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*Global Social Work: Crossing Borders, Blurring Boundaries*, edited by Carolyn Noble, Helle Strauss and Brian Littlechild. 2014: Sydney, Sydney University Press (384pp.). ISBN 9781743324042.

In the middle of the second decade of the 21st century, the Global North can look back on an over hundred-year-old tradition of conscientiously training women and (later also) men for social work – according to what were considered the best theories and skills and the most appropriate values. Social work education formats evolved from short introductory courses through to vocational training and eventually to university studies at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels. Already the founding mothers of social work and social work education were aware of the interdependence between local social problems and transnational processes and international structures. They acknowledged the importance of international exchange and were connected in the women’s civil rights and peace movements. In 1928, the first *International Conference on Social Welfare* was held in Paris where the term ‘international social work’ already seems to have been used. Following two decades of rapid growth, the call for ‘uniform requirements and standards’ (sic) in social work education arose. National associations of schools of social work were founded as early as the end of World War I, and in some countries state regulations were also enacted. Systematic inquiry into social work education from an international perspective can be traced back to the interwar years. Already in 1937, Alice Salomon, the German pioneer of social work education, presented her systematic overview of the

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educational programmes at the time. Her account reveals just how quickly social work education had left its nest in the North to spread across the world. Her alphabetical list of educational endeavours – reaching from A for Argentina to V for Victoria, Australia – included social work programmes then offered on five continents (Salomon, 1937). International comparisons of social work education have since become a self-evident part of the reflexivity of social work. Hence, ten years after the first adoption of the Global Standards for the Education and Training of the Social Work Profession by both the IASSW and IFSW, and given the expectations accompanying these standards, an up-to-date overview of social work education developments in different parts of the world, and related issues under debate, is of much interest.

On the occasion of the 2014 *Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development* in Melbourne, Australia, the editors, who are all members of the IASSW's publication committee, have published the present volume to showcase the theoretical and pedagogical concepts informing the curricula of social work programmes around the globe. Its 27 contributors, many of whom have served – or are still serving – national or international associations of schools of social work or associations of social workers, have been engaged in the discourse and debate on international social work and social work education for many years. In their introduction, the editors claim that 'no such gathering of programs and ideas from as wide a field as we had in mind had yet been undertaken' (p. vii). In addition to the contributions on social work education, the editors have included invited papers from scholars whose work they were familiar with, noting their 'seminal ideas' emanated 'from their long careers in social work education' (p. viii).

The contributions, grouped into eight sections, refer only loosely to the respective section headings. In fact, the volume effectively comprises four types of contributions (discussed below).

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A large number of the chapters (i) delineate the history of social work education and its evolution; (ii) present the current range of programmes existing at different levels and their principal theoretical underpinnings and dominant perspectives; and (iii) provide information about state regulations, adherence to the Global Standards and licensure, while highlighting concerns, challenges and opportunities. Some also pay specific attention to international social work content. The scope of these chapters varies a great deal. Some describe social work education in entire continents or regions, including South Asia (Nikku), Southern and East Africa (Mupedziswa & Sinkamba), New Zealand and Australia (Staniforth & Noble), Eastern Europe (Zaviršek), the Nordic States (Askeland & Strauss), or the English-speaking Caribbean (Rock & Buchanan). Others focus on single – but vast – countries like India (Nadkarni & Joseph), Indonesia (Nugroho & Santi), South Korea (Han & Lim), the United States of America (Shockley & Baskind), the United Kingdom (Littlechild & Lyons), and Ukraine (Semigina & Boyko).

Notably, contributions from the Global South quite frequently raise similar issues, which are noticeably absent from contributions (on the same topic) from the Global North, including the search for teaching materials containing indigenous knowledge. Social work educators are keen to offer programmes that adequately prepare students for their future careers as social workers in the respective countries or regions; in particular, they want their graduates to have an appropriate understanding of client needs and to be knowledgeable and skilled to give locality-specific and culturally relevant responses to those needs. Other concerns are the uncertainty about teacher qualifications, programme quality and national standards.

A second, smaller group of contributions focuses on programmes or specific curriculum content; some of these chapters take the form of case studies. Among these is a comparative study considering family-specific contents in three programmes at universities in Mexico, Chile

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and Argentina (Muñoz-Guzmán, Mancinas & Nucci), with a second case study on the Master of Social Work programme in Hong Kong with its focus on social change and development (Yuen-Tsang, Ku & Wang). Another offers instructive insights into an educational programme for furthering intercultural competencies in Spain (Aguilar-Idañez & Buraschi). And the chapter on international internships for social work students from Canada challenges the national/international binary in international social work discourse (Moosa-Mitha).

A third group of contributions focuses on a diverse range of areas and their implications for social work education, including the elaboration of: transnational social work (Wallimann); chains of micro-, meso- and macro-practice to respond to the challenges of a globalised society (Staub-Bernasconi); the significance of philosophy (Noble & Henrickson); Indigenism in Australian social work (Fejo-King); and disaster interventions (Dominelli). An impressive empirically based demonstration of the negative outcomes of neoliberal policy (Abramovitz) is ultimately inconclusive about its consequences for social work education, although it lays the foundations for several contributions that draw lessons for social work education from political action under the banner of social work values, beginning with political activism against human rights violations (Briskman), research on activism (Wilson, Calhoun, & Whitmore) and a political programme for social work (Gray & Webb).

The fourth group of contributions comprises two closing chapters. The first adopts a critical stance toward global neoliberal developments in the education sector, suggests how they potentially affect social work education and reflects on corresponding mechanisms within international social work organisations themselves (Sewpaul). The final chapter offers a precise and concise account of three different dimensions and understandings of international social practice and takes a stance on the ongoing debate over imperialism and indigenisation (Healy).

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The volume brings together a collection of extremely rich and diverse, but somewhat uneven, contributions. The chapters characterising social work education in specific countries, regions or continents are impressive and most insightful. They open up avenues for further understanding and raise awareness of commonalities, differences and specificities in providing social work education in diverse developmental, political, social and cultural contexts and national welfare regimes. Last, but by no means least, they make comprehensible the specific concerns about social work education expressed in contributions both from the Global South and North. They offer a platform for ongoing dialogue and for advancing mutual understanding. This, in turn, could open new paths for bridging the persistent North–South gap, while avoiding the related traps of an imperialistic approach to the Global South, on the one hand, and acknowledging the plurality of notions and directions in social work and social work education in the Global North, on the other.

Given the breadth of topics and the uniqueness of the chapters surveying the evolution and impasses of social work education, this volume may serve as a welcome compendium. Besides benefitting those interested and involved in international social work, it also serves as a stepping stone for those seeking to engage in the relevant discourses about international social work and social work education from a global perspective. Both social work educators and social workers active in national and international social work education associations will find this volume helpful.

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