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INTRODUCTION



The world before us: reappraising globalization in education in the tumult of contemporary change

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In reassessing globalization, contributors to this Special Issue collectively note the swirling, unstable set of forces that have followed in the wake of globalizing processes visited upon twenty-first century societies and their educational systems in the past few decades. As such, they write against dominant social science and policy understanding of globalization that insists on its unifying and universalizing tendency grounded in the affordances of the technological sublime of highspeed Internet, speeded-up communications and transportation putatively linking up the four corners of the globe and erasing boundaries of the North-South divide (Friedman, 2005). Particularly as educators, contributors insist that globalization is not an abstract or universalizing set of processes of time-space compression that absorb more and more of human reality into a singular homogenous space but is instead profoundly discriminatory and asymmetrical in its impact and effects. They maintain that globalization is now placing tremendous pressure on local settings and institutions such as schools and universities, on the very nature of intellectual and pedagogical processes, and on the social subjects and lived communities formed in these domains.

While an acceleration of truly colossal global events marks the last two decades since 2001, transforming global society more rapidly than ever before, neither their scale nor speed specifically distinguish the present moment. Rather, these conditions afford a new set of collisions of practices and systems embedded in social life, particularly those that expropriate, oppress or exacerbate inequity, which reverberate unexpectedly. These contextualize dynamic forms of aspiration, planning and pedagogy, exerting multivectoral pressure on our social condition. China's entrance into the World Trade Organization, flooding the global economic market with hundreds of millions of people, and the 11 September 2001 attacks, with their lasting geo-political effects of a US initiated War on Global Terror, are but two of many events whereby processes of globalization matter because they create forums and capacities for this multivectoral pressure. Processes that have long been theorized as the diacritics of globalization – accelerating speed, shrinking distance, increasing connectivity – are recognized by contributors to this Special Issue, not as an arrival point, but as resources for the leveraging and collision of social-material forces and pressures

now underway. The spectacular mobility and incessant global flows crisscrossing the world: trade, finance, culture, news, education, media, images, fashion, drugs, diseases, blood, organs, and people, have transformed not just the world, but the very social-material capacities to imagine, prepare and educate.

Although proponents of modernization promised this should theoretically have been a golden age of global peace, sustainability, democratic practice, and increased cross-cultural understandings facilitated by technology, cross-border mobility, and macro-level world collaborations, there is an equally forceful and malicious set of global processes at play, what Stiglitz (2001) and then Appadurai (2006) referred to as the 'darker sides of globalization'. These arise from deepening nationalism, fascism, autocracy and intensified wealth disparity, which exacerbate an already precarious position for education, educational policy, and the academic community at large. The rapid circulation of dynamics that characterize this moment of globalization have produced a variety of fissures and disjunctures (Appadurai, 2013), whereby 'global' connections are selective, discontinuous and rife with modes of exclusion (Ferguson, 2006).

As globalization stretches, twists and mutates in its journey across the world's societies, the manifestation of glocalism creates intense flows of media, technology, capital, labor, social networking, and radically disruptive new demands on educational milieus. Caught between the maintenance of its traditional position – to produce loyal and productive national citizens and workers (Green, 1997) – and an urgent need to respond to contexts of multinational supply chains, technological diffusion and international finance; the global educational milieu faces increasing demands for a new range of skills, dispositions, and forms of knowledge production. The predominance of brainpower industries and a further technological shift in modes of production and capital accumulation have accentuated certain forms of knowledge and skill as the only courses to competitive advantage. Massified systems of education in the Western world, forecasted by Peters (2016), have been consolidated further, with effects extending beyond all borders. These systems increasingly emphasize the development of 'human capital' and 'higher education as a tradeable commodity'. To that end, new questions are posed and arguments developed and circulated about who and what it means to educate for the twenty-first century global world. From existing literature on global citizenship education and internationalization of schooling, these processes reflect the tensions between neoliberal ideologies of the highly mobile, individualistic, globally competitive worker and the humanistic ideals of globally and culturally responsive collective social action, what some scholars – building on Bobbio (1996) – have called a global left-right distinction (Noel & Therien, 2008; Steger, 2009).

These tensions play out differently across educational milieus as they become highly contextualized within local and national spaces (Engel & Siczek, 2018; Engel, Maxwell, & Yemini, 2019; Goren, Maxwell, & Yemini, 2019), where multiple meanings are brought to the constitution of the 'global' citizen. For some, the rise of internationalized forms of schooling is cultivating new pathways to make and claim elitism for the global middle classes (Maxwell, 2018). And yet, at the same time, within these pathways, youth in increasingly globalized circumstances are embodying and mobilizing their global elite status in a multitude of ways (Goel & McCarthy, 2020; Greenhalgh-Spencer et al., 2015).

Up until now, globalism has arguably evolved as the de facto ideology underpinning forms of global governance since the middle of the twentieth century. With the inception

of the United Nations post-World War II, many subsequent international partnerships emerged – NATO, Interpol, World Bank, World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund – taking leads from the Global North. Attempts to measure, manage, organize, network and discipline the world were developed and applied with universalizing and homogenizing intentions. Connected societies, communities and institutions, however, have faced complex consequences from these efforts of global organization, affiliation and circulation. State instigated brutality, racial violence, and civil unrest in many countries such as the United States or France run parallel to massacres in Syria, Myanmar, Kashmir and Xinjiang, revealing deep fault lines beneath such misguided efforts to organize a postcolonial, global twenty-first century world. Such is the context whereby responses to Western hegemonic policies are continuously emerging from the Global South. In this Special Issue, contributors writing on educational systems in India, Vietnam, and China (particularly, Cai, Miglani & Burch, Pham & Duong, and Wong in this issue) have sought to foreground the profound variabilities and redirection of ‘one size fits all’ discourses that Western approaches have tended to invoke.

These variabilities are part of a broader reorientation of the dynamic possibilities for organizing and understanding social life. An upsurge in demand for education in both developing and more developed countries, the rapid internationalization of education, and a stimulus in educational technology and workforce mobilization are all provoking new strategies and protocols in educational policy. As McCarthy et al. (2020) suggest, these are ‘twisting globalization’, as spaces of new colonialism are cultivated in educational institutions like the school, the museum and the city, reconfiguring education through neoliberal logics. As new forms of aspiration, planning and pedagogy are taking root and being directed toward new conceptions of social life, education is emerging as a marketplace where schools hold the key for access to a neoliberal knowledge economy.

In our Call for Papers for this special issue in June 2019, we discussed our aims to cultivate scholarship that takes up new perspectives on education in the tumult of particular contexts of global change. Only months later, we find ourselves grappling with an entirely different series of incredibly disorienting and seismic global transformations. The global COVID-19 pandemic has already begun to compel a worldwide conversation about reimagining schooling in the twenty-first century. More than that, it has laid bare once again the persistent racial, economic and social inequalities embedded in systems around the world. Tenuous, contested, contradictory and disjointed; these systems, their collisions, and the global reaching, socio-technical capacities they mobilize, mandate the need for continuous reassessment.

The essays

In revisiting the conditions that this stage of globalization is transmitting through borders and systems around the world, this Special Issue uses a polyfocal lens and introduces critical interpretive discussions based on localized, primarily qualitative inquiry from across multiple contexts in the world. Organized around three sections (‘Global flows: The changing global scene’, ‘Touching down: The global turn in education’, and ‘Futures: Embracing difference and capacities for becoming’), the articles form a discourse which critically analyzes important cornerstones with nuance and vigor.

Section 1: global flows: the changing global scene

This section takes the condition of dynamic circulation as a point of departure to discuss how actors strategize, respond, adapt or become inured to various global processes.

By analyzing a global think tank network in relation to China's Belt and Road Initiative, **Wong** interprets how certain discursive strategies, and the socio-technological affordances that give them power, work to articulate policies, materials, ideologies and world-imaginaries to signs and systems of social meaning. This article highlights the educational function of think tank knowledge production and media work, to suggest that developing infrastructural networks and impending changes to social life often require ideologically infused, discursive groundwork for them to be made intelligible in global, geopolitical contexts.

Miglani & Burch analyze the discursive work of two prominent educational philanthropies from India and the United States and explore the twinning of globalization and neoliberalism. Questioning the logic of conflating globalization with neoliberalism, they problematize the understanding of neoliberal globalization as replacing the 'state' with the 'market'.

Through a discussion of 'hospitality' in the sense used by Derrida, **Kirchgasler** invites the reader to explore the inside and outside of nation, belonging, subject and the (non) subject migrant in discourses of hospitality linked to globalization / cosmopolitanism/ civic citizenship, multiculturalism/ curriculum and educational policy. His paper invites us to look at migration education as it is articulated in real existing circumstances as in Sweden/OECD with a larger historical reflex back to the US. Working through a tension built up in early references to Derrida's exploration of 'hospitality', the paper places conceptual and critical policy pressure on what gets taken-for-granted in mainstream cosmopolitan curricular and educational discourses on inclusion and integration.

Moving in a different direction, **Pham & Duong** call into question the underlying agenda of developed countries' involvement in internationalization of education via the opening up of college-fair markets and student recruitment possibilities in developing societies. The paper explores the impact of globalization and its linkages to the international educational standard as represented by the Program of International Assessments (PISA). It shows how internationalization of education affects educational policy-making and system procedures in Vietnam in uneven and contradictory ways forcing teachers to grapple with the disconnect between expectations and ground realities of a post-colonial society transitioning from socialism to neoliberal capitalism.

Section 2: touching down: the global turn in education

This section foregrounds a set of essays that call empirically-based attention to situations of cross-pollination between globally oriented aspirations and pedagogies, on the one hand, and the specific contexts of localities where these imaginaries and practices take root, on the other. Education, though it might have developed as a national enterprise, is now at the intersection of these developing dynamics.

In a strongly grounded paper, **Thomas and Banki** move beyond theorizing towards an axiologically-driven exploration of what the incorporation of global perspectives into teacher' education entails in the current times. They present an analysis of how

globalization texts are actually deployed in teacher education, pointing to the infrequent use and integration of such texts in the lived curriculum. Thomas and Banki call attention, as well, to the existing high-handed treatment of diversity and cultural education within educational policy endeavors. Ultimately, they underscore the underlying weaknesses of teacher education efforts and the need for setting up ‘universal ethical-competencies’ as benchmarks for pedagogical practices.

On the other hand, **Robbie & Warren** adopt an out-of-the-box format, offering through verse, prose, and vignettes, a fresh and provocative integration of dramaturgical methods to teaching in a time of intensifying migration and pandemic-based trauma. Their essay identifies an underlying, but often unvoiced, tension that has come to societies in the Global South and North with the acceleration of the rhythm and pace of everyday life and the generalized disruption of a previous lifeworld as a consequence of globalization and neoliberalism. Education is a key flash point of this tension. The underlying privileging of utilitarianism has had the effect of blocking off creativity, experimentation and diversity that has come with the rising demographic mix in our education and societal contexts, and these authors propose art-based methods to bridge these emerging chasms.

Drawing on a multi-sited, cross-country (Australia and Canada) comparative case study, **Rezai-Rashti and Lingard** call attention to the unintended impact of high-stakes accountability testing on racial and ethnic minority high school students’ perspectives, educational experiences and futures. They insightfully explore how neoliberal accountability testing has, in effect, disabled a more rounded and thorough-going educational commitment to school youth, exacerbating real-existing class and race bias and inequality within schools.

Section 3: futures: embracing difference and capacities for becoming

Lastly, recognizing the always unfinished work of reassessing globalization, Section 3 treats unsettled points of contention and the realm of possibility that unfolds from within the many global articulations of persons, places, material and forms.

In a discerning study of the perspectives of a cross-disciplinary group of US students on global poverty, **Cai** writes on global poverty – a topic which is being debated widely across international development platforms and has the potential of moving to the center stage as soon as the world recalibrates itself in the face of popular demands for more equitable distribution of resources, social justice and poverty alleviation. The data from student interviews on a study abroad trip to India foreground the contradictions and variability in the students’ views and maturing understandings of global poverty.

Rozenfeld, Yemini, and Engel apply the notion of ‘alternative futures’ in globalization and education, focusing specifically on the intersection between religion and education. In an in-depth case-study, they delve into the organizational dynamics of an Israeli school (Ofek) catering to a closed-off, traditional Jewish religious community while also proactively embedding specific forms of internationalization. They analyze the conflicting rationales and agenda maintained by this school, to argue that the ideas of segregation, religion, and nationalism are nurtured through the hybridity of the networks of influence, custom-tailored by the school’s leadership.

The Special Issue concludes with a powerful and insightful contribution by **Krejsler** that speaks back to the collection of essays as a whole. **Krejsler** seeks to occupy that sweet space in curriculum and educational policy debates regarding globalization and diversity. The essay's focus is not on practical policy implementation as such but on a prior space – the space of policy vision grounded in a philosophical orientation derived from Deleuze and Guattari and their adherents' emphasis on nomadism and war machines as well as Hardt and Negri's multitude thesis. Drawing on frameworks derived from these, even as they mesh with a digitally perverse universe, the author builds out a theory of diversity that comes close to a plea for degrees of freedom, maneuverability and creativity as drivers of a new, invigorated, educational, pedagogical response to the increasingly blocked circumstances and constraining arrangements of a deeply instrumentalized educational life world.

The Special Issue ends here with this parting shot. Contributors collectively warn of the excessive populism and nationalism now serving politically narrowminded ends and the dangers that this presents to educators, particularly teachers working in the classroom. They have sought to chart a path that questions and moves beyond the intensification of instrumentalism and utilitarianism that dominates schooling in the extension of the neoliberal program throughout more and more of the educational arena across the globe. And through their theoretically and empirically rich analyses and insights, they seek to push our understanding of the past few decades of globalization towards a fuller evaluation of its complex impact on schooling and the great struggles of students and educators to navigate a path beyond its most constraining and damaging features.

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