

Chapter 11

Discourses of Globalisation, Ideology, Education and Policy Reforms: Research Trends



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The topic of globalisation, and education reform has assumed immense importance in the discourse and policies of many bodies and agencies across the international arena. An increasing number of countries and governments have concluded that globalisation, education and policy research approach to learning and teaching should be instituted and deployed as one of the main lines of attack on some of the major problems needing to be addressed in the future. The policy documents and statements of the UNESCO, OECD, the European Parliament, the Nordic Council of Ministers, and the Asia – Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum (APEC) reveal a commitment to globalisation and education reforms. There are other regional alliances that are grappling differently with issues of anti- globalisation trends of Brexit, in the Global South, and in developing and underdeveloped nations also.

Current process of globalisation in education represents an on-going, complex and interactive ubiquitous force, affecting reforms in education policy, curriculum development and evaluation, and the quality of global standards in the performance culture (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002; Schriewer, 2003; Johansson, 2018). As Schriewer (2003), argued earlier, ‘It is undeniable that globalisation takes place as a large-scale, all encompassing process which, while conflict-laden and rich in contrary currents, is both the consequence and the correlative of modernity’ (Schriewer, 2003).

From a critical theory perspective, globalisation has contributed to a new form of entrenched social stratification between the rich and poor economies (Milanovic, 2018). The dimensions of social inequality are essentially due to the impact of capitalist economy, privatisation/marketisation, and the rising inequity in the

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availability of funds among local education/regional authorities, because of differentiated economic and social differences between rich and poor regions. Regional inequalities in educational funding have an adverse effect on access to quality education. Some poorer rural regions are socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged, with little access to high-quality education. Current government policy of supporting best-performing schools, based on National examination results in secondary schools, will continue to have an 'adverse effect on access to quality education for all in those regions' (Dervin & Zajda, 2021, p. 7).

The ideological features of the globalisation discourse have been embodied in that of Bologna, as an education policy response to the global context (Guillén, 2000; Stiglitz, 2006; Steger, 2009; Zajda, 2020a, 2021) Because of the similarities of the two discourses, it could be claimed on one hand that the discourse is just moving levels, from the global to the national, as its main features, that is, competitiveness, flexibility and quality, remain unchanged. On the other hand, the continuous reference to social and cultural issues in the Bologna Process (BP) discourse could suggest that the adoption of the globalisation discourse is not blindfold and silent, but is a process of constant discursive recontextualisation. Finally, it seems, that the two discourses are neither similar to nor parallel to each other. But it appears that the BP policy discourse only makes sense, only has a need to exist in the terms, demands and patterns set by the globalisation discourse. Moreover, they stand with ideologically parallel features but these appear with different strength and force in their construction as discourses. (Kolokitha, 2016, p. 119).

With reference to quality control and standardization of degrees, the Bologna Process was designed to bring more coherence to higher education systems across Europe. It introduced a three-cycle higher education system, consisting of bachelor's, master's and doctoral studies. The system ensured the mutual recognition of qualifications and learning periods abroad completed at other universities. Kolokitha (2016) discussed the ideological features of the globalisation discourse impacting on the Bologna Process, as an education policy response to the global context (p. 119). It was noted that competitiveness, flexibility and quality, remained unchanged in the globalisation discourse affecting higher education.

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Drawing on Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's notion of internalisation, Brendan Hyde argues that Twenty-First Century learners are now born and socialised into a world through schooling in which globalised discourses of neoliberal performativity and responsabilisation are taken for granted as being the norm. He argues that these discourses have been socially constructed in the process of globalised education reforms by governments and educational institutions in their quest for excellence, quality, global competitiveness and comparative education data

analysis. The author discusses key notions in Berger and Luckmann's (1966) treatise, namely habituation and institutionalisation, which have relevance for our understanding and construction of reality. He compares critical and empowering educators like Freire (1972), Noddings (2003), Britzman (1986) and others with the neoliberal imperatives, dictating accountability, performance, standards and profit maximization (Zajda, 2021).

In their comparative research, Regnault Elisabeth, Copreaux Lucie, Landrier-Guéret Brigitte, Regnault et al. (2022) discuss the PISA effect on educational reforms in Finland and in France. The authors noted the existence of five educational patterns in the developed world:

- The Nordic pattern: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden. With a non-differentiated structure, a unified school system, the same subjects taught in junior high schools, no separation between primary schools and junior high schools, academic orientation at 16 - progress and building oriented - centred on general skills and know-how expected from the pupils and on the development of the personality.
- The Latin pattern: Brazil, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Romania, Turkey. With a differentiated structure, a separation between primary schools and junior high schools, orientation at 14 (Turkey) or at 16 (France) and an academic structure based on national curricula split in subjects with numerous graded tests.
- The East-Asian pattern: Korea, Japan, China, Russia. With a mixed structure, a partially common structure in junior high schools, a separation between primary schools and junior high schools, an orientation at 16 and an academic orientation.
- The Germanic pattern: Germany, Austria, Belgium, Luxemburg, The Netherlands, Switzerland. With a differentiated structure and an academic orientation.
- The British pattern: Australia, Canada, the U.S.A., India, Ireland, Mexico, New-Zealand, the United Kingdom. With a mixed structure; progress-oriented.

The researchers mention recommendations from the OECD surveys

- To give the pupil the prominent place.
- To have a constructive approach of the learning process thanks to active teaching.
- To favour cooperative relationships among the pupils.
- To develop friendly and safe links between teachers and pupils.
- To understand the teacher's part as a guide, a facilitator.
- To produce positive assessments.
- To associate an interdisciplinary and a collaborative learning, with the mastering of the knowledge required in every subject.

We now turn to a specific topic of race, as discussed by Freeman (2022) in 'African descendants' globalization challenges, human rights and education dilemmas across the African Diaspora'. She addresses the educational challenges and human rights abuses confronting Black populations. This, argues the author, must be done by utilizing the collective, and comparative experiences of Black populations globally, as well as an internationalist model. African descendants have demonstrated their

existence and similar conditions across regions and countries, the Caribbean, Europe, North and South America. They have also exhibited a growing solidarity, argues the author. More importantly, Freeman argues for the need for a paradigm shift, of refocusing and/or shifting to a different paradigm:

...to examine the comparative, common educational experiences Black populations confront globally have gone largely misunderstood and under-examined. This perspective, utilizing a broader, cross disciplinary and cross boundaries approach, makes the case for African descendants' paradigm shift and new narratives from a Black Nationalist model to a Black Internationalist model to examine Black educational challenges globally (Freeman, 2022).

Developing an Education Planning Tool to Create the Conditions for Social Justice in a Global Village is discussed by Sigamoney Naicker and Ambalika Dogra (2022). They analyse the issue of inequality facing most countries and call for changing education systems, since education has the potential to become an important catalyst for change. They also stress the need for changing theoretical frameworks and practices that are the best for developing the conditions for equality and social justice.

In 'Coping with Globalisation and Disruption: The Making of Higher Education Reforms in Singapore' Michael Lee (2022) discusses education reforms in Singapore, and how features of globalisation, such as international rankings, quality assurance and international collaboration are expressed in the Singapore context. Lee concludes that considering higher education acts as a means for promoting upward social mobility, in line with the principle of meritocracy, it is also important for ensuring equal opportunity. Few other countries would have given such centrality to education, training and R&D, as what Singapore had committed.

Some researchers turn their attention 'craft pedagogy' in Japan. Mohammad Reza Sarkar Arani, Masao Mizuno and Yoshiaki Shibata examine Japanese craft pedagogy, as a lesson script process, whereby children present to each other the methods they have found for solving a problem and refine their ideas as a group. Their aim is to elucidate the *neriage*-based teaching script shared by Japanese teachers as tacit knowledge and to visualize, where visualization means to bring a focal awareness to the ethos and understanding that supports this, through analysis of three case-based studies of mathematics lessons from different time periods. The authors demonstrate how Japanese teachers learn to concern and integrate about *neri* and *age* in praxis and learn integrated together through school-university research partnership such as lesson study/analysis:

If we trace the lens through which teaching has been understood (or view of pedagogical correctness) over time, it has evolved as such: 1) teacher-focused (*teacher is central.*), 2) teaching-focused (*teaching is central.*), 3) learner-focused (*learner is central.*), 4) learning-focused (*learning is central.*) (Sarkar Arani et al., 2022).

The topic diversity and global citizenship in educational policies is examined by Kathrine Maleq & Abdeljalil Akkari, who explore how social and political contexts have influenced the definition and operationalization of citizenship education and multicultural education in curricula and address the debates surrounding global

citizenship education (GCE) and identity in culturally diverse societies. The challenge for GCE is therefore to strike a balance between local, national and global belonging that ensures both national cohesion and a sense of global responsibility. The authors conclude by proposing that there is an urgent need for teaching global citizenship through youth engagement, which is connected with relevant knowledge and skills, such as creativity, critical thinking, communication skills and citizenship skills.

We now move to a case study, examining the influence of an international immersion program in Solomon Islands on Australian pre-service teachers' (PSTs) notions of global equity and justice. Mellita Jones, Renata Cinelli & Mary Gallagher discuss thematic analysis enabling comparison between data sets indicated the program's transformative and lasting program influences on PSTs' social justice understandings, actions and intentions. Findings highlight the potential of such programs to develop attitudes, intentions and capabilities for a socially just form of global citizenship amongst PSTs. Their findings support other research that indicates immersion experiences can benefit PSTs' personal and professional development in terms of expanded worldviews and global perspectives. Findings are also relevant in building the scholarship of global citizenship teacher education which has to date been more focused 'on the practical aspects of GCE [global citizenship education] rather than on the ideals it encompasses'. The authors conclude for a need to encouraging empathy and action as essential to addressing global inequity, and education is a key determinant for social change.

We now address the topic of education for sustainable development and environmental ethics. Issac Paul discusses the current state of education for sustainable development (ESD) as a powerful means of forming of new consciousness and behavior through which human development can shape the environment and thereby ensure sustainable living practices and thereby generate an environmentally ethical society. The author argues that the environmental ethics and education for sustainable development plays a key role in the recognition of the human- environment interactions. The formulation of environmental ethics that focuses on education for sustainable development, is likely to produce peace, good-will and global harmony:

Modern environmental ethics is the philosophical re-thinking of modern human race environmental behavior. Sustainable development implies harmony on human-environment interactions and inters- generation responsibility, with emphasis on a harmonious relationship among population, resources, environment and development, so as to lay a sustainable and healthy foundation of resources and environment for future generations (Paul, 2022).

Evaluation

The current process of globalisation in education policy, reforms and curricula demonstrates an on-going, complex and interactive force, which affects all spheres of education reforms. One of the effects of forces of globalisation is that educational organisations, having modelled its goals and strategies on the entrepreneurial

business model, are compelled to embrace the corporate ethos of the efficiency, accountability and profit-driven managerialism.

Hence, the politics of education reforms in the twenty-first century reflect this new emerging paradigm of standards-driven and outcomes-defined policy change (Zajda, 2015, 2021). A number of education policy analysts have criticized the ubiquitous and excessive nature of standardization in education imposed by the EFA framework, and PISA indicators (Carnoy, 1999; Burbules & Torres, 2000; Popkewitz, 2011; Meyer & Benavot, 2013; Zajda, 2020b).

It is important to notice that current policy and education reforms globally, reflect dimensions of social, economic and educational inequality (Milanovic, 2006, 2018). This is partly due to the rising inequity in the availability of funds among local education/regional authorities, because of differentiated economic and social differences between rich and poor regions. Regional inequalities in educational funding have an adverse effect on access to quality education. Some poorer rural regions are socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged, with little access to high-quality education. Current government policy of supporting best-performing schools, based on National examination results in secondary schools, will continue to have an ‘adverse effect on access to quality education for all in those regions’ (Dervin & Zajda, 2021, p. 7).

With reference to the UNESCO report (2020) there is an urgent need for developing good quality education for achieving a more sustainable world. In the UNESCO’s report *Sustainable Development* (2020) there are four dimensions to sustainable development: society, environment, culture and economy, which are interconnected. Sustainability is a paradigm for thinking about the future in which environmental, societal and economic considerations are balanced in the pursuit of an improved quality of life. Education for sustainable development (ESD) promotes the development of the knowledge, skills, understanding, values and actions required for creating a sustainable world, which ensures environmental protection and conservation, promotes social equity and encourages cultural and economic sustainability.

There exists a complex nexus between globalisation, ideology and education reforms – where, on the one hand, democratisation and progressive pedagogy is equated with equality, inclusion, equity, tolerance and human rights, while on the other hand, globalisation is perceived, by some critics at least, to be a totalising force that is widening the socio-economic status (SES) gap and cultural and economic capital between the rich and the poor, and bringing power, domination and control by corporate bodies and powerful political, economic and educational organisations (Fan & Popkewitz, 2020; Zajda, 2020c).

Conclusion

The above analysis of education policy reforms, and the resultant social stratifications in the global culture, demonstrates a complex nexus between globalisation, ideology and education reforms – where, on the one hand, democratisation and progressive pedagogy is equated with equality, inclusion, equity, tolerance and human rights, while on the other hand, globalisation is perceived, by some critics at least, to be a totalising force that is widening the socio-economic status (SES) gap and cultural and economic capital between the rich and the poor, and bringing power, domination and control by corporate bodies and powerful organisations (Milanovic, 2012). The on-going dialectic in education policy and reforms discourses captures the antinomies between critical and emancipatory educators and forces of neo-liberal ideology of accountability and performance. The educational goal of promoting and building authentic democracy, equality, social justice, and human rights that genuinely promote a transformative pedagogy, seems to be displaced (Zajda, 2021). Hence, we need to continue exploring critically the new challenges confronting policy makers, and educators, in the provision of authentic democracy, social justice, human rights, and cross-cultural values that genuinely promote a transformative pedagogy. We need to focus on the crucial issues at the centre of current and on-going education reforms, namely equity, social justice and human rights, if genuine culture of learning, and transformation, characterised by wisdom, compassion, equality, and intercultural understanding, is to become a reality, rather than a policy rhetoric.

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