



Civility and Shared Fate: Social Studies Education as Teaching for Belonging

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Article Info

Received: April 22, 2020

Revised: May 13, 2020

Accepted: May 16, 2020

 10.46303/jcsr.02.01.1

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How to cite

Ritter, M. (2020). Civility and shared fate: Social studies education as teaching for belonging. *Journal of Curriculum Studies Research*, 2(1), 1-15.

<https://doi.org/10.46303/jcsr.02.01.1>

ABSTRACT

In response to the violence of our era and the vast movement of people around the globe, the author argues that effective social studies education should include understanding ourselves within communities of shared fate, collectively building strategies of civility. Through conceptual analysis, the paper supports arguments that citizenship education should be grounded in communities of fate, rather than a sense of shared identity as a member of a particular country. Shared fate is the idea that our lives are intertwined with others in ways we perceive and ways we cannot. Civility is elaborated as concrete strategies that support or make possible broad participation in the *demos*. Looking at citizenship through the lens of communities of shared fate changes how we think about belonging and our responsibilities to one another in our shared world. The author provides examples of early career educators' moral commitment to teaching from a perspective of shared fate and as well as their concerns to link the conceptual work to concrete practices within elementary school classrooms.

KEYWORDS

Education; Curriculum studies; Citizenship education; Ethics; Social studies education.

INTRODUCTION

But there is something new and soul destroying about this last and current century. At no other period have we witnessed such a myriad of aggression aimed against people as “not us.” Now, as you have seen over the last two years, the central political question was, Who or what is an American?

Toni Morrison (2019, p. 20), *Home*

If we lose faith in ourselves, we can in those moments forget ourselves and dwell on the future of the larger community, on the blessings of neighbors. Your neighbors are those you can see when you look out the window, but today these are not our only neighbors, if we mean by that a common burden, a common joy in an abstract terrain.

Barry Lopez (1990, pp. 59-60), *The Rediscovery of North America*

In a 2009 convocation address titled “Home,” Toni Morrison (2019) asks college students: What do we mean when we say “home”? She continues, “It is a virtual question because the destiny of the twenty-first century will be shaped by the possibility or the collapse of a sharable world” (Morrison, 2019, p. 16). Morrison’s address traces a history of violence and oppression in eloquent prose that makes me pause and reread because so much is challenged in a paragraph. Morrison (2019) writes:

Excluding the height of the slave trade in the nineteenth century, the mass movement of peoples in the latter half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first is greater now than it has ever been. It involves the distribution of workers, intellectuals, refugees, traders, immigrants, and armies all crossing oceans and continents, through custom offices and hidden routes, with multiple narratives spoken in multiple languages of commerce, of military intervention, political persecution, exile, violence, poverty, death, and shame. (pp. 18-19)

The flux of people leads us to question who belongs and who is a foreigner. Morrison (2019) continues, “The relocation of peoples has ignited and disrupted the idea of home and expanded the focus of identity beyond definitions of citizenship to clarifications of foreignness” (p. 19). We worry about borders and build walls. Her speech captures the violence and xenophobia of the current time, as well as our unease with our own sense of belonging, of being at home.

Current statistics are helpful in understanding the scope of this movement of people. Focusing just on those who have refugee status as determined by the United Nations, the global population of forcibly displaced people grew substantially from 43.3 million in 2009 to 70.8 million in 2018, reaching a record high (UNHRC, 2018). The UNHRC Report states that in 2018 alone, the global population of people displaced by persecution, violence, conflict, or human rights violations grew by 2.3 million. Nearly half of all displaced people are children under the age of 18. In response to this violence and other aggression against those perceived as “not us,”

Morrison's questions are mirrored many times over. David Miliband (2017) of the International Rescue Committee feels that one question stands above all others, "What are the duties of the rest of the world toward the innocent victims of war? What are our duties to strangers?" (p. 4). Claudia Eppert's (2010) questions are also resonant, "What does it mean to live in global times of terror? What are our responsibilities to children in such times?" (p. 219).

Does this current movement of people—as well as the history of people fleeing from danger—fit in our school curriculum? According to the National Council of Social Studies, "The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world" (NCSS, 1994, p. 3). Understanding social studies to be about how we live together and relate to one another in our shared world is in keeping with this aim. The studies include who we are within particular cultures in the particular places we live, as well as the institutions we create to govern and sustain our diverse communities and nations. Social studies also have to do with our lives in relation to each other as members of groups and so include wars, conflicts between groups, struggles for equal rights and freedom. Thus, social studies include moral conversations, as well as conversations about history, economics, sociology, geography, anthropology, politics, and civics. The moral dimension of social studies is especially clear when considering the movement of people due to war and conflict. Questions of belonging, our responsibilities to others, and human rights are deeply moral questions that involve justice and compassion. The way that we answer these questions has implications for social studies curriculum and pedagogy.

I draw on Balibar's (2001, 2016) conception of *civility* to frame my argument that effective social studies education should include understanding ourselves within communities of shared fate, collectively building what Balibar calls *practices of civility*. In response to what he calls a topography of cruelty in an era of global violence, Balibar is concerned with sustaining democracy and protecting the insurrectional element of democracy, which he defines as direct participation by the *demos*. For Balibar (2001), the answer to who belongs and who has the right to participate is a radical one: "Whoever lives there" (p. 28). Civility is conceived of as a set of initiatives and concrete strategies, which ensure broad participation, and for Balibar, this is particularly true at the borders (figuratively and literally).

To explore communities of shared fate in the context of social studies, I draw on Williams' (2003, 2009) and Ben-Porath's (2011, 2012) conceptions of citizenship education within "communities of shared fate" and Zembylas' (2012, 2017) pedagogies of compassion and shared fate. Writing about citizenship education in diverse democratic societies, Williams challenges the premise that meaningful citizenship and stable constitutional order must be grounded in a shared identity among citizens and develops an idea of citizenship as membership in a community of shared fate as a viable alternative. Ben-Porath and Zembylas interrogate aspects of Williams' conception in the face of war and violence and add important elements. Lastly, I

provide examples of early career educators' moral commitment to teaching about refugees or people fleeing from danger from a perspective of shared fate to link the conceptual work to concrete practices within elementary school classrooms.

CIVILITY AS PARTICIPATION

Civility is often thought of as synonymous with good manners and politeness or speaking in measured tones—without anger or causing affront. Balibar (2001, 2016) offers a more robust conception of civility to address the violence of our time. For Balibar (2001), civility is a way of “creating, recreating, and conserving the set of conditions within which politics as collective participation in public affairs is possible or at least not absolutely impossible” (p. 15). Balibar hypothesizes that cruelty comprised of forms of extreme violence, intentional or systemic, physical or moral, threatens the very possibility of politics. He names citizenship and segregation, asylum and migration, mass poverty and genocides as crucial “cosmopolitical” issues in a topography of cruelty that threatens our very ability to engage in civic life. Thus, for Balibar (2001), “democratic citizenship in today’s world cannot be separated from an invention of concrete forms and strategies of civility” (p. 16). The traditional institution of borders “works as an instrument of security controls, social segregation, and unequal access to the means of existence, and sometimes an institutional distribution of survival and death: it becomes a cornerstone of institutional violence” (Balibar, 2001, p. 16). Balibar’s conception of civility refers to political action or civic practice that is continually reinvented by those involved. He argues boldly for broad inclusion of people involved in decisions that impact their lives. Balibar (2001) calls for an expansive view of who belongs and who has a right to participate in the public sphere “where collective political *action* (or *praxis*) takes place” (p. 17).

Balibar’s (2001, 2016) argument is rooted in a recognition of common humanity and fundamental human rights. Arendt’s (1973) notion of a “right to have rights” in Balibar’s view: refers to the continuous process in which a minimal recognition of the belonging of human beings to the ‘common’ sphere of existence (and therefore also of work, culture, public and private speech, etc.) *already* involves a totality of rights and makes it possible. (Balibar, 2001, p. 18)

For Balibar (2001), this is the insurrectional element of democracy in that a democratic or republican state, by definition, cannot only consist of statues and rights ascribed from above; it requires the direct participation of the *demos* (p. 18). Civility becomes a set of initiatives which ensures and invites broad participation and thus sustains democratic political order. Balibar (2001) asserts:

At the moment at which humankind becomes economically and, to some extent, culturally “united,” it is violently divided “bio-politically.” A politics of civility (or a politics of human rights) can be either the imaginary substitute of the destroyed unity, or the set of

initiatives that reintroduce everywhere, and particularly on the borderlines themselves, the issue of equality, the horizon of political action. (p. 27)

Balibar opts for a politics of civility as initiatives for struggles for equality and emancipation. But who is included in these struggles? Who belongs? Balibar concludes that if all political communities today (from territories to networks) are communities of fate, then they are communities that already include difference and conflict. He supports Herman Van Gunsteren's (1998) idea that for every individual in every group there must be at least one place in the world where he or she is recognized as a citizen and hence given the chance to enjoy human rights (in Balibar, 2001, p. 28). As to where this is, Balibar (2001) writes:

If communities are communities of fate, the only possible answer is the radical one: *anyplace where individuals and groups belong*, wherever they "happen" to live, therefore to work, bear children, support relatives, find partners for every sort of "intercourse". [...] Given what I have suggested concerning the "topography" of today's globalized and cruel world, I think we could even say more precisely: the recognition of and institution of citizen's rights have to be organized beyond the exclusive membership in one community; they should be located, so to speak, on the borders, where so many of our contemporaries actually live. (p. 28)

The important question, for van Gunsteren and Balibar (2001), is "permanent access to rather than simply entitlement to citizenship, and therefore humanity" (p. 28). Citizenship, in this view, is an active and collective civil process, rather than a simple legal status.

Balibar (2001) is not arguing against international law, nor is he arguing for open borders. He believes that broad participation is vital to addressing the violence of our time. He finds hope in van Gunsteren's conception of a community of fate, but just what this is is not clear. Van Gunsteren (1998) describes a community of fate as defined by the fact that people are sometimes connected to others in ways they cannot avoid (p. 62). It is not something that is chosen, but is rather something that cannot be avoided. For van Gunsteren (1998) "the recurrent task of citizens is to transform the 'given' encounters between people into accepted relations" (p. 62). Williams (2003) will call this transformation a process of a community of shared fate gaining legitimacy. There are common elements in the conceptions and the problems they address. In common with Balibar, Williams believes citizenship needs to be conceived of in ways that have the potential to extend beyond the borders of a nation state. A second common element is the emphasis on broad participation by people connected to one another in ways they may not be aware of or choose; nonetheless, they are connected and their actions have an impact on the other. Balibar's concept of civility rooted in recognition of human rights has real power to address the violence of our time and open the door for the possibility of a genuine belonging. For Balibar, the politics of civility and the politics of emancipation depend on one another. Williams' elaboration of a community of shared fate helps us to think about what skills and knowledge are needed for the development and support of concrete

strategies of civility within education.

COMMUNITIES OF SHARED FATE

In regard to citizenship education, Williams (2003) notes that much of contemporary democratic theory begins from the supposition that citizens must share a subjective sense of membership in a single political community. It is expected that a distinctive identity will be internalized as an affective bond to the political community and its members. The task of civic education, in this view, is to “inculcate individuals’ loyalty and attachment to one and only one national political community” (Williams, 2003, p. 216). Williams (2003) argues this kind of loyalty is dangerous to seek because of histories of exclusion and marginalization of women and ethnic minorities, as well as the forced assimilation of indigenous peoples (p. 217). Further, Williams continues, citizenship conceptualized as a shared identity no longer reflects the life situation of many citizens, if it ever did. Williams notes that the current wave of interest in shared national identity as a project of civic education arrives at a time when the boundaries of the nation-state have changed so significantly with globalization. She argues, “The boundaries of attachment never coincided perfectly with those of the nation-state, and it seems highly unlikely that even a strong program of civic education could bring that about in an era of globalization” (Williams, 2003, p. 225). Like Morrison and Balibar, Williams works to address the history of violence between groups and the violence of our time, including the dark side of globalization.

Williams (2003) argues that a conception of citizenship as a community of shared fate can be reconcilable with traditional liberal understandings of citizenship focused on the nation state, but flexible and expansive enough to make sense of the new locations and demands of citizenship in the global era (p. 229). From the Western tradition of democratic citizenship, Williams (2003) holds that two broad functions stand out as crucial: self-rule and self-protection. The function of self-rule is at the heart of Balibar’s adamant support of broad participation by the *demos*. Williams (2003) describes self-rule in these terms:

To fulfill the human potential for freedom, we must learn to govern ourselves both as individuals and collectives. The role of the citizen consists above all in participating with other citizens in collective self-rule by reasoning and speaking or deliberating together over what they, collectively, ought to do. (p. 227)

The central idea in the function of self-protection is that “citizenship consists in the protection of rights in which we have a pre-political interest” (Williams, 2003, pp. 227-228). These rights are consistent with human rights—universal or natural rights. Williams (2009, 2003) argues that both of these functions are maintained within her conception of citizenship as shared fate, rather than identity. Both functions are consistent with Balibar’s (2001) call for civility as a way of “conserving the set of conditions within which politics as collective participation in public affairs possible or is not made absolutely impossible” (p. 15). From the description thus far, Williams’ conception of citizenship still seems largely bounded within a

nation-state, but Williams later argues that citizenship conceived of as within a community of shared fate can also encompass citizenships of globalization.

In “Citizenship as Agency within Communities of Shared Fate,” Williams (2009) examines what she groups together as “citizenships of globalization” (p. 40): global, cosmopolitan, post-national, transnational, environmental, and diasporic conceptions of citizenship. As a group, Williams asserts, all of these notions of citizenship stress relations of interdependence that exceed the boundaries of territorial states and have in common a claim that the actions of some agents—individuals, states, corporations, transnational institutions of governance, or non-governmental organizations—have an impact on others, even distant others. Whether or not the impact was intended does not change the fact of the impact. Likewise, whether consequent relationships are voluntary or involuntary, relationships of dependence and interdependence do in fact exist. For Williams (2009), “what makes these relationships potential sites of citizenship—possible communities that are capable of possessing a common good—is the possibility that they can be brought under conscious human agency aimed at rendering the relationships mutually advantageous, just, or legitimate” (p. 41). It is through a process of gaining legitimacy or becoming just, that communities of shared fate become citizens or engage in what could be called good citizenship—working toward a common or public good.

WORKING TOWARD A COMMON GOOD

Let me step back to better consider Williams’ (2009, 2003) conception of communities of shared fate. For Williams, what connects us in a community of shared fate is that our actions have an impact on other identifiable human beings and other human beings’ actions have an impact on us. Williams (2003, 2009) notes that the idea of community of shared fate is similar to John Dewey’s (1927) idea of a “public,” as are citizenships of globalization. Such communities are not in themselves ethical in that we are not bound to each other by a set of common values, but by relations of interdependence, which may or may not be positively valued by its members (Williams, 2003).

Communities of shared fate are not in themselves good or ethical, but may become so through intentional action and deliberation for the common good. Williams turns to John Rawls (1971) to distinguish better from worse communities of shared fate: “For Rawls, a well-ordered society is one in which individuals ‘agree to share one another’s fate’” (Williams, 2003, p. 230). But agreement is not in itself enough to gain legitimacy, there must also be a justification: “Since communities of shared fate entail relations of *reciprocal* interdependence and interconnection, the standard of legitimacy also entails a requirement for *reciprocal justification*” (Williams, 2003, p. 230). In this view, legitimacy consists of the ability to justify actions to those who are affected by them according to reasons they can accept, thus:

Having a sense of ourselves as members of a community of fate entails telling (true) stories about how we came to be connected to particular other human beings, and believing that

we are responsible for constructing that connection in a manner that is justifiable to them. (Williams, 2003, p. 231)

When I think of the violence that leads to people fearing for their safety and fleeing home because of belonging to a particular religion or ethnic group, this bar of reciprocal justification seems impossibly high. But it is important to remember that the legitimacy of communities of shared fate is on a continuum of *more* or *less* justified. This requirement does not entail that groups must agree on a single narrative or a single account of the relationship.

Williams (2009) recognizes the potential of conflict in power and dominance, but does not resolve it. She acknowledges that what relates individuals to one another is a “system of social interdependence, often characterized by inequalities of power in which individual-level actions generate effects beyond the parties immediately concerned” (Williams, 2009, p. 41). Despite these differences in power, citizenship conceptualized as shared fate requires two forms of political agency: (a) imagining a set of human beings as socially related to one another in the past and the future (and telling a persuasive story so that other parties to relationship can share in that imagination); and (b) claiming that the terms of relationship should be subject to standards of a common good, including the fundamental good of legitimacy as reciprocal justification (Williams, 2009). Williams does not examine the very limited opportunities that some people may have to claim their agency or the fact that others may not listen and may not care about the relationship meeting the requirements of legitimacy. For everyone to have the will and the imagination to see themselves as socially related to identifiable others and then having the skills and knowledge required to tell (true) persuasive stories and engage in deliberation or dialogue supporting reciprocal justification sounds far-fetched in this era of violence. How can we possibly do this?

Williams’ conception of communities of shared fate has descriptive power: our lives are connected across national borders in complex ways and our actions do have an impact on others, as the actions of others impact each of us. The idea of citizenship as agency within communities of shared fate is compelling and yet when I think of the “topography of cruelty” (Balibar, 2001), I despair that we are so far from dialogue or even caring about people who are “not us” (Morrison, 2019). The despair many of us feel can be seen as an indicator of the concern that Morrison (2019) expresses when she spoke about “the possibility or the collapse of a sharable world” (p. 19). Balibar (2001) expresses a similar concern in his assertion that cruelty threatens our very ability to engage in civic life. And yet we—human beings—do still manage to engage in difficult dialogue and take responsibility for actions in a myriad of ways. The work of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions is a clear example, such as that established in 1996 as apartheid ended in South Africa and the National Unity government took power. Or that conducted in Canada between 2010 and 2015 on the experience of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis children forced to attend government-funded, church-run residential schools, the last of

which closed in the 1990s.¹ But we limit what this story-telling or truth-finding might look like if we look only for formal deliberation. Literature, the arts, and protest movements all have many clear examples of the kind of agency that would fit within Williams' conception of citizenship within communities of shared fate. School curriculum sometimes does and should include study of struggles for justice, emancipation, and reconciliation, as well as the development of skills and dispositions for students to claim agency.

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION FOR SHARED FATE

Williams (2003) proposes that like citizenship education for shared identity, citizenship education for communities of shared fate would include learning basic skills of critical reasoning, of speech and argument, and an awareness of public affairs. Citizens need these skills for participation in deliberative activities. Students would still need to know about civil and political rights and, in particular, learn about the history of struggle for these rights. In addition to these elements, Williams proposes citizenship education for shared fate would include a focus on dialogue across difference. For Williams, democratic legitimacy in a diverse society requires that we engage in an exchange of reasons about matters that affect us jointly, and that we do not seek simply to impose our will on others:

Bringing the requirements of legitimacy together with the fact of sometimes unwelcome diversity means that citizens must learn to engage in democratic discourse through which they can come to understand (even if imperfectly or incompletely) others' experience from others' perspectives. (Williams, 2003, p. 237)

In short, Williams (2003) concludes an education for citizenship as shared fate would stress the development of three dimensions of human agency that tend not to be stressed in other accounts of civic education:

- (a) The capacity of enlarged thought;
- (b) The imaginative capacity to see oneself as bound up with others through relations of interdependence as well as through shared history and institutions;
- (c) The capacity to reshape the shared practices and institutions that shape one's environment through direct participation. (p. 238-239)

Returning again to Balibar's (2001) argument, I claim these dimensions of agency—these capacities—count as concrete strategies of civility because they have the potential to promote broad participation in our schools and classrooms and engage students in identifying and claiming agency in communities of shared fate. Educators and students read literature and biographies that enlarge thought. Curriculum sometimes includes histories of different struggles for equality and connects historical struggles to current movements. Educators could often be

¹ South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission maintains a website at <https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/>; more on Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission can be found at <http://www.trc.ca/reconciliation.html>

more intentional and more cognizant of including multiple perspectives, but there are many clear examples of when and how this is done in social studies teaching.² These three dimensions of human agency seem to entail broad knowledge of the world and cultural self-awareness, as well as cultural competence in moving between cultures, to be able to more fully understand diverse perspectives. Such competence or capacity will support educators and students in asking good questions, listening with an open mind, and engaging in story-telling; this does appear broadly in education literature and practice. Williams' (2003, 2009) outline of citizenship education is compelling and has clear implications for teaching social studies from the integration of literature to engagement with social engagement projects. It feels familiar and empowering; however, it also needs more elaboration regarding fear, indifference, or violent refusal to acknowledge another's perspective when moving from the fact of interconnectedness to a political and moral community. I turn now to the work of Ben-Porath (2011, 2012) and Zembylas (2012) who suggest some directions in addressing this concern directly related to strategies and practices of civility.

Ben-Porath (2011) proposes the concept of citizenship as shared fate as a way of addressing the problem she describes as belligerent citizenship or wartime citizenship which emerges as a response to perceived threats (which may be real) to national security. Ben-Porath names the characteristics of belligerent citizenship as follows: a) suppression of deliberation; b) demand for national unity; c) focus on compliance and support of war effort; d) diversity is suppressed for the sake of national survival. Belligerent citizenship is in an overpowering form of patriotic unity (Ben-Porath, 2011). Diversity is minimized and contained. As an alternative or addition to citizenship as shared identity, particularly in its belligerent form, Ben-Porath (2011) suggests that "working to preserve rather than contain diversity is a public and educational aim that can be met through teaching citizenship as a form of 'shared fate' rather than through presenting citizenship solely in terms of identity" (p. 319). Ben-Porath's description of war-time or belligerent citizenship helps to understand what citizenship should not be if our goal is to sustain a plural democratic society. In itself, it provides a strong rationale for an alternative.

Ben-Porath (2012) conceptualizes citizenship as shared fate as:

[...] a relational, process-oriented, dynamic affiliation that arises from cognitive perceptions as well as from the preferences and actions of its members. Shared fate citizenship recognizes that reciprocity is at the heart of citizenship in a democracy, therefore, civic learning – commonly seen as composed as knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward the system of governance – should include knowledge of fellow citizens, skills to interact with them on the political and civic level, and attitudes that can facilitate shared civic action. (p. 383)

Ben-Porath asserts that citizenship education based on shared fate acknowledges and

² One example can be found in the lessons and units at teachingtolerance.org

promotes visions of shared histories, struggles, institutions, and commitments. She emphasizes the development of horizontal relationships between groups in a democracy as a balance to the more vertical or hierarchal structure emphasized in many curricula and in wartime or belligerent citizenship. Further explicating horizontal relationships, Ben-Porath (2012) writes:

Shared fate portrays citizens as developing a view of themselves as members for a community by virtue of their relation to other members, by their way of relating to the nation-state as a project they take in, and by their multiple linkages to the national community and its institutions and practices. (p. 385)

A strength of Ben-Porath's (2011, 2012) conception of citizenship as shared fate is that some kind of shared identity is still there in an inclusive form. Ben-Porath argues that it is impractical to completely jettison our sense of shared national identity. Further, she believes there is something hopeful and important in this identity, if it is fluid enough, that can inform our conversations as communities of shared fate. Key differences between Ben-Porath's and Williams' (2003, 2009) conceptions include that Ben-Porath does not move beyond national boundaries and sees national identity as a part of citizenship. Thus the conception does not suggest ways we might respond as citizens or as educators to the stranger or refugee, who may not have citizenship in our nation. Ben-Porath's conception does not support the radical and insurrectional element of democracy so important to Balibar's response to the violence of our time as well as Williams' conception does. Lastly, the jump from belligerent citizenship to positive horizontal relationships in a diverse community is not clear. What are the structures and strategies that support this change?

Zembylas (2012) broadly supports the vision of citizenship education that promotes the values of shared fate, but is concerned with the lack of attention to the role of affect and emotion in the conceptions of citizenship education elaborated by Williams and Ben-Porath. He is specifically concerned about the education of political emotions and the kind of affective relationality that is required to enact values such as shared fate. Zembylas argues that we need to theorize shared fate in a way that recognizes the requirements for affective relationality. In his view, two issues merit attention:

First, whether the notion of citizenship as shared fate entails particular formations of connectedness that are not only rationally based but also affectively grounded; and second, the kind of affective relationality that might be required to ground perceptions of shared fate in the first place, especially in sites of ethnic conflict. (Zembylas, 2012, p. 556)

In his work in the ethnically divided society of Cyprus, Zembylas (2013) sees evidence that children and young people have intense emotional challenges as they are encouraged to open up themselves and move toward those they consider the "enemy." He writes, "The politics of emotions (e.g. fear, hatred, resentment) formulate particular dispositions and values about belonging, identification, and citizenship among students and their teachers (distinctions

between ‘us’ and ‘them’), and so it becomes very difficult to encourage new affective relationalities” (Zembylas, 2013, p. 561).

Building new relations and perceptions, Zembylas argues, is not impossible because there is often ambivalence in the feelings of resentment or fear, but alternative habits of perceiving don’t come easily. Zembylas emphasizes that the goal is not to develop compatible historical narratives between members of conflicting ethnic groups that erase past trauma and grievances; rather, the focus is on creating openings for compassion and perceptions of shared fate. Zembylas is interested in the conditions in which citizenship as shared fate can be translated into action to form new relationalities that are grounded in what he refers to as critical pedagogies of compassion and shared fate. These pedagogies should be seen as practices that envision the radicalization of solidarity and affective relationality with those with whom we are in conflict (Zembylas, 2012). In Zembylas’ view, compassion is important for the development of shared fate because it leads to the recognition that each one of us is vulnerable.

Thinking about the emotion involved helps to understand how people in a community of shared fate such as Williams (2009, 2003) describes might find ways to listen and tell stories to each other and begin to move to more legitimacy when there are relations of fear, resentment, and distrust. It helps us to imagine Balibar’s (2016, 2001) community of fate reinventing and innovating strategies of civility and thus, potentially meeting the concrete challenge of access to citizenship. In social studies instruction it makes sense for educators and students to work to distinguish between pity and empathy as we trace varied perspectives in the communities of shared fate identified in history and in our present day, both inside and outside our classroom and school community.

MORAL COMMITMENTS OF EDUCATORS

I began with questions about home and belonging in an era of growing violence and displacement. I stated that the moral dimension of social studies is especially clear when considering the movement of people due to war and conflict. Questions of belonging, our responsibilities to others, and human rights are deeply moral questions that involve justice and compassion. The way that we answer these questions has implications for social studies curriculum and pedagogy. To discuss implications, I begin by sharing two statements of educators who were asked to consider their views on welcoming the stranger and teaching about immigration with a focus on those with refugee status in particular. These statements relate to the teaching of powerful children’s literature depicting the journeys of families fleeing from danger.

Jim: My purpose in teaching students about refugees is to transmit to students that there are many children—who share the same dreams, interests, and quirks—who deal with extremely challenging circumstances. I appreciate the actionable language in the National Council of Social Studies themes such as explore, describe, demonstrate, compare and

contrast, identify, construct, observe, consider, and examine. These verbs drive home the idea that social studies educators must facilitate windows for critical thinking towards the development of empathetic, nuanced, and thoughtful global citizens.

Susan: We see the news stories about refugees almost every day. We hear the true but almost unimaginable accounts of families forced to flee their homes, their homelands, their entire lives. While we may wish that our students didn't have to know about such trauma, the facts are that it's real and very present — and there are countless children living it. Picture books can facilitate dialogue and promote healthy communication on this difficult topic, help to foster empathy and understanding, and even inspire young readers to act to ensure safe and welcoming environments in their own communities.

We are always telling a story of the movement of people, a story that that can be told from many different perspectives. I think of Faith Ringgold's (2016) book *We Came to America* which begins "We came to America, every color, race, and religion from every corner of the world. Some of us were already here before others came. And some of us were brought in chains, losing our freedom and our names." These educators were designing units with powerful children's literature depicting refugee journeys. Developing empathy and understanding of what others go through are clear goals in these two statements. Juxtaposing the refugee journeys with Faith Ringgold's book encourages connections and begins to develop what Williams' (2003) called "the imaginative capacity to see oneself as bound up with others through relations of interdependence as well as through shared history and institutions" (p. 238). Both statements have an appropriate place for young children to begin to build the capacity to reshape shared practices and institutions. My point is that teaching for communities of shared fate is not unfamiliar. It does involve more intentionality and thought than pulling out a textbook or Weekly Reader, but more than that it involves courage.

These educators' comments regarding concerns about reading books that include a reference to violence or fear centered on the possibility of giving children nightmares or anxiety that they could have to flee their home and facing opposition from a parent or guardian who wanted borders closed, who did not feel that we needed to consider what obligation or responsibility we had to help those fleeing from danger. These kinds of concerns can be enough for educators to play it safe and close down age-appropriate conversation that could help children to understand the world around them or for other children, to hear their experience mirrored, validated in the classroom. To teach in a responsible way, courage is required.

Courage is required of all of us. That is what is so powerful in Balibar's conception of civility—the belief in the insurrectional element of democracy. The belief that we can find ways (i.e., a set of initiatives that are reinvented and innovated to ensure broad participation) to make collective participation possible or not completely impossible. For educators, civility as concrete strategies for participation in and beyond our curriculum and classrooms can become a criterion against which to reflect on our practice. Williams' conception of a community of shared fate has

descriptive power. We simply are connected with one another and our actions have an impact on others. It may not be possible to trace out all of our intersecting communities of fate, but that doesn't mean we don't take seriously the questions of agency and legitimacy that Williams' presents. In short, what stories we tell and how we listen matters in sustaining our sharable world.

CONCLUSION

I've drawn on Balibar's (2016, 2001) conception of civility to frame an argument that effective social studies education should include understanding ourselves within communities of shared fate collectively building practices of civility. Our curriculum and pedagogy has to find ways to address the violence of our times to sustain what Morrison (2019) called a sharable world for children and young people. We need the courage to hope, to reach out to the stranger, to listen and tell true stories, and "to reshape the shared practices and institutions that shape [our] environment through direct participation" (Williams, 2003, p. 239). We also need to provide students with opportunities to do the same.

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