

# **TURBULENCE, EMPOWERMENT AND MARGINALISATION IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS**

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# **TURBULENCE, EMPOWERMENT AND MARGINALISATION IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS**

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We would like to dedicate this book to God, to all the senior-level leaders who participated in this research and who work in our noble profession and to all people who work for social justice with courage and prudence for peace in our time.

## Preface and Acknowledgements

A community of scholars is needed in order to further such a significant and complex project such as this; many highly valued colleagues contributed directly or indirectly to the construction, design and refinement of this book. The discussion on how governance at different levels can improve access to education for excluded communities has gradually developed between the editors of the book and many other participants over the last decade; the hope is that this book will contribute to the discourse on fairness for these excluded communities in education. Our voyage of discovery began with cyclic research, which deepened through internal school discourse concerning the complexity of this issue and its communal, socio-cultural and national aspects. Our many partners in this quest included Professor Daniel Muijs representing Belgium, Professor Rui Yang from China; Dr Emir Mahmoud from Egypt; Professor Mika Risku from Finland; Professor Danielle Zay from France; Professor Marc Beutner and Mr Rasmus Pecheul from Germany; Dr Michalis Kakos, Dr Despina Karakatsani, Professor Nektaria Palaiologou and Dr Dora Katsamori from Greece; Professor Anikó Fehérvári from Hungary; Professor Ewelina K. Goździk from Poland; Dr Dorina Goceami from Romania; Professor Anna Nedyalkova from Bulgaria; Dr Geraldine Vadna Murrel-Abery from Guyana; Professor Stephan Huber and Professor Guri Skedsmo from Switzerland; Dr Priti Chopra and Mr Rajesh Patek from India; Dr Khalid Arar presenting an Arab perspective of Israel, Dr Zvei Berger presenting a Jewish perspective of Israel, Professor Roberto Serpieri, Dr Emiliano Grimaldi and Dr Barbara Segatto from Italy; Professor Kenji Maehara from Japan; Professor Aigerim Mynbyeva, Professor Yenar Onalbekov and Dr Zarina Yelbayeva from Kazakhstan; Dr Kaeunghun Yoon from South Korea Professor Hauwa Imam from Nigeria, Dr Samuel McGuinness, Dr Jessica Bates, Dr Stephen Roulston, Dr Una O'Connor, Dr Catherine Quinn and Mr Brian Waring from Northern Ireland; Dr Mohammed Ilyas Khan, Dr Muhammad Iqbal Majoka and Dr Asima Iqbal from Pakistan; Dr Kathy Harrison, Professor Gerry McNamara, Professor Joe O'Hara and Dr Barney O'Reilly from the Republic of Ireland; Professor Segei Trapitsin, Professor Victoria Pogosian, Professor Elena Pushkinova, Dr Elena Tropinova and Professor Victor Timchenko from Russia; Professor Freddy James and Dr June George from Trinidad and Tobago; Dr Ana Patrícia Almeida from Portugal; Dr Sarah Sands-Meyer from Strasbourg; Mr Shailen Popat, Dr Tania Hart, Mr Ian Potter, Mr Kenny Dunkwu and Dr Alison Taysum from England; The Feast including Founder and Chair of Trustees Dr Andrew Smith from England; Mr Tim Fawssett from Australia; Ms Mayssa Haidar leader of Model United Nations from Lebanon; and Dr Carole Collins Ayanlaja, Dr Warletta Brookins and Dr Pam Angelle from the United States (Taysum, 2012, 2014; Taysum et al., 2017). The project owes its success to these colleagues



demonstrated by the generation of new knowledge in our publications and grant applications. The in-depth socio-historiographical analysis of the 30 nation states that have contributed to the education project has afforded the depth of comparative analysis that connects with Paulston (2000). These analyses have enabled us to have a deeper understanding of the five case studies presented in this book that have underpinned our impact strategy meetings with senior-level leaders, for example in Southside Chicago, that puts knowledge generated in this book to action.

International, independent and critical friends to whom we owe our gratitude, each from their own viewpoint and world view, have peer-reviewed the chapters. All authors have responded to the feedback which has enriched and sharpened our observations on education systems as dynamic systems influenced by many different stakeholders and representing ‘momentary’ consensus between them. The external international peer-review process was conducted along with our team’s internal peer-review process, which has enhanced the trustworthiness of the research and the quality dimensions (Bridges, 2016; Levin, 2004; Oancea & Furlong, 2007; Pollard, 2008).

Our viewpoint on the role of governance stemmed from examination of the school and its activity on the micro-level and the work of policy-makers at the political macro-level and developed through discussion circles and workshops in conferences at the European Education Research Association Annual Conferences (Taysum, 2012, 2013, 2014; Taysum et al., 2015, 2016, 2017), The British Educational Research Association Annual Conferences, the American Educational Research Association Annual Conferences and the British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society Doctoral Interest Group (2018). During these workshops, we tried to develop through an international research community, representing different societies, cultures and worldviews on education governance systems. We examined education governance systems in contexts where contested projects compete in the education field: projects that aim to maintain social stratification, to serve a particular national scheme and to strengthen partition between religions and cultures in contrast to projects that aim to challenge this discourse with the development of social cohesion and multicultural discourse, strengthening democratic processes including social justice and fairness through recognition, participation and equal distribution of human wealth and seeing diversity as socio-culture enrichment.

The strong commitment of the authors of the different chapters permitted deep observation of the complexity involved at the level of the individual classroom and school and also at the level of the state. The work of these various authors allowed us to develop our research approaches and methodologies and to attribute meaning to the current reality to develop tools to improve participation in school decision-making and the implementation of processes in praxis and to develop our theoretical conceptualisation including the development of a model that would provide a space for containment and constructive critical discussion. We found that we were able to understand this complex reality by applying the lens of ‘Turbulence Theory’ (Gross, 2014). This wide-branching project allowed us as a research community to become more aware of the role of

governance in different states and cultures and to develop different approaches concerning its role in school work.

We would like to sincerely thank the authors of the calls for the Horizon 2020 education projects. We highly recommend the rich reading of the Horizon 2020 calls and the associated documentation whether the reader wishes to apply for Horizon 2020 funding or not. Our reason is because, in our view, they have been written by some of the most enlightened minds of our time and offer valuable insights for any individual interested in the relationship between knowledge of our evolving world, and the practice of our evolving world and putting knowledge to action for the betterment of our world's economic, cultural, political and ecological good sustainability.

Finally, Alison Taysum would particularly like to thank Dr Dieter Krohn and Dr Kirsten Malmquist for being patient teachers during the socratic facilitator's training, and her fellow socratics on the course who explored virtue and character through our Socratic Dialogues. She would also like to thank Professor Yusef Waghid Professor Ron Glass, Professor Charles Slater, Professor James Conroy, Professor Michael Apple, Professor Ikuo Komatsu Professor Masaaki Katsuno, Dr Ueda Midori, Dr Hiroko Hirose, Professor Dr Kathy Harrison, Professor Chie Nakajimar, Professor Gerry McNamara and Professor Jo O'Hara, for their wisdom and support of the development of the ideas in this book.

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# Foreword

When I served as chief of curriculum and instruction for the Vermont Department of Education, I was asked to lead that state's curriculum reform program, with the goal of setting a broad learning agenda for all of our schools. The central question we posed to 5,000 people in over 50 forums around our small state boiled down to this: *What do we need to know and be able to do in order to be successful?* But what is meant by the word *we*? Is it a singularity, *we* meaning each one of us considering our separate well-being and the preparations the lone individual needs or is it a group *we*? If so what are the boundaries of that *we*? Or most broadly, is it a universal *we* connecting the well-being and preparation of our human family so that we define the knowledge and abilities that are our common responsibilities?

At that time, my colleagues and I argued that the top priority of our school systems was to provide the next generation of citizens with the knowledge and abilities they needed to sustain and improve democratic societies locally, nationally and around the world. Therefore, it is the third use of the word *we* that mattered most. We were hardly alone in this conclusion. Consider the aspirational vision outlined in such documents as the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) or the spirit of the heroic civil rights leader Fannie Lou Hamer when she taught us that 'Nobody's free until everybody's free' (1971).

It is clear to me that the authors of this book are aiming at the third definition as well, namely the needs that *we* writ large, have to be successful. If this is the case, *we* again meaning all of us, need to consider the needs and aspirations of those whose hands are not within grasping distance of the levers of power. Just as importantly, we need to examine the historic circumstances that have led to current inequities for marginalised communities. For the authors, this means considering the pattern of events in the specific international cases in their research as well as connecting these findings to theoretical work that seeks to establish clear patterns of power shifting first from one group to another, all the while sustaining or even elevating inequities.

Into this caldron of political and social turbulence come the educators, specifically those senior leaders and supervisors charged with harmonising elements of school system bureaucracies with publics who may have very different agendas. All of this often comes amidst inequalities of resources. It is, therefore, no mystery why conditions of heightened turbulence exist (Gross, 2014).

The authors have used Turbulence Theory and specifically the four levels of turbulence it depicts as a consistent theoretical lens with which to describe the dramatic struggles of their protagonists. They have also considered the three drivers of turbulence: positionality, cascading and stability in their thoughtful analysis. By so doing, they make it clear that every event does not lead to an

extreme level of turbulence and therefore help us to understand the times that modest adjustments are called for as distinguished from stronger measures in the case of more challenging situations. This analysis leads to specific suggestions for innovations such as robust, equity-oriented mentoring networks and the empowerment of a new generation of social renewal activists. Helping educators around the world learn to work with the inevitable turbulence of their profession in ways such as these is why I developed Turbulence Theory in the first place and why I continue to explore ways it can be employed.

But the authors do more than reflect on turbulence in isolation. Their carefully selected international cases, taken individually and as a whole, provide a multi-dimensional lens with which we can better understand and respond to inequities in our school systems. Whether they are examining the challenges facing African American women superintendents in the United States, depicting the pressures confronting Arab educational supervisors in Israel, or considering the conditions meeting curriculum reform leaders in Trinidad and Tobago, the authors faithfully connect the three concepts found in the title of this book: Turbulence, Empowerment and Marginalisation. This dedication to the book's theme is clearly found as well in the English case of Black Asian Minority Ethnicity (BAME) chief executive officers' (CEO) determination to support their communities and in the examination of educational leaders helping to guide communities in Northern Ireland towards peaceful coexistence. In this way, authors do the world's educational community and the wider public a true service.

Returning to the question of what do we mean by *we*? I would say that that acquiring the knowledge and skills to respond, adapt and even thrive amidst the heightened turbulence of our era is something that *we* all need. This seems even more the case for educators seeking to promote equity in their work with marginalised populations. This book is a rich resource for just such a study. I commend it to you.

Steven Jay Gross  
Professor Emeritus  
Temple University

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