

# Introduction

**NICHOLAS SUN-KEUNG PANG**

## **GLOBALIZATION IN THE ONE WORLD: IMPACTS ON EDUCATION IN DIFFERENT NATIONS**

### **Abstract**

There is only one world, but it is widely divided. All nations share a common interest in the investment and development of education in their own contexts. The one world has been undergoing tremendous, turbulent changes, due to the recent quick movement in globalization. This paper aims to explore what is meant by globalization, how it has impacted on education and what changes in principle have come about. More specifically, it will explore how school, and higher education have been responding to globalization, and what the implications have been for educational research and development in this unprecedented era of global change.

**Keywords:** Globalization, education reform, higher education, basic education, research and development

There is only one world. But, the world is widely divided, geographically, politically, economically, socially, culturally, linguistically, and religiously. Despite the vast diversities in various aspects, all nations share a common interest in the investment and development of education in their own contexts. Education has essential functions of enhancing the development of individual, society and country. Education provides opportunities for individuals to develop physically, intellectually, morally, socially, aesthetically and spiritually, to maximize their potentials and prepare them for the future. Education facilitates the strengthening of a civil society, and enhances social justice, equity and cohesion. Education helps a nation inculcate civic and social responsibility among its citizens, develop capacity building, promote national integration, and enhance national competitiveness. Each country in the one world strives to establish an education system for the well-being and development of its younger generation, the society and the nation.

The one world has been undergoing tremendous, turbulent changes, due to the recent quick movement in globalization. As a result of globalization, educational change occurs in the development of basic and higher education in many countries in the one world. This paper aims to explore what is meant by globalization, how it has impacted on education and what changes in principle have come about. More specifically, it will explore how school, and higher education have been responding to globalization, and what the implications have been for educational research and development in this unprecedented era of global change.

## The Advent of Globalization

Globalization is not a new process. Bates (2002) comments that migration of ideas, artifacts and people has been a constant part of human history but that what appears to be new is the rapidity with which such migrations are now accomplished and the relative weakness of the barriers to them, constructed by nation states in order to maintain their social, political and cultural integrity. Although current concepts of globalization are still blurred and hard to define, it is generally accepted as relating to the global reach of processes of the exchange of goods, the formation of gigantic multinational enterprises, and the virtual abolition of time because of the instantaneous quality of communication all over the one world (Capella, 2000). Carnoy (1999) argues that globalization means more competition, which means that a nation's investment, production, and innovation are not limited by national borders. Globalization has become possible only because of the technological infrastructure provided by telecommunications, information systems, microelectronic equipment, and computer-controlled transportation systems.

There is no universally accepted conceptualization of globalization. Globalization has many faces, thus different theorists view globalization differently. Held (1991, p. 9) defines globalization as "the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa". Pieterse (1995, p. 45) speaks of globalization in terms of "the ideas that the world is becoming more uniform and standardized, through technological, commercial and cultural synchronization emanating from the West, and that globalization is tied up with modernity". Parker (1997, p. 484) views globalization as "a growing sense that events occurring throughout the world are converging rapidly to shape a single, integrated world where economic, social cultural, technological, business, and other influences cross traditional borders and boundaries such as nations, national cultures, time, space, and industries with increasing ease".

Capling, Considine and Crozier (1998, p. 5) argue that, "globalization refers to the emergence of a global economy which is characterized by uncontrollable market forces and new economic actors such as transnational corporations, international banks, and other financial institutions". Blackmore (2000, p. 133) described it as "increased economic, cultural, environmental, and social interdependencies and new transnational financial and political formations, with both homogenizing and differentiating tendencies".

Globalization is a product of the emergence of a global economy. The process of globalization is seen as blurring national boundaries, shifting solidarities within and between nation-states, and deeply affecting the constitution of national and interest group identities (Morrow & Torres, 2000). The term "globalization" is generally used to refer to a complicated set of economic, political, and cultural factors. As a result of expanding world trade, nations and individuals experience greater economic and political interdependence (Wells *et al.*, 1998). New communication technologies that facilitate expanded world trade as well as cultural interaction are considered the determinants that lead to the emergence of globalization. It is widely believed that globalization is transforming the political, economic and cultural lives of people all around the world, whether in the developed countries or developing ones, and that globalization is driving a revolution in the

organization of work, the production of goods and services, relations among nations, and even local culture.

### **The Impact of Globalization on Education**

The potential effects of globalization on education are many and far-reaching, due to its scale and nature. Because the main bases of globalization are knowledge intensive information and innovation, globalization should have a profound impact on education (Carnoy, 2002). Almost everywhere in the one world, educational systems are now under pressure to produce individuals for global competition, individuals who can themselves compete for their own positions in the global context, and who can legitimate the state and strengthen its global competitiveness (Daun, 2002).

Economic and technological globalization is challenging the nation-state in different ways. Countries differ in their response to the processes of globalization according to their size, economic and technological level, economic position in world markets, cultural composition, relationships between the state and economy (Green, 1997; Daun, 2002). Carnoy (2002) argues that analyzing how nation-states respond to globalization is crucial to the understanding of the effects of globalization on education. He posits that the approach a nation-state takes in education reform, their educational response to globalization, depends on three key factors: their real financial situation, their interpretation of that situation, and their ideological position regarding the role of the public sector in education. These three factors are expressed through the methods that a nation-state has adopted for the structural adjustment of its economy to the new globalized environment (Mok & Welch, 2003).

Globalization is having a profound effect on education at many different levels. That education has been a national priority in many countries is largely understood in terms of national economic survival in a fiercely competitive world. It is commonly recognized that the production economy is being rapidly overtaken by the knowledge economy. Many countries have taken action to enhance their competitive edge through the development of the knowledge-producing institutions and industries (Daun & Strömqvist, 2011). The development of the knowledge economy through the enhancement of skills and abilities, that is, improved human capital, has become an important agenda in many countries' educational policy (Bates, 2002). Globalization will have even greater effects on education in the future (AACSB International, 2011). Because global financial flows are so great, governments rely increasingly on foreign capital to finance economic growth. One way to attract finance capital is to provide a ready supply of skilled labor by increasing the overall level of education in the labor force.

Global competition results in an overall demand for higher skills. Daun (2002) and Suárez-Orozco (2007) argue that global competition leads to an increasing demand for higher skills in the population as a whole, and lifelong learning for all. Global competition also leads to a techno-economic shift. Such a shift results in unemployment in the short term but to a higher standard of living and higher employment in the long term. As the arrival of a global society will also herald that of a knowledge society, the role of education is to enhance a nation's productivity and competitiveness in the global environment. Bates (2002, p. 139) foresees that the challenges ahead for most education systems and their success in global

competition will depend on (i) whether they can determine the skills and attitudes required by the young and by lifelong learners, (ii) the construction of an appropriate global curriculum, (iii) the development of an appropriate technologically mediated pedagogy, (iv) the specification of the universal standards by which performance can be evaluated, and (v) the management of the system through which these achievements can be realized.

### **Globalization and Educational Change**

Globalization has brought a paradigm shift in educational policies and administration in many countries. Under the impacts of globalization, Mulford (2002) observes that the old-fashioned values of wisdom, trust, empathy, compassion, grace, and honesty in managing education have changed into those so-called values of contracts, markets, choice, and competition in educational administration. At present, school administrators are probing more into the instrumental skills of efficiency, accountability and planning than the skills of collaboration and reciprocity. School education nowadays puts more stress on the short term, the symbolic and expediency, having the answers and sameness, than those of the past, which focused on the long term, the real and substantive goals and objectives, discretion and reserving judgment, and character.

In the competitive global economy and environment, nation-states have no choice but to adjust themselves in order to be more efficient, productive, and flexible. To enhance a nation's productivity and competitiveness in the global situation, decentralization and the creation of a "market" in education have been the two major strategies employed to restructure education (Lingard, 2000; Mok & Welch, 2003). Decentralization and corporate managerialism have been used by most governments to increase labour flexibility and create more autonomous educational institutions while catering for the demand for more choice and diversity in education (Blackmore, 2000; Novelli & Ferus-Comelo, 2010). The emergence of education markets has also been central to education reform for globalization in many states. Carnoy (2002) argues that if education is restructured on market principles and based upon competitive market relations where individual choice is facilitated, education will become more efficient.

While it is true that many educational developments are due to globalization, the dynamics, complexity, and mechanism of such impacts are still not fully grasped. Martin Carnoy (1999) analyzes how globalization has been affecting education systems, directly and indirectly, and summarizes that globalization has recently brought the following major educational changes (pp. 15-17):

1. Globalization has had, and continues to have an impact on the organization of work and on the work people do. Usually this work demands a high level of skill.
2. Such demands push governments to expand their higher education, and to increase the number of secondary-school graduates prepared to attend post-secondary education.
3. Most governments are under greater pressure to increase spending on education to produce a more educated labour force.
4. The quality of education is increasingly being compared internationally. The TIMSS and PISA studies are cases in point.

5. There have been greater emphases on mathematics and science curricula, English as a foreign language and communication skills, in school education.
6. Use of information technology, such as, the use of the Internet and computer assisted instruction are becoming more common in the classroom.

In the following sections, the impact of globalization on higher education and school education will be discussed more specifically and in greater details.

### **Restructuring Higher Education in the Era of Globalization**

There have been a variety of important social, cultural, economic, and political forces that link to the global development of higher education. Schugurensky (2003) identified (i) the globalization of economy, (ii) the 'commodification' of knowledge, and (iii) the retrenchment of the welfare state as three important forces, among others, for the changes in higher education. Globalization leads to the emergence of a knowledge economy, in which the importance of information technology and knowledge management is coming to outweigh that of capital and labour. Globalization also leads to the intensification of the transnational flows of information, commodities, and capital around the globe. That, in turn, renders both production and dissemination of knowledge increasingly commoditized. In parallel with the onset of globalization, more and more welfare states have adopted a neoliberal ideology geared to promoting economic international competitiveness through cutbacks in social expenditure, economic deregulation, decreased capital taxes, privatization and labour 'flexibilization' (Novelli & Ferus-Comelo, 2010). All these forces are implicit in a restructuring of higher education systems worldwide (Peters *et al.*, 2000; Welch & Mok, 2003).

The impacts of these forces on the change to higher education are manifest in the drastic restructuring of higher education systems, in which values, such as accountability, competitiveness, devolution, value for money, cost effectiveness, corporate management, quality assurance, performance indicators, and privatization are emphasized (Mok & Lee, 2002; Ngok & Kwong, 2003). Though nations vary widely in their social, political, cultural and economic characteristics, what is striking is the great similarity in the unprecedented scope and depth of restructuring taking place. In general, most of these changes are expressions of a greater influence of the market and the government over the university system. At the core of these changes is a redefinition of the relationships among the university, the state, and the market (Schugurensky, 2003).

Currie (1998) has been able to identify certain trends in the restructuring of higher education, in the globalizing practices in Anglo-Pacific and North American universities. These trends have important implications for the development of higher education systems in other countries in this era of globalization. These trends include (i) a shift from elite to mass higher education, (ii) the privatization of higher education, (iii) the practice of corporate managerialism, and (iv) the spread of transnational education.

There has been a shift from elite to mass higher education globally, driven by the fact that in a knowledge-based economy, the payroll cost to higher levels of education is rising worldwide. This is a result of the shift from economic production

to knowledge-intensive services and manufacturing. Rising relative incomes for more highly educated labour increases the demand for university education, pushing governments to expand their higher education (Carnoy, 2002; Maringe & Foskett, 2010).

In the face of limited resources and the rapid expansion of higher education, governments have been forced towards the privatization of higher education and corporatization of public universities. Privatization is another global trend in higher education, which means a reduction in the level of state provision, and correspondingly, the encouragement of the expansion of private provision (Lee, 2000). The underlying ideology of privatization is based on the belief that the public sector is ineffective, inefficient, and inflexible, while the private sector is deemed more effective, efficient, and responsive to the rapid changes that are needed in the globalizing world.

By corporatization, public universities are run like business corporations. The adoption of business-like approaches will result in financial cost savings; increased administrative efficiencies; and retain academic staff through the offering of competitive market remunerations (Lee, 2000). Such a global change reflects the fact that higher education institutions are increasingly required to secure additional funds from external sources and to reduce dependence on the government (Ngok & Kwong, 2003).

A unique feature of the rapid expansion of private higher education is the emergence of offshore programmes that are offered by foreign universities. The emergence of foreign-linked programmes reflects a growing trend of transnational education, which means that there is a growing volume of higher education being delivered across national boundaries. Education has become increasingly affected by commoditization. In the global context, the boundaries of how, where, and under whose authority education is carried out and certified are becoming less clear as universities internationalize their campuses, curricula, and teaching staff (Lee, 2000; Maringe & Foskett, 2010).

There are some backwash effects created from these global currents of restructuring of higher education due to globalization. First, a rapid expansion in higher education may inevitably lead to a fall in the average academic standard and performance of graduates. It is likely that the definition and establishment of quality will become the prerogative of management rather than academic professionals. When universities become more corporatized, they will be linked more to the market and less to the pursuit of truth. Intellectuals will become less the guardians of the search for truth, and administrators will assume a dominant role (Stromquist & Monkman, 2000). In this regard, norms that have traditionally been part of university life may be questioned. Stromquist and Monkman (2000) and Zajda (2010) warned that when guided by a climate of knowledge as production, the university may become indifferent to subjects dealing with ethics, social justice, and critical studies.

### **Globalization and School Educational Reforms**

While higher education systems worldwide have been undergoing restructuring as a response to the challenges posed by globalization, school education systems inevitably have to reform also. Based on the strategies the nation-states adopted in

school educational reforms implemented in the context of globalization, The International Labor Organization (ILO) (1996, pp. 6-12) and Carnoy (1999) have been able to identify three different models of educational reforms and make a distinction between: (i) competitiveness-driven reforms, (ii) finance-driven reforms, and (iii) equity-driven reforms. The competitiveness-driven reforms are implemented in order to improve a country's competitiveness in the world market and the major strategies include decentralization, centralization, improved management of educational resources and improved teacher recruitment and training. Finance-driven reforms consist of privatization, shifting public funding from higher to lower levels of education, and the reduction of costs per student as the major strategies, while equity-driven reforms are often targeted towards groups that are neglected or are more affected by the consequence of structural adjustment programs. Different countries will adopt these models of educational reform to a greater or lesser extent according to their financial situation, culture and interpretation of globalization.

Though different nation-states may have varying perceptions of globalization and adopt different strategies in school educational reforms, similarly to the strategies in restructuring higher education described in previous sections, decentralization, marketization and choice are the major approaches seen.

The main argument for decentralization stems from the assumption that increased flexibility and control allow for a better fit between educational methods and the students served, as well as greater accountability for educational results. Decentralization is cast in the role of a reform that increases productivity in education and thus contributes significantly to improving the quality of a nation's human resources. Many schemes have been tried to achieve decentralization of school education, such as voucher plans, magnet schools, zero-based budgeting, school consultative committees and school-based management (Brown, 1990).

Decentralization in education systems is typically the legacy of the New Right's neoliberal ideology of school reform in Western countries in the early 1980s (Cooper, 1988). Both Ronald Reagan of the United States and Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain were committed to breaking the monopoly of schools and the introduction of more choice, competition and measurable results. They both believed that strong state control of schools rendered them ineffective, inefficient and not responsive enough to rapid global societal changes. Their basic beliefs were that the market is the most efficient instrument to allocate resources, that competition will motivate people to raise their standards of performance and that school improvement will not occur if they are not held accountable and given the necessary resources to do their job.

These two Governments came into office on a platform of motivating schools' internal initiatives and reducing the governments' roles in and control over education by creating competitive markets in the school system and devolving authority to schools. The New Right's language articulated in school reform is, "choice", "competition", "market mechanism" and such like. In order to promote a market mechanism in the school system and to allow schools to compete with each other, state (government) schools should be dissolved, deregulated and even "privatized" (Pang, 2002), be given the chance of self-management (Caldwell & Spink, 1988) and be accountable for their own performance. "Market" and "school-

based management” are the two prime ideological foci of the New Right’s school reforms.

When the concept of a market is applied to the school system, the notion of choice is crucial. Choice may be bi-directional in the sense that schools compete for students and students also compete for schools. The two-way competition is the driving force for both schools and students to improve and to raise their standards of performance. In the face of competition, students would strive for excellence in order to get into a “good” school, and schools would ensure they provided quality education in order to compete for the best students. When market forces are introduced into the school system, competition is created, and the quality of education will be assured effectively, efficiently and automatically.

When there is a market mechanism in the education system, schools are responsive and accountable. The right choice is to devolve the system to schools (Chapman & Boyd, 1986). School-based management (site-based management, self-budgeting and self-management are other terms coined) is the most popular form of school management reform to revitalize schools in terms of responsiveness, flexibility, accountability and productivity. When the functions of market and school-based management in schools are at full strength, the quality of education will be assured.

### **Implications for Further Research and Development**

Though there is still no universally accepted conceptualization of globalization, what we call “globalization” has brought numerous and profound changes to the economic, social, cultural and political life of nations as well as changes in education (Pang, 2006). Globalization seems to be leading to some homogenizing tendencies, but it is also opening a space for new identities and contesting established values and norms (Stromquist & Monkman, 2000). The global flow of information and culture as well as the rapid spread of new technologies has enormous consequence for education. Globalization might entail the imposition of the concepts of competition, market, choice, decentralization and privatization on education, that is, the further infiltration by business forces into education. It might also lead to increased commoditization of education and making quality education only accessible to elite elements of society who can afford it (Kellner, 2000).

The globalization of education might involve the privileging of Western, most particularly English-language, culture in the one world. It is evident that in many places, globalization has led to greater economic and social inequality; and that educational access, whilst expanded, has also become more unequal in quality. Greater decentralization and privatization of education has generally not increased equality in educational services, rather leading to more inequality (Carnoy, 2002).

There exist dichotomous accounts of globalization in the literature, for example, (i) the relations between the global and the local; (ii) between globalization viewed as a trend toward homogenization around Western norms and culture and globalization viewed as an era of increased contact between diverse cultures, leading to an increase in hybridization and novelty; and (iii) between the material and rhetorical effects of globalization (Burbules & Torres, 2000, pp. 13-14).

There is also a question of whether globalization is a “good thing”? (Reid, Gill & Sears, 2010) Is globalization beneficial to economic growth, equality, and justice,



or is it harmful? (Zajda, 2010) Has globalization led to development or division in education, and to what extent? (Welch & Mok, 2003) The question whether globalization in its various manifestations, is bad or good for education, remains largely unanswered. There exist dichotomous accounts of globalization in the literature, for example, (i) the relations between the global and the local; (ii) between globalization viewed as a trend toward homogenization around Western norms and culture and globalization viewed as an era of increased contact between diverse cultures, leading to an increase in hybridization and novelty; and (iii) between the material and rhetorical effects of globalization (Burbules & Torres, 2000; Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). Further research into these controversial issues should be carried out, as long as globalization continues to affect education (Roth & Gur-Ze'ev, 2007; Popkewitz & Rizvi, 2009). The challenge ahead for research on globalization in Education is not only whether progress is being made, but whether it is being made quickly enough.

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Professor Dr. Nicholas Sun-keung Pang  
Department of Educational Administration and Policy  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
nspkang@cuhk.edu.hk

Nicholas Sun-keung Pang is the Professor and Chairman of the Department of Educational Administration and Policy at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Director of the Hong Kong Centre for the Development of Educational Leadership (HKCDEL) and was elected the Chairman of Hong Kong Educational Research Association. Prof. Pang specializes in educational administration, management and leadership, as well as school effectiveness and improvement and he has been publishing widely, locally and internationally.