
Globalization and Education

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Economist Theodore Levitt is credited with coining the term globalization in 1985 to describe changes in the global economy that affect production, consumption, and investment (Stromquist, 2002). The term was quickly applied to the political and cultural changes that generally affected most of the world's people. One of the common global phenomena is school. As the opening editorial for the new 2003 journal *Globalisation, Societies and Education*—the founding of this journal demonstrates the growing importance of globalization and education as fields of study—stated (Dale & Robertson, 2003), “Formal education is the most common institution and the most frequent experience shared from all in the contemporary world” (p. 7). However, the globalization of education does not mean that all schools are equal, as a study of differences between local and global (Anderson-Levitt, 2003) shows.

The language of globalization is rapidly entering the discourse on schooling. Governments and business groups talk about the need for schools to meet the needs of the global economy. For example, the US organization Achieve, Inc. (2005), formed in 1996 by the National Governors Association and CEOs of large corporations for the purpose of school reform, states that “high schools are now at the forefront of America's battle to stay competitive in an increasingly competitive international economic stage” (p. 1). The organization provides the following definition of the global economy under the title of a publication suggesting the link that politicians and businesses see between education and globalization: “American High Schools: The Frontline in the Battle for Our Economic Future.”

The integration of the world economy through low-cost information and communication has more important implications than the dramatic expansion of trade volumes and what can be traded. Trade and technology make all the nations of the world more alike. Together they can bring all the companies in the world the same resources—the same scientific research, the same capital, the same parts and components, the same business services, and the same skills.

In a similar way, the European Commission's (1998) document *Teaching and Learning: On Route to the Learning Society* describes three basic drives for globalization: “These three drives are the emergence of the information society, scientific and technical civilization, and economic globalization. All three contribute to the development of a learning community” (p. 21).

The launch of the journal *Globalisation, Societies and Education* require editors to define their field of study. In the first edition, the editor stated that globalization and education would be regarded as a global set of interrelated processes affecting education, such as worldwide discourses on human capital, economic development, and multiculturalism; intergovernmental organizations; information and communication technology; non-governmental organizations; and multinational corporations (Dale & Robertson, 2003).

The following are some of the features that the editor mentions as a global educational process. Regarding education discourse, most of the world's governments discuss a similar education plan which includes investing in education to develop better human or worker resources and to promote economic growth. As a result, educational discourse around the world often refer to human capital, and lifelong learning to enhance employability and economic development. In addition, the global economy triggers mass migration of workers, which results in a global discussion of multicultural education. Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), such as the United Nations, OECD, and the World Bank, promote a global education agenda that reflects educational discourses on human capital, economic development, and multiculturalism. Information and communication technology accelerates the global flow of information and creates a world knowledge library. Global non-governmental organizations (NGOs), particularly those concerned with human rights and the environment, are trying to influence school curricula around the world. Multinational companies, particularly those involved in publishing, information, testing, not-for-profit schools, and computers, market their products to governments, schools, and parents around the world.

As the title of the journal *Globalisation, Societies and Education* show, these interrelated global educational processes are analyzed in terms of societies that differ from nation-states. This framework

makes it possible to talk about society or global society. The term society is intended to cover something broader than the nation-state by including economic and political organization, civil society, and culture. In this definition, the nation-state does not disappear but becomes part of society. In other words, certain societies can be identified as having similar political forms such as democracy and totalitarianism, similar economic organizations such as market-driven and planned, or equal religions such as Muslim, Christian, and Hindu societies.

While the journal's founders chose the word society to identify groups of people with similar characteristics who see themselves connected across nation-state boundaries, others chose the word civilization (Hayhoe & Pan, 2001a; Huntington, 1996). The term civilization can be used for categories east and west as well as north and south. However, these terms are so broad that is not clearly defined.

In comparing the thinking of Asian and Western students, Nesbitt (2003) defines the concept of Asia as a civilization based on Confucian ethical values, such as China, Korea, and Japan, and Western society based on the early works of Greek thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle.

Huntington (1996) popularized the idea of a clash of civilizations. His vision is a world divided by religious, cultural, and economic differences that override the boundaries of nation-states. Civilization categories include Western, Latin American, African, Islamic, Sinic (China and Korean), Hindu, Eastern Orthodox Christianity, and Japan. In the future, a clash of civilizations, according to him, will occur between Western, Islamic and Sinic societies.

How do globalization studies and education differ from the traditional fields of comparative education? First, researchers on globalization and education are not drawn exclusively from comparative education, although many of those who study globalization identify with the field of comparative education. As a new field of study, researchers into the process and influence of globalization on educational practice and policy come from a variety of educational disciplines, including anthropology, curriculum studies, economics, history, sociology, educational policy, comparative education, psychology, and instructional methodology, for example, the book *Globalizing Education: Policies, Pedagogies, & Politics* was edited by Michael Apple, curriculum researcher, Jane Kenway, educational sociology researcher, and Michael Singh, education policy researcher (Apple, Kenway, & Singh, 2005).

As a result, at least, at an early stage, research in this new field tends to be interdisciplinary. This does not rule out the possibility that one day, researchers in the fields of globalization and education will become specialists educated in doctoral programs devoted to these topics.

Second, comparative education has traditionally focused on comparing the education systems of nation-states. Referring to the "new world for comparative education," Dale (2005) writes that with globalization, the world "can no longer without problems be conceived of as consisting of autonomous states, an assumption that has been quite fundamental to much work in comparative education, indeed, the basis for which comparisons are made" (p. 123). Or, as Carnoy and Rhoten (2002) assert, "Before the 1950s, comparative education focused primarily on the philosophical and cultural origins of national education systems" (p. 1). For Dale (2005), the study of globalization has given comparative education "new life" (p. 118). In an editorial in *Comparative Education*, Broadfoot (2003) wrote that the topic of globalization had a positive effect on historic changes in the perceived value of field of comparative education: "Today we find ourselves at the last extreme [a key educational policy tool], with governments around the world eager to learn how to on educational practices in other countries, as they scan the latest international league tables of school performance" (p. 411). Researchers in the field of comparative education have logically turned their attention to the issue of globalization as indicated by articles appearing in the journal *Comparative Education* such as "Globalization, Knowledge Ec (Dale, 2005) and "Meeting Global Challenges? Comparing Recent Initiatives in Schools of Science and Technology" (Jordan & Yeomans, 2003).

The study of the influence of globalization on the educational process is developing its own academic language, stemming from the work of Appadurai (1996) and Castells (2000). Appadurai (1996) introduces the language of global streams of ideas, practices, institutions, and people, such as ethnoscapes, the movement of world societies; finance, movement of trade, money, and capital; technoscapes, technology movement; mediascapes, the movement of images and ideas in popular culture; and ideoscapes, the movement of ideas and practices regarding government and other

institutional policies. Flow provides a general conceptual framework for the globalization process. Castells (2000) translates the concept of global flows into networks; multiple streams (financial landscapes, etc.) move through a network capable of unlimited expansion. Because of the Internet, networks can compress space and time with communication being instantaneous. In addition, the network will continue to grow and attract members because being in the network increases the chances of success in most endeavours. In studying the global transformation of political economy, Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton (1999) used the concepts of flows and networks to categorize seven areas of globalization: military, government, trade and finance, environment, migration, popular media, and communications and transportation. Also, there are grassroots networks that promote democracy and social justice (Bandy, 2004; Smit, 2007). In their conceptualization of globalization, these regions stretch across the boundaries of nation-states and continents with the local and the global becoming entangled. Although these three approaches to globalization have provided a conceptual framework and language for the study of globalization, they have been criticized for not considering the role of human choice or agency in the globalization process (Marginson & Sawir, 2005).

The following sections will review research related to the interconnected world of discourses, processes, and institutions that influence educational practice and policy, including in the following sections different theoretical perspectives on globalization and education. An overview of worldwide discourse will cover the knowledge economy, lifelong learning, global migration and circulation of the brain, and neoliberalism. Two sections will be devoted to research on the main global institutions that influence educational practice and policy around the world including the World Bank, OECD, WTO/General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), United Nations, UNESCO, and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and organizations other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as human rights, environment, and women's organizations. The last section will discuss the growing uniformity of educational practice in terms of teaching methods, testing, and using the English language.

World Culture, World System, Postcolonialism, and Cultural

Currently, there are four main interpretations of the process of globalization of education. The first is an interpretation that presupposes the existence of a world culture that contains Western ideals of mass schools, which serve as models for national school systems. One of the premises of scholars of world culture is that all cultures slowly integrate into one global culture. Often called "neo-institutionalists", this school of thought believes that nation-states utilize this world's culture in planning school systems (Baker & LeTendre, 2005; Boli & Thomas, 1999a; Lechner & Boli, 2005; Meyer, Kamens, & Benavot, 1992; Ramirez, 2003; Ramirez & Boli, 1987).

The other three models of interpretation sometimes overlap, particularly with regard to the analysis of world knowledge and power. The world system approach sees the world as integrated but with two distinct main zones. The core of the zone is the United States, the European Union, and Japan, which dominate the periphery.

Its core aim is to legitimize its power by instilling its values into peripheral states (Arnove, 1980; Clayton, 1998; Wallerstein, 1984, 2004).

What I call postcolonial analysis sees globalization as an attempt to impose certain economic and political agendas on global societies that benefit the rich and rich countries at the expense of the world's poor (Apple, 2005; Brown & Lauder, 2006; Gabbard, 2000; Olson, 2006; Weiler, 2001). The third interpretation emphasizes cultural variation and the borrowing and borrowing of educational ideas within a global context (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Benhabib, 2002; Hayhoe & Pan, 2001b; Schriewer & Martinez, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). This interpretive framework draws on anthropological research and culturalist theory perspectives.

World cultural theorists argue that schools based on Western models are now global cultural ideals which have resulted in the development of general education structures and general curriculum models (Meyer & Kamens, 1992; Ramirez, 2003; Ramirez & Boli, 1987). As an ideal, this school model is based on the belief in the education of all people, the right to education, and the importance of education in safeguarding economic and democratic rights. As a participant in the evolution of world culture theory by a group of sociologists at Stanford University in the 1970s and 1980s, Francisco Ramirez (2003) wrote, "[World] culture at work, we then affirmed, articulated and transmitted through nation-states,

organizations, and the experts who embody the triumph of the world's 'credential society' schools" (p. 242). In their pioneering survey of world curricula, world cultural theorists John Meyer and David Kamens (1992) concluded: "that through this century [20] one can speak of the operation of the 'primary curriculum of the world' being relatively clear, at least by official standards, in almost all country" (p. 166).

Why is there a common global primary school curriculum? Meyer and Kamens claim that "when national elites define and develop curricular policies, they tend to draw from the best development models they and their consultants can find" (p. 168). This ideal model of education exists in the world's educational culture.

In stark contrast to world culture theory which believes that the Western model of globalizing schools is the best. World systems analysts believe that core countries try to legitimize their power by using aid agencies, particularly through educational support, to teach capitalist ways of thinking and analysis (Arnove, 1980; Tabulawa, 2003; Wallerstein, 1984, 2004).

In the same way, the postcolonial analysis argues that Western schools dominate the world stage as a result of the imposition of European imperialism and their Christian missionary allies. Simply put, Western-style schools spread throughout the world as a result of European cultural imperialism (Carnoy, 1974; Spring, 1998, 2006; Willinsky, 1998). With the breakup of colonial empires after World War II, new forms of colonialism or postcolonialism emerged through the work of IGOs, multinational corporations, and treaty trade. In their current manifestations, the postcolonial forces of promoting market economies, human resource education, and neoliberal school reforms are designed to promote the interests of rich nations and powerful multinational corporations. Within the framework of postcolonialism, these critics argue, education is seen as an economic investment designed to produce better workers to serve multinational corporations (Becker, 2006; Crossley & Tikly, 2004; R. Rhoads & Torres, 2006; Spring, 1998; Stromquist, 2002; Stromquist & Monkman, 2000). In describing what they perceive to be the negative effects of global IGOs and trade agreements on Latin American education, Schugurensky and Davidson-Harden (2003) write, "We take a postcolonial perspective in considering historical inequalities marking the region's relations with the world's rich countries... [WTO/GATS] has the potential to continue the cycle of imperialism that has subdued the development of Latin American countries since colonial times" (p. 333).

In general, postcolonial analysis (Crossley & Tikly, 2004) includes issues of slavery, migration and diaspora formation; the effects of race, culture, class and gender in postcolonial settings; history of resistance and struggle against colonial and neo-colonial domination; the complexity of identity formation and hybridity; language and language rights; the ongoing struggle of indigenous peoples for the recognition of their rights. (p. 148).

The postcolonial analysis considers prevailing forms of knowledge as a result of political and economic forces. In contrast to world cultural theorists, those who use postcolonial analysis believe that the global influence of Western thought does not result from it being true but from political and economic forces. The German political scientist Weiler (2001) identifies the relationship between global knowledge and power as involving a knowledge hierarchy in which one form of knowledge is privileged over another; where certain knowledge is legitimized by power because it legitimizes that power; and where transnational systems of power work through global organizations, such as publishing companies, research organizations, institutions of higher learning, professional organizations, and testing services, legitimizing one form of knowledge.

The common thread between postcolonial analysis and "culturalism" is the belief in the existence of world knowledge and the subjugation of some knowledge by others. Culturalists reject what they perceive as the simplistic view of world culture theorists that national elites choose the best school model from the world of cultural education. They also question the idea that the schooling model is only applied to local culture. This group of theorists believe that local actors draw from several models in the global flow of educational ideas. In contrast to the concept of the existence of world culture which reflects one form of knowledge, culturalists emphasize the existence of different knowledge and different ways of seeing and knowing the world (Hayhoe & Pan, 2001b; Little, 2003; Rahnema, 2001; Zeera, 2001). In addition, culturalists argue that in the global flow, there are educational ideas other than human capital, such as religion, Freirian, human rights, environmental education, and various forms of

progressive education (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Benhabib, 2002; Schriewer & Martinez, 2004; Spring, 2004, 2006; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). For example, Beverly Lindsay (2005) argues that universities in Zimbabwe and elsewhere should adopt a “dynamic paradigm” to support peace and progressive development through university enterprises” (p. 194). Choosing from these educational models, local actors adapt them to local circumstances sometimes against the wishes of local elites.

Summarizing the case studies in his edited book, Steiner-Khamsi (2004) writes, Transfer of education from one context to another not only occurs for different reasons but also plays different roles. For example, despite all the political and economic pressures on low-income countries to comply with “International Standards” in education, import policies do not have a homogenizing effect, i.e. they do not lead to the convergence of the education system. (pp. 202–203).

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that postcolonial and cultural analyzes often overlap in their research because they share a common perspective on the existence of some knowledge and the conquest of some knowledge by someone else. However, the four major interpretive divisions in the fields of globalization and education do reflect different approaches to the future of globalization. The first two interpretive frameworks advocate a specific political agenda. The culturalist world supports and wants to enhance the school's currently dominant human capital model. World systems theorists see this as a process to legitimize the actions of wealthy nations. Believing in the value of world culture, Baker and LeTendre (2005) emphasize the existence of an “educational culture that forms the same values, norms, and even operating procedures in schools in all types of countries which are quite contrasting.”

Global Discourse: The Knowledge Economy and Technology

Global education discourse plays an essential role in creating shared educational practices and policies. It is certain that the central global discussion is about the knowledge economy. Within the discourse on the knowledge economy, there are discussions about technology, human resources, lifelong learning, and the global migration of workers. Brown and Lauder (2006) describe the conceptual evolution of the knowledge economy from the original work on the economics of human capital by Gary Becker (1964, 2006), who argued that industrial development in the twentieth century depended on the knowledge and skills of an elite few. However, now, the economy depends on everyone's skills and knowledge. By coining the term postindustrial, Daniel Bell (1973) predicted that there would be a shift from a blue-collar to a white-collar workforce, requiring a large increase in educated workers. In the 1990s, Peter Drucker (1993) argued that in a new stage of economic development, knowledge rather than capital ownership generates new wealth and that power shifts from owners and managers of capital to knowledge workers. The increasing income inequality between individuals and nations, according to Robert Reich (1991), is the result of differences in knowledge and skills. In summary, changes in human capital and post-industrialism, according to these theorists, create a knowledge economy in which wealth is tied to knowledge workers and ultimately with a discourse on the knowledge economy focusing on the need to educate students with skills for the global workplace. In this case, technology plays a dual role. First, students are educated to be able to continuously adapt to the world of work where technological innovation occurs almost every day (Monahan, 2005; World Bank, 2003). The World Bank (2003) has put it this way: “A knowledge-based economy relies primarily on the use of ideas rather than physical capabilities and the application of technology.”

Equipping people to meet these demands requires new models of education and training (p. xvii). In turn, information and communication technology has made it easier for students to access world knowledge (Stromquist, 2002). Also, technological innovations affect the educational process, as Stoer and Magalhaes (2004) write, this makes “knowledge inherent in the teaching and learning process. Expansion of the demands of economic globalization, on the one hand, and functional to the new needs that arise from the scientific and technological reconfiguration of production and distribution processes” (p. 325).

The knowledge economy plays a role in discussions of economic development and competition between nation-states and supranational governmental organizations such as the European Union. “Conventional wisdom,” writes David Guile (2006), “Whether the knowledge now the most important factor of production in the economies of advanced industrial societies; and as a corollary, the

populations of these countries need greater access to the knowledge represented by qualifications” (p. 355). For developing countries, the discourse on the knowledge economy holds the promise that expanding educational opportunities will result in economic growth and modernization. “Like the Bible,” Grubb and Lazerson (2006) claim, “it [the rhetoric of the knowledge economy] has been accepted by a large number of policymakers, reformers, many [but not all] educators, the business community, most students want to get ahead, and most of community” (p. 295).

Examples of the penetration of knowledge economy discourse in educational planning can be found around the world (Spring, 2006). Followers of two examples are the developed economy, the European Union, and the developing economy, China. For example, the 2000 Council of Europe's Lisbon declaration (Directorate General of Education and Culture, 2002) urges member states to “Become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and the bigger social cohesion” (p. 7). The title of the European Commission report on higher education exemplifies the penetration of knowledge economy discourse into policy statements: “Mobilizing the Brainpower of Europe: Enabling Universities to Make a Full Contribution to the Lisbon Strategy” (European Community Commission, 2005).

Dale (2005) suggests, at least in the case of the European Union, that the knowledge economy discourse includes limiting the power of the nation-state over education. “Earlier, education was considered, under the European Treaty, an exclusive national responsibility,” writes Dale (2005), “but Lisbon's statement included the announcement of a set of Future Concrete Goals for the Educational System, and stated that this could only be met at the Community and Community level, not by the individual Member States” (p. 136). Under the Lisbon Declaration, EU schools educate their students to become highly skilled workers who will ensure success in a competitive global economy.

The global discourse on the knowledge economy has been on the agenda for many national education policy people (Spring, 1998, 2006). One example is the Chinese integration of government in economic planning and education. In a World Bank report on the knowledge economy in Hong Kong and Shanghai, Cheng and Yip (2006) explain, “Both Hong Kong and Shanghai face the challenges of what is, conveniently, called a 'knowledge society.' Thus, the education system in both cities also faces major challenges” (p. 4). The authors go on to describe how knowledge society discussions are changing education policy in both cities, particularly with regard to lifelong learning: “Curriculum reform in both cities appears to be pointing in the same direction—which is a shift in general orientation from concrete knowledge and skills to general abilities.” (p. 34).

In contrast to the focus on increasing educational opportunities to prepare workers for the knowledge economy, there is some research evidence to suggest that there is an oversupply of higher education graduates. After analyzing data on college graduates and their incomes, Brown and Lauder (2006) conclude that, globally, the number of college graduates outweighs the labour market demands. The result is educational inflation with reduced wages for college graduates and people in jobs for which they are over-skilled. They argue that employers are primarily concerned with work attitudes and that good work attitudes are associated with higher levels of education. In other words, their research concludes that in some cases, a higher education degree only serves to identify workers who have good work attitudes.

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