual persons. This expansion in the salience and prevalence of human rights education thus has its roots in the broader human rights movement and in the empowerment of the individual in the modern world polity. This chapter charts the history and expansion of human rights education at the world level and relates these developments to the human rights movement and the empowerment of individuals through education. We begin by providing a brief description of the human rights movement and then focus on the emergence and development of human rights education. We conclude by relating human rights education to civic education and changing notions of citizenship.

### **The Expansion of Human Rights**

Most international developments in the modern human rights movement began to take place after World War I. Before World War I there were some international campaigns such as the effort to abolish slavery, but for the most part these campaigns involved just a few dedicated nongovernmental organizations (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Lauren 2000). Nations were not particularly concerned with human rights violations within the borders of foreign nations, and the Convention of the League of Nations after World War I contained no mention of human rights. After World War II, however, the panorama changed substantially.

The horrors of the holocaust during World War II had a major impact on the development of the human rights movement. Although countries continued to wave the banner of sovereignty, the United Nations was formed in 1945 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was set forth in 1948. For the first time, human rights

became a global issue and represented a worldwide model for appropriate state behavior. Particular ideas have more strength than others and domestic conditions often distort and translate international scripts, but human rights discourse has had a pervasive influence. With the growing legitimacy of human rights, states and other actors have started to pay attention to issues involving the protection of human rights. After the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights it became possible to argue that “what started as a Western cultural account is now universal, and there is evidence of its growing intensification” (Ramirez 1987, pg 327). Since World War II the number of human rights organizations has expanded dramatically (Tiberghien 1997, Wiseberg and Scoble 1981). Based on data from the Human Rights Internet and the Union of International Associations, Figure 1 captures the number of human rights organizations that were founded on a yearly basis between 1839 and 1995. As the figure shows, the formation of human rights organizations before World War II was fairly constant but quite low in terms of “foundings” per year. The figure also demonstrates that there was a noticeable increase in the formation of human rights organizations just after World War II and the creation of the United Nations. The most interesting aspect of the figure, however, is the period after the 1960s. In every year between 1970 and the mid-1990s, the number of human rights organizations founded exceeded the number of organizations founded in any previous year.

[Figure 1 about here]

Developments in intergovernmental organizations and in foundations paralleled the developments in NGOs. Before the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights there were no intergovernmental organizations focused on human rights, but by

1990 human rights was emphasized in twenty-seven of these organizations. (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Funding for human rights organizations followed a similar pattern. In the early 1970s “the big U.S. foundations hardly ever funded international human rights work. From 1977 to 1987, however, such grant making grew dramatically, both in numbers of grants and in their total dollar amount” (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 98). In every respect, then, interest in human rights increased dramatically – in recent decades foundations began to increase funding to human rights, the number of NGOs involved in the movement increased, and the number of IGOs involved in human rights also increased.

### **Education and Human Rights Education**

Besides being an era of growth in the human rights movement, the post World War II era was also an era of enormous educational growth. Poor countries which had almost no education in 1950 have nearly universal primary enrollments (of admittedly varying quality) and came to have greatly expanded secondary enrollments by the end of the century (See Meyer et. al. 1992, 1977 for cross-national analyses of primary enrollment growth). University level education occurs now in every sort of country and many less developed countries show tertiary enrollment rates greater than those found in Britain, France, or Germany in 1960 (Schofer and Meyer 2004). Beyond general enrollment growth, expanded education has involved an increase in (a) the range of groups and interests identified within education, such as ethnic, regional, or gender groups, (b) the range of topics covered in national education and school curricula, and (c) the range of national and individual goals education is expected to serve. Virtually every



domain of social life is now included in the school system; students learn not only some skills and norms to prepare them for future occupational and political roles but also identities in terms of ethnicity and gender and other collective sub-national bases.

These trends in the growth and complexity of both education and the human rights movement continue, and beginning in the late 1970s a variety of organizations began to link the world of human rights and the world of education. Early work in the human rights movement involved promoting human rights declarations and instruments (Wiseberg and Scoble 1981). Because of the importance of promoting these declarations and instruments, during the first few decades of the human rights movement there was little work in human rights education in formal school settings and almost all human rights education involved legal training. Much of the “action” in human rights was taking place either at a very grassroots level or at the international level in IGOs like the United Nations. The emphasis was legal because nations were signing documents that were supposed to become international laws. As one human rights educator noted, in the 1970s:

“Much of what was defined as human rights education was shaped principally by lawyers....Not surprisingly, on a practical or methodological level, this often led to a focus on the law and a formal discussion of rights as the entry point to human rights education” (Miller 2002).

As time passed, however, the legal emphasis began to change and human rights educators began to see the relevance of human rights for formal education systems. This does not imply that the legal aspects of human rights education disappeared or became less relevant, but it does suggest that human rights education underwent an important transformation. Researchers and practitioners began to recognize that to promote human

rights required educational activity, not merely legal training (Martin et al. 1997; Claude 1997).

### *Human Rights Education in Intergovernmental Organizations*

These changes are reflected in the growing salience of human rights education in nations, in intergovernmental organizations, and in nongovernmental organizations. Although it is possible to point to the creation of the United Nations as the beginning of human rights education, very few efforts were made to teach human rights until more recent decades. The United Nations Charter endorsed efforts at “promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms,” (United Nations 1945) and the Preamble of the Universal Declaration for Human Rights stated that nations should “strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms” (United Nations 1948).

[Table 1 about here]

Nevertheless, work in human rights education evolved incrementally and unevenly. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has always been the biggest proponent of human rights education at the IGO level, and UNESCO made a first attempt with the creation of the Associated Schools Project in 1953. The Associated Schools Project supported experimental schools in different regions of the world in order to promote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to promote the activities of the United Nations (UNESCO 2003b). Teaching human rights was thus just one of many goals of the program. This project followed the first international seminar on teaching human rights (1952), and the program still exists

today. While the program continues to grow and serve more schools in more countries, it is not clear how much human rights was actually taught in these schools in the first few decades of the program.

[Table 2 about here]

As mentioned earlier, the human rights movement was still in its early phases in the 1950s, and few countries were willing to allow these UNESCO schools to operate freely within their borders. In the United States, for example, the fear of communism took hold after World War II and in 1951 a “controversy erupted over a locally designed curriculum unit on UNESCO and its teachers’ manual, which supposedly promoted ‘faceless citizenship in a monstrous world government’” (Zimmerman 2002, pg 86-87). The United Nations and UNESCO were treated with caution even by the nations that helped to form them, and curriculum units that did nothing more than introduce these organizations were often regarded as suspect or even subversive. It is thus not surprising that UNESCO characterized these initial efforts with Associated Schools as “grassroots” (UNESCO 2003b). Human rights education was still a long way from the mainstream and the Associated Schools Project was just the first step in this direction.

Other than the Associated Schools Project, UNESCO and all other intergovernmental organizations were virtually silent when it came to human rights education. In fact, as Table 1 indicates, the topic dropped off the agenda for intergovernmental organizations until the 1970s. In 1974, human rights education reappeared on the scene with the UNESCO “Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.” Compared to a treaty, this document did not have

the power to regulate or mandate specific activities. More than anything else, the Recommendation elaborated on and clarified the UNESCO vision of the curriculum and the social sciences. In all, 76 countries signed the document (Buergethal and Torney 1976), indicating at least a symbolic consensus around the social scientific topics that the international community felt should be included in the curriculum.

Interestingly, although the Recommendation reflects what many consider Western ideas and Western development models, only five countries opposed the Recommendation and all of them were highly developed Western countries (United States, France, Germany, Australia, and Canada). Many developed countries did sign the document, but the active opposition by some of the major world powers demonstrates that the Recommendation was not simply a document prepared by countries in the West for other countries in the world. The United States and England in particular were uncomfortable with the “leftist” turn in the United Nations and were cautious about supporting anything affiliated with it. In fact, the United States and England withdrew from UNESCO in 1984. Both of these countries neglected their commitments to UNESCO for well over a decade before rejoining the organization (Great Britain in 1999 and the United States in 2002).

In spite of the political differences between member countries, the UNESCO Recommendation was significant because it was the first educational document to directly emphasize the need to both foster respect for human rights and promote knowledge of the international instruments protecting human rights (Torney-Purta 1987). The United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration for Human Rights vaguely mentioned the importance of teaching human rights, and the Associated Schools Program

made important efforts to teach human rights at the grassroots level, but the Recommendation in 1974 was the first instance where teaching human rights in formal education had a prominent position in an international document.

Even though it did not have the support of some of the most powerful nations in the world, UNESCO sponsored and participated in several human rights education meetings in the years following the Recommendation in 1974. In particular, UNESCO created a human rights education prize, it created university chairs in human rights education, and it sponsored a number of conferences dedicated to human rights education. Besides drawing greater attention to human rights education, some of the conferences served to clarify the aims of the Recommendation and human rights education in general. At the International Congress on the Teaching of Human Rights in 1978, participants created a document giving guidelines for human rights education. This document emphasized that

“Human rights education and teaching must aim at: (i) Fostering the attitudes of tolerance, respect and solidarity inherent in human rights; (ii) Providing knowledge about human rights, in both their national and international dimensions, and the institutions established for their implementation; (iii) Developing the individual’s awareness of the ways and means by which human rights can be translated into social and political reality at both the national and international levels” (Torney-Purta 1984, pgs 59-60).

The UNESCO Recommendation and subsequent international conferences represent “global” developments in human rights education, but many of the major regional cultural organizations have also passed legislation in support of human rights education. For Europe, the Council of Europe passed a resolution in 1978 on teaching human rights to educators and then passed a recommendation in 1985 on teaching human rights education in school. In Africa, the Organization of African Unity created the

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul) in 1981 which mentions the “duty to promote and ensure through teaching, education and publication, the respect of the rights and freedoms contained in the present Charter” (OAU 1981). Finally, in 1988 in Latin America, the Organization of American States produced the Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights (Protocol of San Salvador) which states that “The States Parties to this Protocol agree that education should be directed towards the full development of the human personality and human dignity and should strengthen respect for human rights, ideological pluralism, fundamental freedoms, justice and peace” (OAS 1988). Support from intergovernmental organizations does not guarantee the success of human rights education at the national level, but the developments in these organizations clearly indicate increasing interest and global support. Moreover, developments in nongovernmental organizations parallel (and often predate) developments in IGOs.

### *Human Rights Education and Nongovernmental Organizations*

While the work done at the IGO level grants legitimacy and visibility to human rights education, much of the practical work on the ground is carried out by nongovernmental organizations. Besides advocating for the integration of human rights concepts into the school curriculum, these organizations produce textbooks, they train teachers in human rights, and they organize networks of human rights educators.

Figure 2 captures the expansion in the number of human rights education organizations at the world level. While some organizations were founded before 1970, most of the growth in human rights education organizations comes after the UNESCO

Recommendation in 1974. It is important to note that although the Recommendation was a key document in the development of human rights education, it was not necessarily the singular cause for the expansion in human rights education organizations. The human rights movement was cohering during this decade with advocacy efforts in Latin America (Argentina and Chile in particular), and both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights went into effect in 1976. The human rights movement was becoming institutionalized enough that formal education was no longer insulated from human rights discourse, and education was also expanding and absorbing a growing variety of populations.

[Figure 2 about here]

Comparing the growth in human rights organizations to the growth in human rights education organizations demonstrates that education came a bit later. Figure three suggests that human rights education became more of a priority subsequent to the institutionalization of the human rights movement. Amnesty International serves as a good example of this phenomenon. Amnesty International became famous for a singular focus on prisoners of conscience and the protection of civil and political rights. More recently, however, Amnesty International has embraced human rights education as a way to prevent future abuses. Rather than dealing solely with existing cases of abuse and torture, Amnesty has developed a large and influential program for human rights education (Flowers 2002). More importantly, Amnesty is not unique in this regard. Traditional development organizations and older human rights organizations have also altered their missions in support of human rights education (Nelson and Dorsey 2003). Many human rights organizations now focus on education, and a number of traditional

education and development organizations have also started to adopt human rights concepts (Flowers 2002). Human rights education has expanded in relevance and size, and this expansion has involved both the creation of new organizations and the transformation of older organizations.

[Figure 3 about here]

Around the time of the UNESCO Recommendation, organizations and individuals throughout the world also began to publish materials on human rights education. By the mid-1990s enough materials were appearing that NGOs started to catalog the materials into bibliographies representing the publications of organizations throughout the world (Amnesty International 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997; Elbers 2000). More recently, the United Nations also has started developing an international bibliography on human rights education (UNHCHR 2003b).

Figure 4 presents a graph of these publications on human rights education by year and by major language category (English, Spanish, French, and Other). The number of publications for each language increases beginning in the late 1980s. As the graph indicates, in the 1980s the majority of the publications were in English, but toward the end of the decade other language groups began to produce human rights education materials as well. Many of these materials are available for free on the internet, increasing the circulation of human rights education materials and ideas available for classroom use. In addition, educators and researchers involved in publishing human rights education materials often view these human rights materials as global and not just national. Almost all of the publications are presented as adaptable to different societies and populations. While the effort is not to make “one size fit all,” there are a number of



cases where materials get translated into different languages or adapted with only minor changes. Teachers are encouraged to make appropriate changes depending on the national context, but the consistent message is that *human rights are universal and should be respected throughout the world*. More than just an increase in the sheer number of organizations dedicated to education, these publications demonstrate that organizations actively work to train new educators and teach the idea that human dignity and human rights are not bounded by the nation-state.

[Figure 4 about here]

Finally, as human rights education has become more formalized and developed into a distinct field, individuals and organizations have developed “virtual networks” for communication and support. Just as many human rights education materials are available on the internet, the internet serves to link human rights educators throughout the globe. Human Rights Education Associates (HREA 2004) is an international NGO with a “listserv” where educators discuss issues important to the human rights education community. In the last few years participants have discussed definitions of human rights education, pedagogy for human right education, and assessment methods for human rights education programs. These networks exist at both global and regional levels. The Inter-American Institute of Human Rights has a human rights education listserv for Spanish speakers, and participants have a chance to communicate and interact with educators in other countries. These networks facilitate collaboration, innovation, and they help link organizations for advocacy efforts.

Asia does not have a regional cultural organization, but this did not stop NGOs in the region from creating the Asian Human Rights Charter. According to the Charter,

“thousands of people from various Asian countries participated in the debates during the three-year period of discussion on this document. In addition, more than 200 nongovernmental organizations (NGOS) directly took part in the drafting process” (AHRC 2004, pg 37). Although the Charter was focused on human rights in general, the final document mentions that “Governments, NGOs and *educational* institutions should co-operate in disseminating information about the importance and content of human rights” (AHRC 2004, [italics ours] pg 25). Organizations at the local, national, and international levels are advocating for human rights education, and a variety of networks are engaging in empowering activities designed to get different groups to work together.

Beginning with the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1992, intense lobbying by NGOs like the People’s Decade for Human Rights Education (Koenig 2002) culminated in the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education. Lobbying for the UN Decade was a major effort made by NGOs to promote human rights education at the international level, and the UN Decade has been significant because it entails formal assessment and reporting requirements. UNESCO placed human rights education on the international agenda in 1974, but in many respects the UN Decade resulted because of the work of NGOs and their efforts to hold the United Nations accountable to their earlier proclamations. In turn, the United Nations has started to assess the status of human rights education throughout the world.

In the roughly 30 year span between the founding of the United Nations and the UNESCO Recommendation in 1974, NGOs worked on human rights and human rights education at the national level and in grassroots communities. As the human rights movement became more institutionalized and visible, the formal education system

became a primary target for human rights education. Because the United Nations Decade did not constitute a binding agreement for nations, after their success with lobbying the United Nations many NGOs refocused their advocacy efforts on the national level. In the mid-term (5 year) report on the Decade, the United Nations commented that “Both the United Nations and its Member States have repeatedly recognized the invaluable contribution of non-governmental organizations to human rights education. The present review reconfirms that non-governmental organizations are key actors in that field” (United Nations 2000, pg 20). These organizations continue to work tirelessly on human rights education, and their efforts demonstrate that human rights education is not just a movement occurring at the level of discourse in national ministries and intergovernmental organizations.

### *Human Rights Education and Nations*

Nations vary widely in their support of human rights education. There is variation within regions, between regions, and between countries. Some countries like Costa Rica have included human right education in the curriculum since the early 1990s (Suarez 2004a), and some countries still have absolutely no mention of the topic at all in the curriculum. While some countries just sign international treaties supporting human rights education, other countries mention the importance of human rights education in national constitutions or mandate that human rights education be taught in classrooms. In spite of this variation, the direction is growth in interest in human rights education at the national level.

As part of the UN Decade for Human Rights Education, nations have to report on activities pertaining to human rights education. In a report available on the internet, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights summarizes national initiatives undertaken since 1995 (UNHCHR 2003a). Not every country has reported, and many countries have not reported since the Decade first started, but a review of the document reveals the same trends found in IGOs and NGOs – an increase in the presence of human rights education. The document is divided by world regions (Africa, Arab Countries, Asia/Pacific, Europe and North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean), and there are concrete examples of national initiatives in every region. As just one example of many, the report on Morocco states that:

“The Government initiated in 1994 a partnership between the Ministry for Human Rights and the Ministry for Education with the aim to elaborate a National Programme for Human Rights Education. In this context, the following activities have been undertaken: revision of school textbooks to ensure accordance with human rights standards; training seminars for teachers and their supervisors; pilot-testing of the National Programme in both urban and rural areas of the country. Morocco further reported on the initiative to hold the first Arabic gathering on human rights education within the Decade, in cooperation with UNDP and UNESCO, which led to the adoption of the Rabat Declaration on the elaboration of a regional strategy for human rights education” (UNHCHR 2003a).

A number of studies of Latin America also suggest that more countries are including human rights education in the curriculum now than in previous years (IIDH 2000; Suarez 2004b). Some countries like Haiti and Honduras have done very little work to incorporate human rights education into the curriculum, but other countries like Peru and Mexico have made a number of changes in favor of human rights education. Overall, in Latin America and in other regions the trend is clearly in the direction of incorporating human rights education into the curriculum.

More research on the incorporation of human rights education in individual nations and regions is greatly needed, both in longitudinal case studies and in international comparative studies. The United Nations will publish a final report after the end of the Decade in 2005, and this document should facilitate a number of cross-sectional and longitudinal comparisons. We anticipate that there will be cases where lobbying by NGOs has a direct impact on the incorporation of HRE into the curriculum, but we also anticipate that quantitative studies will demonstrate independent effects from the human rights movement and the expansion of education in general. As the human rights movement becomes more institutionalized and as educational systems expand to incorporate more groups, the likelihood increases that human rights education will become integrated into national curricula.

### **Human Rights Education, Socialization, and Citizenship**

Schools have always had a broader mission than the teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic (Tyack 1966, 2003; Butts 1980). That broader mission has been to instill in students a set of values and norms that would facilitate their becoming good members of their national societies. There is a well established literature on the political agendas of schools, with both a more functionalist (Dreeben 1968) and a more critical tone (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Bernstein 1975). Much of this literature emphasizes the curriculum as the principal mechanism through which political socialization takes place. Whether one thinks of the curriculum in general or more specifically of civic education, what is learned in schools is imagined to reflect the national character and the prerequisites for participating in national society. Within this research tradition curricular

reforms are national exercises to realign school and classroom activities with national goals and interests.

More recently, comparative educational sociologists have raised questions about the autonomy of nation-states and the distinctiveness of national educational goals and reforms. Within this emerging perspective educational goals and curricular reforms are no longer solely national exercises. All sorts of exogenous or transnational influences are at work shaping educational enterprises across the world. Coercive, mimetic, and normative processes are emphasized in varying degree throughout this literature (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Some comparative case studies have examined the ways local actors or specific nation-states react to external educational agendas (Arnové and Torres, 1999; Popkewitz, 2002). These studies are especially useful in identifying and making sense of different educational outcomes. Other studies focus on similar educational outcomes and link these developments to the rise and impact of cultural globalization. These studies stress how a world logic of appropriateness leads to educational isomorphism across countries, despite much cross-national variation in economy, polity, and culture (Meyer and Ramirez 2000; Ramirez and Meyer, 2002).

This paper seeks to understand why human rights education has grown so dramatically not just within the world of human rights organizations but also within educational systems throughout the world. Human rights education is an unexpected development since it clearly goes beyond the older and more limited notions of national citizenship. It also extends beyond the earlier and again more restricted view of human rights as a solely legal issue. Note that most national legal issues do not become transnational curricular matters. So, what kinds of world developments facilitate the

emergence of human rights education throughout much of the world? First, a world rigidly organized around an inter-state system in which state sovereignty is the highest standard undergoes significant erosion. This initially takes the form of world models of citizenship rights which all proper nation-states should articulate, but increasingly a human rights discourse gains center stage. It will not do to simply state that a good country must extend to women citizenship rights; it is now imperative to assert that women's rights are human rights, as are children's rights, gay and lesbian rights, disabled persons' rights, immigrant rights, and indigenous peoples and ethnic minority rights.

Second, the world must be more than fixated on education as economic investment; all sorts of problems and all sorts of solutions must be deeply rooted in education. It is not just economists who roam the world providing advice on how to fix education. A much broader range of educational expertise is evident in international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Third, the universalistic assumption of human rights goes hand in hand with the universalistic aspirations of educational expertise. Cross-national studies of curricular developments clearly show decreasing variability in curricular categories (Meyer, Kamens, and Benavot 1992), increasing salience of individual-centric social studies (Wong, 1992), and the emergence of post-national citizenship and human rights in civic education (Rauner 1998). These longitudinal studies indicate a greater degree of curricular standardization than that which characterized earlier eras when curricular matters more exclusively reflected local concerns. Furthermore they reveal the emergence of an orientation in which the world and world standards becomes the proper object of study. For better or for worse in the contemporary world, educational experts

activate world standards through the universalism of educational science. Lastly, an enormous amount of confidence in the efficacy of education must be firmly entrenched. The failure of educational reforms leads to alternative educational reforms, not a loss of faith in education.

Bearing these world developments in mind it is perhaps not so surprising that the worldwide rise of a human rights discourse would include human rights education. Respect for human rights is increasingly becoming a standardized goal for the proper nation-states, quite apart from its human rights practices. In a world in which nation-states are attuned to what constitutes a proper nation-state the articulation of appropriate goals is to be expected. As one researcher noted, "Usually, new curricula or innovations struggle to achieve recognition and legitimation. Human rights education, however, has both recognition and legitimation at the highest levels of government in a variety of international fora" (Tarrow 1992, pg 31). As human rights becomes more institutionalized at the global level, and as education expands to incorporate more groups and increase the authority of individuals, we anticipate that human rights education will continue to increase in prevalence in the curriculum.

## **Conclusion**

We have argued that in the last half century there has been an explosion in worldwide organizations and discourse on behalf of ever-expanding conceptions of human rights. This broad movement has resulted in an increase in (a) the number of groups whose human rights are to be protected, such as women and children, gays and lesbians, or ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples. It has also produced an increase



(b) in the range of topics covered, such as basic due process rights, rights to an elementary and secondary education, rights to health, and rights to one's language and culture. It has expanded (c) the scope of human rights treaties and the number of countries that have ratified them. Finally, it has expanded (d) the density of organizational structures around the world engaged in advocacy, monitoring, and representation. This broad movement has impacted policy and practice throughout much of the world. (See Ramirez and Meyer, 2002 for a general sketch of research directions in this area; Wotipka and Ramirez, 2003 for a specific analysis of the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women).

The educational impact of the human rights movement is very great though not much theorized. Older notions of citizenship education or civics instruction now appear to be limited and outdated, if these are solely informed by older notions of citizenship rights. Thus, traditional civics education is clearly not a main current focus - indeed, some of the curricular time devoted to this subject may well be shifted to the new domain of human rights education. The rights of minorities, women, and immigrants are now much more likely to be framed and understood in broader and universalistic human rights terms (see Soysal, 1994 on the rights of "guest workers" in Western Europe). It seems likely that some of the older civics topics receive less attention, relatively or absolutely, than they did when the national state and society were the exclusive focus of education for public life.

The worldwide human rights movement is a recent phenomenon, and an important foundation of human rights education. Human rights education has expanded dramatically since the mid-1970s, and the United Nations Decade for Human Rights

Education has drawn even more attention to the movement. The growth in education and the variety of communities and identities represented in schools, combined with globalization and the success of the human rights movement, accounts for the strength and the success of human rights education at the global level.

## **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup>World society theorists have spent decades investigating how world cultural models shape nation-states. These scholars have investigated the impact of globalization on mass education (Meyer et al 1992), environmental policy (Frank et al. 1997), the political incorporation of women (Bradley and Ramirez 1997; Ramirez, Soysal, and Shanahan 1997; Ramirez and Wotipka 2001), and science (Schofer et al. 2000).

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Table 1. Major International and Regional Events in the History of Human Rights Education

Year	Event
1945	United Nations Established
1948	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
1952	International Seminar on Teaching About Human Rights (Netherlands)
1953	UNESCO Associated Schools Project Established
1974	UNESCO Recommendation on Human Rights Education
1978	UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education Established
1978	First International Congress on the Teaching of Human Rights (Austria)
1978	Council of Europe Resolution (78) 41 on the Teaching of Human Rights
1979	Asia-Pacific Meeting of Experts in Education for Peace and Human Rights
1981	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul)
1982	Meeting of Experts in Human Rights Teaching (Strasbourg)
1983	International Conference on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Paris)
1984	First Latin American Conference on Human Rights Education (Venezuela)
1985	Council of Europe Recommendation R (85) 7 on Teaching about Human Rights in Schools
1987	International Congress on Human Rights Teaching, Information, and Documentation (Malta)
1988	Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights (Protocol of San Salvador)
1989	First Meeting of Directors of Human Rights Research and Training Institutes
1992	International Meeting on Human Rights Education (Czech Rep.)
1993	International Congress on Education for Human Rights and Democracy (Canada)
1993	World Conference on Human Rights (Austria)
1994	UNESCO Academic Chair in Human Rights Education Created
1995	United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education Established

Source: Stimson and Torney-Purta (1982); Tiberghien (1997), Suarez (2004b)

Table 2. UNESCO Associated Schools Program (Participating Countries and Number of Schools)

Country	1953	1971	2003
Africa	0 (0)	10 (71)	44 (1666)
Arab States	0 (0)	4 (34)	17 (474)
Asia & Pacific	2 (5)	13 (330)	38 (1286)
Europe & North America	10 (25)	27 (406)	45 (2250)
Latin America & Caribbean	3 (3)	9 (55)	30 (1668)

Sources: UNESCO (1954, 1971, 2002)

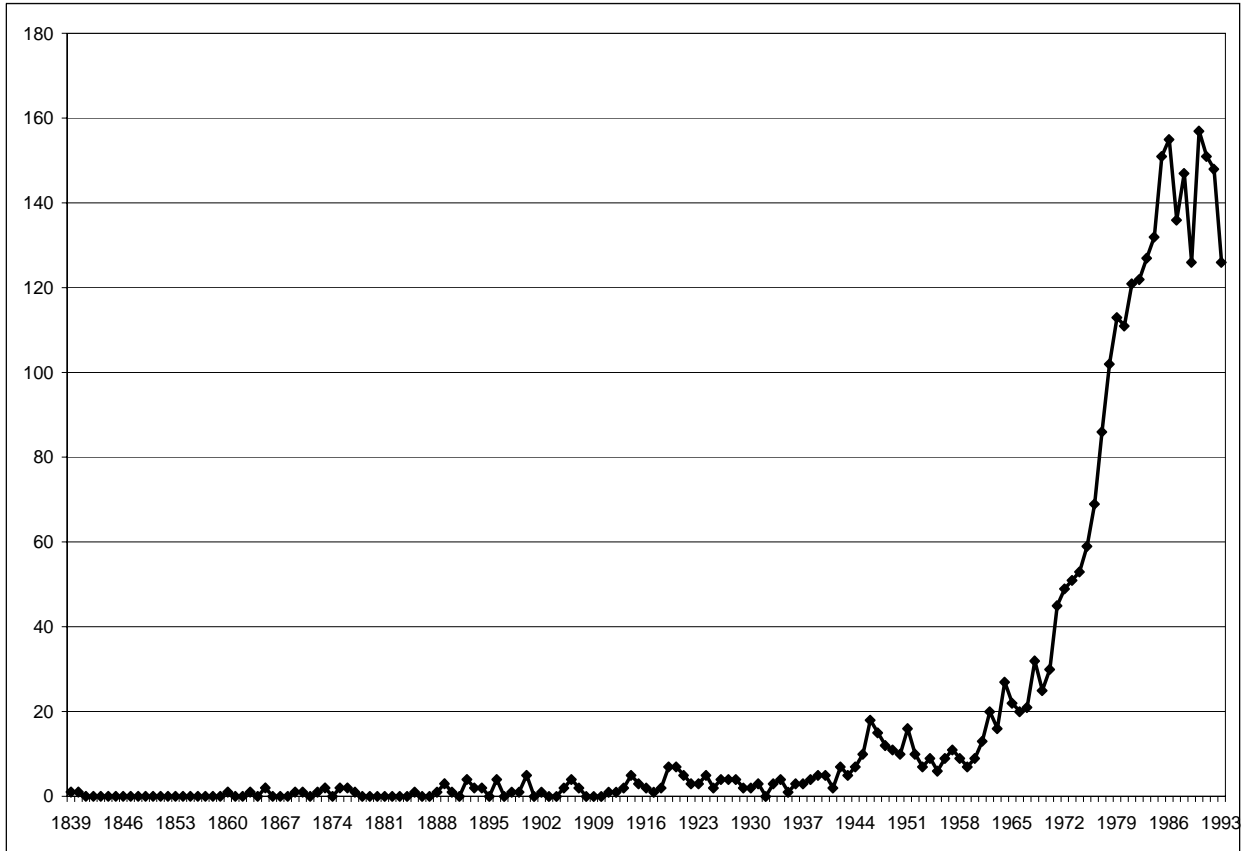


Figure 1: Human Rights Organization Foundings (N=3,249)

Source: Human Rights Internet (2000); Union of International Associations (various years).

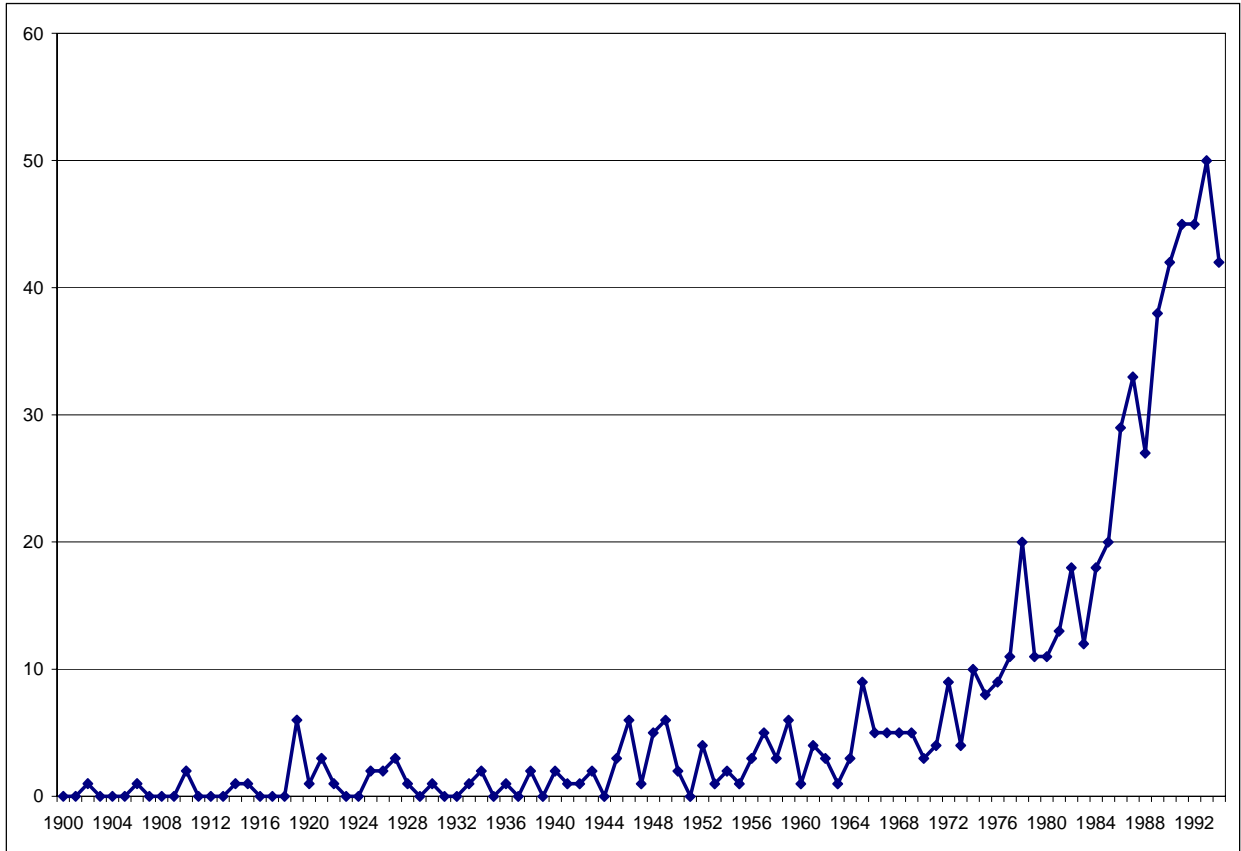


Figure 2: Human Rights Education Organization Foundings (N=711)  
*Source:* Human Rights Internet (2000); Union of International Associations (various years); UNESCO (2003a); Elbers (2000); UNHCHR (2003b).

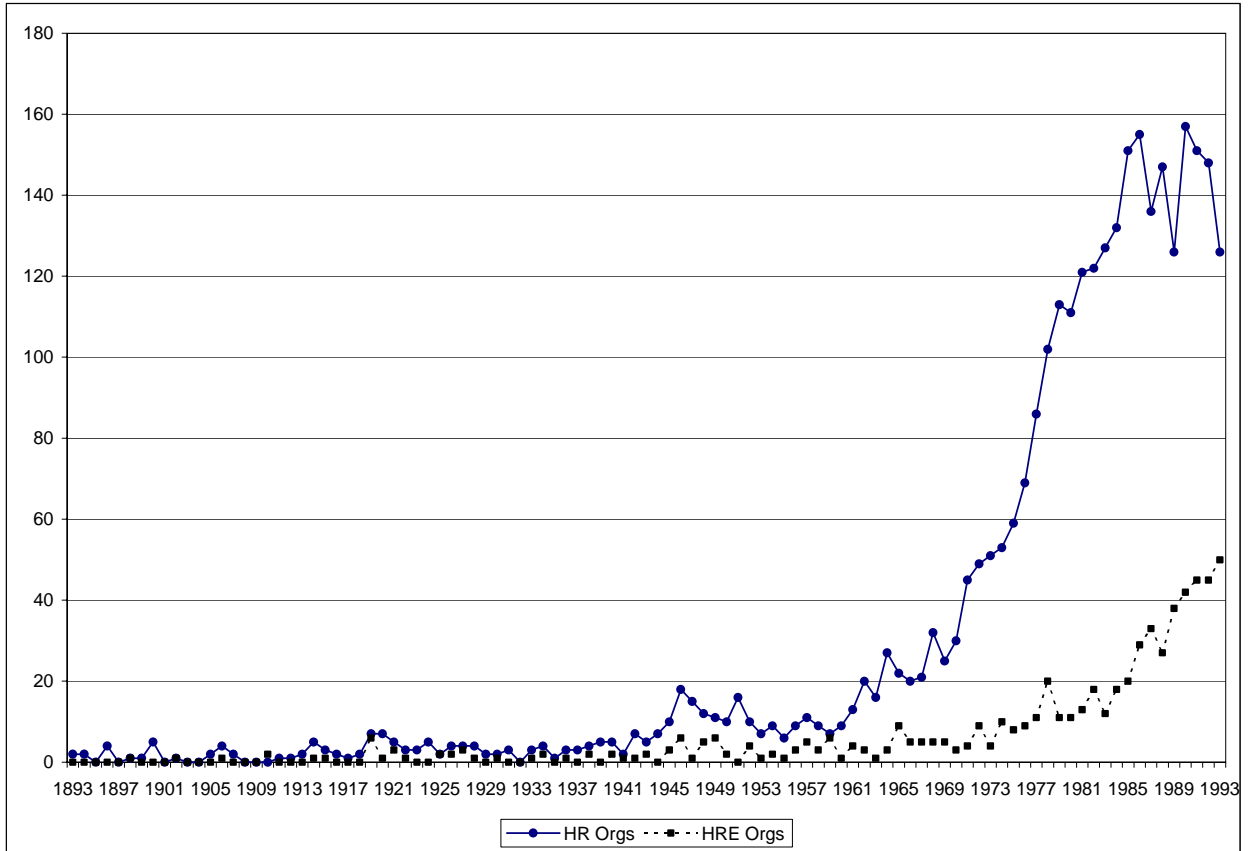


Figure 3: Comparison of Human Rights Organization Foundings and Human Rights Education Organization Foundings, by Year  
*Source:* Human Rights Internet (2000); Union of International Associations (various years); UNESCO (2003a); Elbers (2000); UNHCHR (2003b).

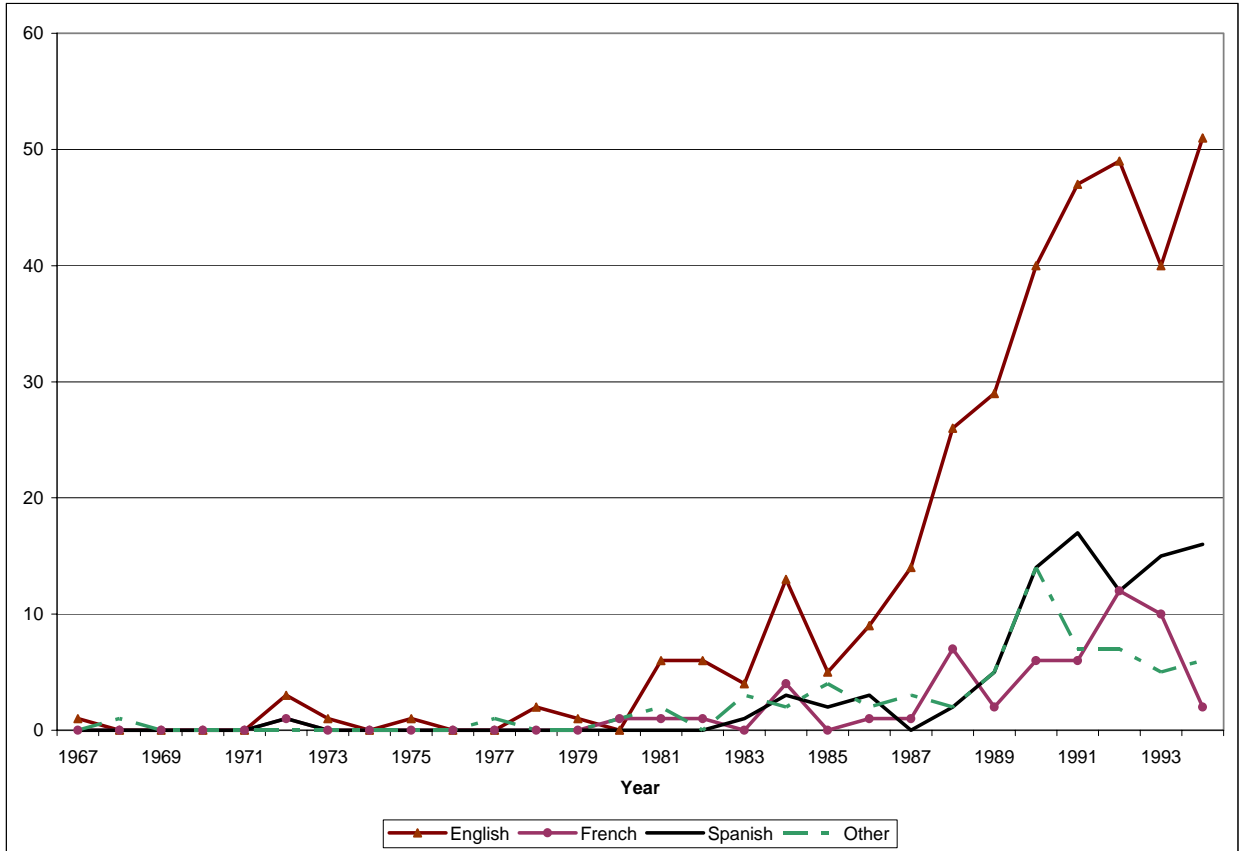


Figure 4: Human Rights Education Publications, by Year and Language (N=560)  
 Source: Amnesty International (1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 1997); Elbers (2002); UNHCHR (2003b).