

**Education Leadership for Equity, Resilience, and Inclusion:
Geopolitical Issues, Framework, and Critical Praxis in Global Contexts**

Symposium Chair/Organizer: Linyuan Guo-Brennan, PhD, Professor, University of Prince Edward Island, Canada; Lead -Convenor of WERA IRN on *Educational Leadership for an Equitable, Resilient, and Sustainable Future*

Discussant: Greg William Misiaszek, PhD, Distinguished Professor, Tohoku University, Japan. Associate Director, Paulo Freire Institute, UCLA, USA. gmsiaszek@gmail.com

Promoting equity, resilience, innovation, and inclusive excellence in education is a global agenda; however, the process is complex and requires globally competent governance, leadership, and praxis. This symposium consists of 3 research presentations introducing a) a global leadership framework based on a mixed-methods comparative studies conducted in Canada, China, UK, and USA; b) a mixed-methods study examining immigrant and refugees' experiences with digital governance and the digital-relational paradox in Estonia and its implications for educational governance and leadership; c) a qualitative study examining minority teachers' leadership during crisis-driven migration in Poland, Finland, and Israel. This symposium highlights the importance of global competence education and its implications for educational leadership, inclusive excellence, and collective wellbeing.

Keywords: Global leadership; minority leadership, digital governance, geopolitical conflicts, inclusive excellence

1. Global Leadership Framework for Inclusive Excellence in Education

(Linyuan Guo-Brennan, PhD, Professor, University of Prince Edward Island, Canada)

Citizens, organizations, and societies around the world are deeply affected by complex and interconnected global issues, such as globalization and deglobalization, inequality, geopolitical conflicts, digital revolution and disruption, economic uncertainty, and environmental and health crisis. Global competence education provides the essential knowledge, skills, attributes, and actions individuals need to adapt to and thrive in an era characterized by these emerging disruptions and opportunities. This presentation introduces a global leadership framework developed from a mixed-methods study comparing the higher education policies, programs, and praxis in Canada, China, the UK, and the US. The framework's implications for advancing quality, equity, and inclusion in education are articulated as a pathway towards inclusive excellence, particularly within institutions and systems serving diverse populations.

2. Tackling the Digital Relational Paradox through Globally Competent Governance

(Michael Guo-Brennan, PhD, Professor, Troy University, USA)

Using Estonia as a critical case, this study examines the “Welcoming Gap” – the divergence between efficient digital processing of immigrants and the absence of relational integration outcomes. Drawing on a Welcoming and Inclusive Communities framework, the study reveals that that high Functional E-Agency (the ability to navigate state digital systems) can coexist with minimal Relational Agency (the ability to form social bridges, influence local institutions, and experience belonging). Qualitative data reveals three structural barriers embedded within Estonia's e-governance model: (1) *parallel worlds*, where digital efficiency masks social decoupling; (2) *linguistic gatekeeping*, which restricts access to skilled employment and erodes

human capital; and (3) *agency loss*, where immigrants are administratively included but not socially welcomed. Findings demonstrate that if digital governance is not coupled with relational infrastructure and global dimension, can inadvertently reinforce exclusion in delivering public services, such as education.

3. Minority Educational Leadership in Times of Crisis: Migration, Scarcity, and Systemic Constraints (Joanna Madalinska-Michalak, PhD, Professor, University of Warsaw, Poland)

This presentation examines how minority teachers enact leadership during crisis-driven migration, drawing on a comparative qualitative study across Poland, Finland, and Israel. The study explored how teachers working in immigrant-dense schools respond to the 2022–2023 influx of war-affected students. Based on semi-structured interviews with school leaders, coordinators, and teachers, the study analyses leadership as a relational and adaptive practice under institutional scarcity. Findings reveal three leadership patterns: emotional care work without formal recognition, leadership beyond official titles, and community collaboration compensating for limited state capacity. While these patterns appear across contexts, they are most pronounced in Poland due to rapid adaptation and high migration pressure. Minority teachers' distributed and informal leadership sustains schooling and wellbeing where institutional capacity was insufficient. The study contributes to rethinking educational leadership as an emergent, multi-actor practice that extends beyond formal hierarchies and organizational roles.

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