TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION AND EDUCATION

Peacebuilding, Citizenship, and Identity

Empowering Conflict and Dialogue in Multicultural Classrooms

Christina Parker

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Volume 2

Scope:

Migration has been adopted by many countries as a strategy to compete for the most talented, skillful, and resourceful and to ameliorate aging populations and labour shortages. The past few decades have witnessed both an expansion and transformation of international migration flows. The resulting demographic, social and cultural changes have reconfigured the landscapes of education in the receiving societies.

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- transnational migration and youth
- race and ethnic relations
- ethnicity, diversity and education

Peacebuilding, Citizenship, and Identity

Empowering Conflict and Dialogue in Multicultural Classrooms

Christina Parker
University of Toronto, Canada
Renison University College, University of Waterloo, Canada

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FOREWORD

We are witnessing a major shift in educational endeavours, away from neoconservative, reductionist approaches that claim to prepare children and youth for adult lives in a world of political and economic strictures. Instead, more enlightened approaches seek to prepare young people to think deeply about the world and their own purpose in life via citizenship education, represented in this book as peace education. Including others is key to peace education. In spite of conflicts and in light of increasing diversity, integrative peace education is a major force for including student voices in the curriculum.

In diverse metropolitan centres we see injustice erupt on a daily basis, as marginalized students are cast aside from a system they are unable to navigate because their identities do not permit their inclusion. This is why Christina Parker's work is so necessary. She shows how the process of peacebuilding in a world of conflict calls for the development of identities in Canadian citizenship education, and also seriously considers why peacebuilding, citizenship, and identity are important in education more broadly. To achieve these goals, Dr. Parker focuses on the classroom, where difference and conflict in education for democracy may be dealt with by means of conflict dialogue, for which she provides many useful tools.

This book will help users make cultural exclusion visible and gather the energy and courage to do something about it: to make peacebuilding education integral to all aspects of curriculum. In the classrooms and schools discussed here, teachers and students negotiated their language, environment, and classroom participation codes to build classroom climates that developed social and pedagogical contexts for inclusion. The teachers that were part of this multilocus study used critical pedagogies to link academic status and participation—revealing the power of those who previously remained silent in the classroom. Participants learned to navigate conflict and live together peacefully.

Dr. Parker's careful consideration of the nuances of pedagogical patterns illustrates how students interacted with cultural conflicts that were negotiated internally, so as to move forward via pedagogies for classroom engagement. Such moments championed internationally recognized principles of democracy and civic engagement—initiatives so relevant and necessary in today's globalized world. Where implemented, these ideas can enliven schools and communities around the globe.

The book connects curriculum, student identities, and religious and Canadian conflicts within its research focus. It reveals the realities of immigrant children's lives at school through critical ethnographic moments, uncovered with research tools such as classroom observations, interviews, group conversations, documentary knowledge, and the researcher's personal insights. A final conversation deconstructs historical and political issues, while recognizing teachers and school sites as privileged agents and contexts.

An important aspect of peacebuilding's theoretical foundations is the significance of identity within local concerns. Dr. Parker clearly illustrates that democratic peace cannot be planted as in a garden, row by row—it must grow out of local contexts, throughout the population.

Much needed, this book's main focus is the development of diverse students' critical consciousness, so that they may become aware of societal inequities. This prepares them to become active, responsible citizens. The contribution of peace education to society is critical. The book visualizes a way forward, through peacebuilding. It is indispensable for peace and citizenship education.

Yvonne Hébert, University of Calgary

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This book is a result of a multifaceted collaborative process that involved the input and contribution of many. I am grateful for the many people in my life who have contributed to my own learning and development as a scholar in peacebuilding education. I have been privileged to work with the fascinating teachers and students who have made this book possible. I thank each of them for their contributions, openness, and commitment to dialogue.

I am grateful to Dr. Kathy Bickmore for her scholarship and mentorship in the field of conflict dialogue and democratic peacebuilding education. I thank her for her commitment in reviewing and critiquing many drafts of this text, to shape it into what it has become today.

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My parents, Frankie and Seeta Parker; my grandmother, Bhagpattee Trilokie; and my brother, Christopher Parker, have all contributed to my determination to pursue questions and experiences that have contributed to the motivation to conduct this research. I am grateful to them for their infinite love and support.

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INTRODUCTION

In late January 2009, a few hundred Sri Lankans from across the Greater Toronto Area gathered in front of the Sri Lankan consulate, on the corner of Yonge and Eglinton Streets, to protest the Sri Lankan civil war. Their numbers swelled to a few thousand overnight as the protest moved south to the United States consulate on University Avenue, this time in protest against that government's inaction. As their numbers grew, so did their determination and range of tactics: they blocked major streets in downtown Toronto, formed a five-kilometre human chain along Yonge Street, and more. The protests continued for months, and involved sit-ins, hunger strikes, internet activism, and a continual blockade of major intersections, often during rush hour. By May 10 the protesters, including women and young children, blocked the Gardiner Expressway, a major highway in downtown Toronto, and demanded attention from the Ontario premier.

The Government of Canada's resolute silence in face of the conflict was the eventual focus of protests in Toronto and Ottawa. Several thousand of the Sri Lankan diaspora gathered on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. These protests led to social ferment and an appeal to all Canadians for their support in resolving this conflict in their homeland. These proletarian actions attempted to get the attention of Canadian parliamentary officials. Worldwide protests were held, urging world leaders to help bring a ceasefire to the conflict. In the United States, President Barack Obama called upon both the Sri Lankan Army and the Tamil Tigers[1] to bring an end to the bloodbath.

Meanwhile, another wave of activism developed—demonstrators began to protest the protesters. These were the Sinhalese, a Sri Lankan minority group. With their campaign motto, "Stop the Tamil Tigers," they argued that the Tamil Sri Lankans were in fact supporting terrorists. Interestingly, mainstream Canadian rhetoric appeared to align with this group of ostensibly more peaceful protesters. Perhaps they could restore the freedom for Canadians to travel unhampered through their streets, the media said.

Many controversies abounded surrounding this protest. Misconceptions about the Sri Lankan civil war grew, due to the multitude of messages from the two Sri Lankan groups. I do not seek to editorialize on the conflict or insert my own attempt at clarifying the many misconceptions about the protests or about the Sri Lankan Civil War that arose. I am, however, interested in understanding the experiences of the many young Sri Lankan students across Toronto—for on both sides, many of the protesters were young people born in Canada. They showed up in class the next day, having either stood side by side (or face to face) in a protest the day before. Many non-Sri Lankan students also showed up in class having heard their parents' perspectives (or perhaps complaints) about the protests.

Culturally inclusive educators strive to offer education that is relevant and affirming. Schools in metropolitan areas around the globe serve a multitude of

children who come from different parts of the world. In educators' attempts to empower young people with these diverse identities—where identity is characterized by pluralism and globalization, not by place of birth and location of residence—they must engage with much complexity in order to affirm the students' "glocalized" identities.

What kind of education will create democratic citizens who are critical thinkers, and who uphold strong values of their respective societies? While liberal multicultural education has typically been the response to addressing diversity in schools, I argue that it is not enough to simply present the heroes and holidays as tokens in time. Rather, a deliberate engagement with difference, which begs for the confrontation and examination of diversity and conflict, is what I believe paves the way for the inclusion of all children. In this book I examine how such education is achieved through integrating peacebuilding education. The intentional generation of conflictual dialogue for transformation includes exploring the roots of conflict, applying nonviolent solutions to conflict, and promoting inclusive strategies to resolve complex disagreement. I look at how education and instruction can promote peace, and how peace education can promote understanding of the Other and compassion for the Other.

The aim of this book is to offer an empirical account of how children of immigrants in a globalized world have negotiated their identities as members of various diasporas. To do this, I discuss the possibilities—and perils—of peacebuilding education, in a careful examination of data arising from field work in three classrooms, where I interviewed and observed teachers and students. The identities of immigrant children were honoured within the implemented curriculum. These young people are shown coping with the struggles of acculturation and the subsequent processes of containing or maintaining their cultural identities. Vignettes from observations of both teachers and students vividly depict classroom settings where conflicts and diversity were openly discussed.

This book in its discussion of culturally relevant and peace-based pedagogy fills a gap in the theory and the practice, and as such will be helpful for practising teachers, student teachers, and scholars in the field of multicultural and peace education. Original in its Canadian focus, the book will be of international relevance. It shows how teachers and students can engage in teaching and learning practices related to diversity. It shows that diversity education is happening, how it is done, and how teachers grapple with the issues.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

In Chapter 1, I present the theoretical foundation for the concepts I discuss in this book. I outline the opportunities available in classrooms today to create spaces to engage divergent perspectives. I introduce various processes that can be used to confront multifaceted identities, through intersectionality and the implicit and explicit narratives present in the curriculum. I question how students' ethnocultural

and gender identities are acknowledged and incorporated into the curriculum they engage with at school.

The foundations for creating a framework for inclusive peacebuilding education is a particular focus of my analysis. I describe how conflict management tools can work to address contested classroom dialogues concerning the unsettled social and global issues that are inherently present in transnational contexts. I also review methodological approaches to conducting critical ethnographic research in diverse and privileged contexts, and situate the connection with my personal identity in this research.

In Chapter 2, I synthesize national and international research on students' experiences with multicultural and democratic citizenship education. I also look at various methods researchers have used to study inclusion in peacebuilding education and conflict dialogue processes. I review how ethnocultural minority students' experiences are represented or underrepresented in implemented curriculum. My main focus is how to develop diverse students' critical consciousness so that they become aware of societal inequities. In order to make space for a democratic and inclusive paradigm, we need to know how the hidden and the explicit curricula shape what we know, how we know what we know, and how a purposive and constructive engagement with conflict creates an interruptive democracy.

In the third chapter I situate the context and characteristics of the globalized and transnational classroom cases represented in the three classrooms of my study. This research was carried out in one of the most multicultural cities in the world—Toronto, Canada. While this book presents a local case, it also illustrates connections to cross-national and global cultural contexts. Peacebuilding education is not unique to Western schools. In many ways, the principles of peacebuilding education encourage the intersection with Eastern principles and traditions, where the reliance on connection through dialogue is paramount.

In my view, in order to graduate tolerant, democratically engaged, participatory citizens, the future of schooling needs to be inherently connected to peacebuilding education. My empirical analyses therefore focus on students' experiences with democratic citizenship education in diverse school contexts. If racialized bodies occupy the entire classroom, what approaches might the teacher use to build community and develop resilience to challenge heteronormative and Eurocentric content? And how do these approaches compare to others that work to reproduce systemic and structural power imbalances, which most schooling systems perpetuate? All students benefit from the purposive integration of peacebuilding content and pedagogy that encourages constructive dialogue about diversity and social issues. Still, however, most schools and classrooms around the world—including Canada—have not made the kinds of shifts that are possible and viable building blocks for the future development of strong, global citizens. I do, however, present cases where various pedagogical shifts have contributed to the inclusion and exclusion of diverse students in these classrooms. In spite of this, the classrooms I introduce in this book are still developing and remain in the early stages of such a pedagogical evolution.

In the fourth chapter I focus on identity and belonging, and the ways in which young people negotiate new ways of bridging and connecting their experiences with migration and citizenship across time and space. To do this, I pay particular attention to what happens when teachers engage with students who come from high-conflict parts of the world, using contested narratives and perspectives. Such situations have the power to both transform and reform critical perspectives on multicultural education and its connection to peacebuilding. I also critically examine how racialized students' experiences are represented or underrepresented in the implemented curriculum. The vignettes highlight how both teachers and students negotiated belonging and inclusion to bridge ethnic and local identities. The teachers used a range of conflict dialogue processes and pedagogies that supported or impeded the students' learning and inclusion in these processes.

In the fifth chapter, I examine how the hidden and explicit curricula functioned in the three classrooms to develop students' civic and national identities. If the intention of schooling is to engage young people to be active and contributing citizens, then structural power and systems need to be confronted. I illustrate how select teachers navigated the development of their students' critical consciousness by inviting them to both challenge and participate in mythical democracies. I also explore how these implemented curricula intersected with diverse students' social identities and differential power locations.

Particular foundational and structural issues need to be addressed in order to formulate inclusive classroom contexts. Chapter 6 is dedicated to imagining the hope and constituting the power to integrate peacebuilding education in all classrooms. The success of these approaches is illustrated in my exploration of how silenced voices were heard and religious identities nourished.

Finally, the seventh chapter deals with implications for the pedagogical processes that seek to affirm diverse identities. Such processes show how conflict and diversity can serve as resources for critical social and academic engagement in multicultural classrooms, lead to increased academic achievement, and address broader issues of structural violence. Were teachers to implement dialogic pedagogies to integrate immigrant students' cultural and linguistic identities, how might they also support those students' civic and literacy engagement, and facilitate an inclusive space where all students have the opportunity to participate and have their voices heard?

NOTE

[1] The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), also known as the Tamil Tigers, was founded in 1976. "Eelam" is the ancient Tamil name for Sri Lanka. The LTTE, recognized as a terrorist organization, sought to create an independent state in North and East Sri Lanka for Tamil people. This campaign led to the Sri Lankan Civil War, which officially began in 1983 and ended in 2009, when the Sri Lankan military defeated the LTTE. See "Sri Lankan Civil War" (2014).

CHAPTER 1

WHY PEACEBUILDING EDUCATION?

Sā vidyā yā vimuktaye [Education is what liberates].

—*Vishnu Purana*, 1.19.41

Beth Roy (1994) has recounted a story from the 1950s about Hindu and Muslim farmers in a remote Bangladeshi village, where conflict appeared to arise of out nowhere. The owner of a seemingly insensible cow explained:

> "There was trouble with the cows," said the farmer. "I tied my cow and went home. But the cow got loose and ate the [plants] in their field." (p. 13)

Roy went on to examine the subsequent village riot that occurred:

> By the time the "trouble" was over, masses of men had mobilized, several people had died, many were injured, and life in the village was altered forever after. The problem, it seems, was that the cow belonged to a Muslim and the crop to a Hindu. (p. 13)

Adults and children alike, our positions and perspectives are inherently attached to our identities. Children quickly size up their playmates, often through nonverbal communication. On the playground, they determine unabashedly who to include and who to exclude. Similarly, in the classroom, teachers of implemented curriculum may present and affiliate with hegemonic narratives by falsifying and ignoring people and histories.

While not resulting in a community riot, a religiously motivated conflict ensued in a Grade 4 classroom at Aria Public School, an elementary school in a southern Ontario community in Canada.[1] "Your God is not the *real* God," said Tina,[2] the one girl of African heritage and only Christian in the class. Fatima, a Muslim girl who had recently immigrated from Pakistan, and who covered her hair with a hijab, knew that Tina was asking for trouble, because religious intolerance was not accepted at their multicultural school. She informed Tina that she was going to tell on her.

Tina and Fatima's class did not have any White students—not surprising, in a school population largely comprising visible minority immigrants from India, Sri Lanka, China, and Hong Kong. The girls' community had recently attracted an influx of immigrants. Parks there were filled with older adults, many of whom were the grandparents of children attending the school. They met in this ethnically connected community to sit, have tea, and talk. Some played cricket on the soccer field. For many of them, this was the only time they had connection with people outside of their homes. Many new immigrants are isolated upon their arrival in a

new land, but the school community served as a place where many from the same ethnic origins congregated.

In many ways, the community facilitated their integration into the larger society. The school was looked on as the place that was going to pave the way for the acculturation of their next generation: caught between multiple cultures, it remained clear that young children would continue to be taught ancestral values at home, but that the school would teach them how to be Canadian.

Ms. Marlee, the Grade 4 teacher, aware of and clearly upset by the religiously motivated conflict between Tina and Fatima, addressed her entire class of students: "When you have conflict in the playground, it shouldn't be over religion." Drawing on her own experiences as a second-generation immigrant, she reminded her students that their engagement in conflicts over religion violated the foundational goal of their families' choice to emigrate: to live in *peaceful* Canada. In their new, chosen culture, riots or conflict based on perceived identities should not occur.

The conflict between the two girls could have been settled at this point, with the teacher admonishing them for participating in a religiously motivated debate. However, Ms. Marlee did not reprimand anyone or send anyone to the office—instead, she chose to extend this conflict. She used it as a learning opportunity. Connecting the incident to a story about Inuit creationism that appeared in their literacy textbook, she gave these instructions to her students: "Tonight, you're going to go home and ask your parents what the creation story from your culture is, and then you're going to write it out and bring it to class to share with all of us." Sharing these creation stories sparked considerable interest among students. Fatima and Tina listened calmly to each other speak; they and others asked questions. Together, Ms. Marlee's Grade 4 class seemed to develop a greater appreciation for the diversity that existed among the classmates as they participated in an intellectually motivated peacebuilding dialogue. Her class lesson extended her implemented curriculum content beyond the textbook, making it relevant to the students' diversities and conflicts. Even in constrained and conflicted classrooms, such dialogue is possible.

All conflicts bring the potential for constructive change. Still, most people shy away from conflict because it has so often led to destruction, pain, and suffering. The simple key to transformation is to see the positive possibilities that can exist within such divisive moments. Also, to engage in such conflict learning does not necessarily involve the most talented or tenured teacher. In fact, as Ms. Marlee's character unfolds in the subsequent chapters, you will see that it was not necessarily her passion for engaging conflict that drove her pedagogy. Rather, she more consistently implemented authoritarian, conflict-neutral curriculum in a way that did not engage her students. However, even in this context, she managed to create space for dialogue. I return to an analysis of this conflict in Chapter 4.

CONFLICTS AND IDENTITIES EMBEDDED IN CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Southern Ontario is home to students whose ethnocultural ancestries are more diverse than anywhere else in the world (Statistics Canada, 2006, 2011). However, many of these diverse immigrant students may not get the same learning opportunities as their mainstream peers. Teaching students as though they were all the same will not create equitable social relations (Bickmore, 2005; Dull & Morrow, 2008). A curriculum in which only White, male, heterosexual viewpoints and knowledges are reflected discourages the exploration of alternative perspectives and excludes diverse students who may not share those values and frames of reference (Kumashiro, 2000).

Issues of diversity have been addressed in various ways: through curriculum mandates, board initiatives, and teachers' professional development. Pedagogies that invite discussion of alternative viewpoints and conflicts may engage diverse students and contribute to their inclusion in the classroom. Engaging students in open, inclusive dialogue about conflictual issues can support them to develop skills, values, and inclinations for democratic civic engagement (Haas, 2008; Hahn, 1998; Hess & Posselt, 2002; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schultz, 2001). Such conflict-dialogue processes can provide opportunities for students to practise tolerance and inclusion, thereby becoming participatory citizens (Avery & Hahn, 2004).

How are students' ethnocultural and gender diversities acknowledged and incorporated into the curriculum they engage with at school? Conflict management processes and other pedagogical tools presumably guide and shape the dialogue experiences of diverse students, and the ways in which conflict dialogue is approached in schools are presumably influenced by the ethnocultural and gender identities of both students and teachers. But, even with the implementation of policies to infuse equity-oriented activities in classrooms, research on—and evidence for—the ways that culturally relevant and responsive pedagogies actually are facilitated and experienced by diverse students is slim. While some educational initiatives (e.g., critical literacy, inclusive schools) have encouraged teachers to implement dialogue pedagogies in the classroom, there has been little research on diverse students' experiences with such pedagogies.

Empowering Conflict in Peacebuilding Education

I urge the inclusion of *conflict dialogue* in the classroom curriculum. With this in mind, I intend this book to contribute to the research on conflict dialogue in school settings and to respond to its limitations in attending to student diversity. For this purpose, I investigated how conflict dialogue occurred in three public elementary classrooms, and what its consequences were for diverse students, especially newcomer immigrants. I researched how diverse elementary students aged 9 to 13, mostly first- and second-generation immigrants,[3] experienced and responded to conflictual issues, pedagogies, and discussions in relation to their own

perspectives, histories, and identities. Some studies have explored students' experience with conflict dialogue, but few have studied diverse students' experiences of particular conflict-dialogue pedagogies in elementary classrooms. I therefore also examined how effective (or not) various conflict-dialogue pedagogies were at facilitating inclusive spaces and influencing diverse students to participate in social studies and language arts curricula.

I use the term *conflict dialogue* to describe constructive discussion of conflictual or controversial issues in educating for and about peace, democracy, equity, and social justice (Bickmore, 2011b). Conflict-dialogue processes of constructive discussion can be understood broadly as *peacebuilding education*, which is the purposive generation of conflict as a learning opportunity, and in which issues are explicitly aired and taken up in ways that can promote positive peace.[4] Purposively generating conflictual dialogue means confronting difficult issues that are highly emotional and linked to identity—in short, personally relevant (Bekerman, Zembylas, & McGlynn, 2009; Bickmore, 2008a; Boler, 1999).

Peacebuilding education includes dialogic and culturally relevant pedagogies designed to (re)build strong, healthy relationships that respect human rights, and that challenge inequities: all necessary for democratic societies. In the context of diversity, a critical, multicultural education program is necessary to encourage the inclusion of diverse perspectives and to facilitate critical reflection on social power structures (Nieto, 2002). Such critical reflections are key aspects of peacebuilding education and in educating for democracy (Bickmore, 2006; Davies, 2004a).

On Identity, Transnationalism, and Inclusion: Some Definitional Considerations

Curriculum and pedagogy—including conflict-dialogue learning opportunities—can create inclusive spaces for diverse young people to find their place in the curriculum and in their world. These opportunities can connect immigrant students' diverse and intersecting identities in ways that facilitate their social and academic engagement. Simply put, they learn how to connect their identities, experiences and the curriculum content.

An intersectional interpretation of multiple identities allows for consideration of how both adults and young children navigate the local and global cultural boundaries that shape their histories and experiences. Identity is not a singular construct; it is multiple, ever-changing, and fluid. It is "produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices" and is shaped by various social contexts (Hall, 2000, p. 17). This postmodern conception of identity "assumes different identities at different times" that are "historically, not biologically, defined" (Hall, 2006, p. 250). In partial contrast to Hall, Woodward (2002) argues that the broad cultural roots of identity are just as important as identity's evolution or construction within the life of any individual. In her view, while race carries biological foundations, "ethnicity marks cultural and social differences between groups of people" (Woodward, 2002, p. 146).

Identity is socially constructed and understood through difference (Allahar, 2006; Gérin-Lajoie, 2011; Hall, 2006). Thus, curriculum that recognizes and addresses difference can create space for the inclusion and democratic development of diverse students. I use *diverse* to refer to students' intersecting identities and experiences, based on their perceptions of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, social status, and immigration history. Paying attention to these different identities pushes back against prescriptive and normative pedagogies. When referring to ethnocultural minorities, I consider how particular ethnic origins intersect with other aspects of identity that perpetuate disadvantage, such as racialized identity, home language, poverty, and undocumented status (Ghiso & Campano, 2013). In these ways, through democratic peacebuilding education, the siloed student experience and perspective can be challenged.

Importantly, all of the children and teachers in this book identified with a visible minority group. I use descriptive terms such as *immigrant*, *marginalized*, *diverse*, *ethnocultural*, and *minority* to illustrate the wide range of groupings that children and adults carry when they are visible minorities, racialized, or people of colour, living in a context where they are not the dominant majority. Even though visible minorities may be the "majority" in terms of numbers in certain communities or contexts, they still do not have access to the same kind of power and privileges afforded to the dominant majority of the White Canadian population.

Migration patterns shifting across geopolitical borders have fuelled transnationalism, which integrates cultures, languages, and diversities. Within the Canadian context this process is pronounced, through historical and evolutionary policies and practices that have shaped how both immigrants and nationals view and respond to cross-border and hybrid identities.[5] Transnationalists are typically characterized as those who settle in their host country but who remain in close contact with those in their home country, such as by sending resources to them and maintaining frequent communication. The receiving country sometimes looks down on immigrants for nurturing these ties and connections to their homeland (Van Den Anker, 2010).

Active civic participation, such as maintaining membership in local community groups and voting, are examples of indicators for immigrants' level of integration. However, levels of integration vary and are dependent on various economic and sociocultural factors, such as material living conditions, health, education, and the labour market, as well as civic engagement (OECD, 2012).

Diaspora broadly refers to groups who live outside their ancestral regions. Members of diaspora groups are multifaceted and diverse, and carry differing experiences of and perspectives on their connection with their place of ancestry. In this way, transnational communities include diasporas (Wong, 2007/2008). Transnationalism also refers to multiple cultural associations between the host society and places of origin and ancestry.

Grouping all immigrants together does not allow for a consideration of the diversities and differences within these groups. While "immigrants" are typically grouped together, various immigrant groups contain many differences. For instance, all immigrants are not necessarily accepting of other ethnic groups and