Building Trust: Education in Global Perspective
Building Trust: Education in Global Perspective

Sonia Mehta

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Preface

PREFACE

Building Trust Through Education: A Global Perspective explores the role of education as a global phenomena within an interconnected and interdependent world. In this textbook, we cover the main tenets of several interrelated fields: globalization, international development and global education policy, all of which connect to a global perspective of education.

Each section of this textbook is designed so that it presents a contained learning module with follow-up questions and links for further exploration. Although there is a logic in the arrangement of the sections, they can be studied separately or in any order. You will find central text flanked by supplemental content and/or alternative representations that respond to or challenge the dominant discourses around main themes. These alternative representations are an acknowledgement of the many dimensions of any single theme. Occasionally, case studies have been added allowing the reader to further explore the issues and questions raised in the section.

- The first section explores the development of globalization. What exactly is globalization? What have been its positive and negative aspects? What tensions have been created? It is difficult to understand education in global perspective without first understanding the multi scalar, multifaceted effects of globalization.
- The second section focuses on education as a global phenomena: its role in international development, and the creation of a global education policy.
- The third section examines methods to analyze the complex and changing dynamics of education in a global perspective. It also presents some questions of ethics and trust, and the roles of teaching and learning within the context of globalization. We explore the question: what is the role of education when people and ideas become mobile, diversified, dangerous or contentious?
- The fourth section is a direct engagement with current issues, and extends the debates on education further into practical application. It challenges readers to use their knowledge to represent and re-imagine an education that is responsive to an interconnected and mutually dependent world. We ask how conflict, climate change, human rights, global citizenship and other such global movements may influence or be influenced by concepts of edu-
As you read this textbook, you will find various debates and theories represented in a variety of different ways: static and interactive text, video, graphics and images, and more. In the spirit of open educational resources, we encourage readers and users of this textbook to add similar multimodal and multimedia representations of the themes represented, as well as identify new themes. This underscores the premise that learning is a fluid, constantly changing, transformative process. Our goal in creating this textbook is to explore what education brings to a world in which knowledge is critical, connected and shared. It is our hope that the platform created here will continue to evolve and will be used by undergraduate students interested in exploring the field of education both locally and globally.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Chapter 1:
What is Globalization Anyway?

CHAPTER ONE SUMMARY

We begin our exploration of education in a global perspective with a discussion of globalization. First, we need to arrive at a common understanding of what globalization is. We will then briefly explore globalization’s historical development and its various conceptualizations.

1.1 Introducing Globalization
1.2 Globalization: Generative or Destructive?
1.3 Globalization: Definitions, Conceptualizations, and Perspectives
1.4 Glocalization: Global Meets Local (an infographic)
1.5 Chapter Summary
1.6 For Review

1.1 Introducing Globalization

Globalization is perhaps the most intensive and important phenomena of our time. It is frequently discussed by politicians, journalists, business leaders, and scholars, and the term is used world wide. So, what is globalization? Broadly speaking, globalization may be thought of as forces that connect people around the world in a network of relationships and interconnections. These forces include major world events, powerful global actors, worldwide economic movements, rapid international communication, and more. While most frequently thought of in terms of economics and trade relationships, globalization also includes the sharing, merging and morphing of cultures, ideas, and knowledge(s). Within our understanding of globalization we also acknowledge that a connected world is also an inter-
and statistics to show recovery/early warning infrastructure etc.

–Comparatively by global north and global south)

Climate change, for example, is a global phenomenon that illustrates how connected and unequally situated are the various regions of the world. There is international scientific consensus that climate change, caused by increased greenhouse gasses in the earth’s atmosphere has been accelerated by human activity, specifically the rapid industrialization of so-called developed countries. The growing concentration of these gasses are changing the earth’s atmosphere, causing climatic upheavals such as floods and famines such that this phenomena is seen as one of the most present and critical global environmental challenges of our time. The UN reports however, that “While climate change is a global phenomenon, its impact on countries and communities will be very different, with developing countries likely to be the most adversely affected because these countries do not have the resources to face the potentially devastating effects of climate change”. In effect, therefore, least industrialised countries (who have contributed the least to climate change) are the ones suffering the worst of its catastrophes. (ref: Dervis, Kemal: ‘Devastating For the World’s Poor.. UN Chronicle, United Nations Report).

1.2 Globalization: Generative or Destructive?

Globalization is seen as inevitable by many people; the result of advances in communication technology, the speed and efficiency of travel, the impetus of global economic growth, and the interaction of knowledge communities across the world. The speed and pervasiveness of globalization, however, has given rise to a range of community responses. Some embrace fast, transformative change, arguing that in a borderless world, where geographic and conceptual barriers don’t exist, the flow of ideas and people would stimulate exponential learning for the benefit of all. In this case globalization is seen as a positive force, a new era of open and connected social interaction, innovation and universal progress. To others, globalization is a negative uncontrolled force, bringing sweeping change too rapidly, disrupting ways of life and traditions. These groups see globalization as a destabilizing, risky force and want to stop the merging and integration of a borderless planet, arguing for more barriers between nations, people, cultures, and ideas. Most people fall somewhere along the spectrum between these extremes, arguing for managing the pace and consequences of globalization.

There are reasons for the polarization of responses to globalization and the degrees of contention around its negative or positive effects. In the last quarter century, the pace of change of globalization has grown exponentially. This has led to consequences that privilege some while victimizing others, of making life and prospects better for some people and worse for others. The historical process of globalization (examined later in more detail), set in motion the tools of liberal capitalism as the preferred methods of progress at the same time as the postwar push for modernization/development (also examined in greater detail later) was unfolding. Liberalism and free market principles led to the free flow of capital across the globe to a large extent, with nations opting to open their markets or close them down, and with
capitalism becoming synonymous with First World modernization. These activities, and this narrative of globalization was accelerated by technological breakthroughs that enabled faster transport, production-distribution mobility, and communication across the globe. This also established the global desire for modernization and industrialization (once called Development), making industrialized countries the standard to be followed in all ideas of progress, and overriding (arguably) many nation’s endogenous methods of progress and change. We will examine these issues as one of our global perspectives on education in the following chapters in greater detail.

### Definitions

**Endogenous change** = change that come from within, an organic process, not imposed from external agents.

**Exogenous** = change that comes from external forces

### 1.3 Globalization: definitions, conceptualizations and perspectives

It is difficult to pin down a single, precise definition of globalization because it has so many layers and dimensions. When you think of globalization, it is useful to think of it as a set of processes and forces that connect and affect people and their geo-social environments. It also involves an ongoing, continuous movement towards more interaction and interconnectedness. Definitions of globalization change depending on who is defining it and what epistemological positions they speak from. One reading of globalization traces world-wide connections to the Industrial Revolution in Europe. A very influential economist and philosopher, Adam Smith (‘The Wealth of Nations’, 1776) set the parameters for the free market (‘free market’ means the ability of the market to regulate itself and the quality of goods and services), signaling a shift away from old world mercantilism to production, distribution and innovation of trade between and among nations.

Scholars have studied globalization from many perspectives. The majority of this literature has taken an economic focus. This is not surprising, given the dominance of capitalism and Western civilization during the same period as the rise of global scholarship. This presents an incomplete picture of globalization. Capitalism requires constant growth and wealth production through the opening of new markets, exploiting and extracting resources, and oiling the machinery of supply and demand. Trade, then, became a principal driver of international encounters: Christopher Columbus’ arrival in the Americas while searching for spices in 1492, and Vasco da Gama’s arrival in Africa, also in 1492, which allowed the Portuguese to obtain a monopoly on the spice trade in Africa. Current
Europe.

1206
Spread of the Mongol Empire.
The Mongols began to establish one of the largest land empires in history which lasted from early 13th century to the mid 14th century. Pax Mongolia (Mongol Peace) was a time of great cultural expansion. A network of trade routes all around Asia and Europe were created leading to increasing communication between different regions and a blending of cultures. The fall of the Mongol empire beginning in the early 14th century was a result in disputes among Mongol leaders and the spreading of the bubonic plague which spread along the trade routes.

1439
Gutenberg’s movable type printing press.
While printing had been invented a long time before in China, most books were still copied out by hand in what was a painstaking and time-consuming process. Johannes economic thought is that the global economy really came into existence when markets could take advantage of cheap labor and means of production on a global scale. For example, while clothing might be manufactured in the United States from raw resources to final product, in the current world raw materials might come from India, production might happen in China (cheap labor), and the final product might be sold in the United States. This forces nations to compete with each other at all levels of the production process. This, in a nutshell, is the economic view of globalization.

There are many schools of thought that find an economic-specific exploration of globalization to be incomplete. As we have seen globalization involves far more than just economics. It affects and is affected by social, cultural, technological, and environmental developments that should not be analyzed from an economic perspective alone. Economics is a part of globalization, but only a part. In its broadest sense, globalization was set in motion many millennia ago, through migration patterns of humans on the move in search of food and better living conditions for themselves. As groups came together and organized themselves, they interacted with other groups—sometimes peacefully, sometimes violently. They created cultural connections through trade and commerce and the exchange of knowledge, scientific discoveries, spiritual inquiry, etc. Internationalism/cosmopolitanism and globalization and are very similar concepts and are often used interchangeably. It is useful here to understand these terms in order to better conceptualize globalization

**International? Global?**

Internationalism is the development of unilateral or multilateral relationships between nation-states. Globalization, which is supra-national (above or more-than national), involves more than just a uni-dimensional interaction between countries and goes beyond solely national concerns. For example, treaties between countries for specific purposes such as trade, worker or student exchanges, and so on may be seen as purposeful international relationships that are sought after and agreed upon by institutions and governments. Globalization goes beyond the security, trade, and diplomatic relations that typically define internationalism. A more unpredictable and unspecified, multidimensional process of relationships, it involves connections and interactions of ideas, and cultures, products and people, as well as the repercussions of these connections. Internationalism may indeed lead to globalization. For example, economic globalization involves the transition from independent national economies to an interdependent global economy, accomplished mainly through free trade and capital mobility, but also through open borders and the unobstructed migration of people.
Gutenberg’s innovation of the metal cast movable type printing press meant that books and other printed materials could be produced in greater numbers and more quickly and cheaply than ever before. This led to a huge social and cultural revolution that first impacted the European continent and eventually the world.

1896
First Modern Olympic Games.
The first modern Olympic Games took place in Athens, Greece, in April 1896. The goal of the games was to bring nations together despite political and cultural difference united by sports competition. In 1896, 241 athletes from 14 nations participated in 43 events. In recent Olympic Games, nearly 11,000 athletes from more than 200 countries have participated.

1945
United Nations’ charter signed.
A replacement for the ineffective League of Nations, the United Nations’ charter was

In this textbook, our focus is more on this supra-national, complex and multifaceted process of globalization.

While globalization as a concept has risen in public consciousness in recent decades, it has always existed. You might think of it as the consequence of events and processes that bring the world together in relationships that are both benign and contentious. Think of what might have happened when two different groups of early humans came across one another. There might have been conflict, where one group wanted the other’s territory; there might have been trade established between the two groups; there might have been an exchange of ideas that benefited both. Most likely all of these things happened. This meeting of two groups might be thought of as a catalyst event. Such events have ripple effects that spread over time and distance. While there might be immediate consequences (such as trade routes developing), other consequences might not become apparent for years or even generations. The effects of globalization have been and continue to be felt, by everyone.

As the world becomes even more connected, the speed of change becomes rapid and unpredictable. This leads to new combinations and concepts of ideas, races, ethnicities, and cultures. Even conceptions of the individual are rendered more complex by gender, sexual, ethnic, and racial considerations. There is a growing trend towards the recognition of and tolerance for diversity. International organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank were founded in order to address human rights and solve global issues. But now, interest is developing in the idea of a world civil society and world citizenship. International law is evolving to address global justice issues beyond national boundaries. However, tension also develops because of unpredictable change, fear of the loss of cultural cohesion, certainty, and traditional platforms of power.

Roland Robertson, who has been credited with the first most cohesive definition of globalization, suggests thinking about it in terms of a world that is increasingly compressed. In his 1992 work, Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture, Robertson is interested in the process by which we reach global consciousness. He defines globalization as “the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole” (Robertson, 1992). In other words, there is a growing intensification of awareness not just that we exist in an interconnected world, but also that we are aware of our co-dependencies with other nations, other species and global change beyond our immediate localities. Robertson is building on some of the ideas first introduced by mass media theorist Marshall McLuhan in his book, Understanding Media (1960). McLuhan discusses the creation of a global village with the world shrunk by modern advances in communications. In 1960, this meant television, radio, newspapers, etc.
McLuhan likens these communication systems to an extended central nervous system that links us collectively.

With the development of the internet, a new reality of connectedness has changed the way people around the world interact with one another. New realities through connections may also signal an emergent global consciousness which, in our historical moment may be conceptualized, among other attributes, as

- the ability to understand the complexities and patterns of connections between local, global, international and cross cultural events, systems, institutions, movements and actions.
- A curiosity and willingness to explore the new and unfamiliar and to learn from it; acknowledging the diversity of socio-economic and political power issues in communities and how they play out on a global stage, and finally,
- Ethical awareness and a growing (if changing) social responsibility towards people and communities beyond one’s own; as well as a growing consciousness of social justice issues that extend to the non-human, to concerns for a sustainable planet, and the ability to approach global issues with this consciousness. (ref: Marcelo Suarez-Orozco. (2007) Learning in the Global Era: International perspectives on globalization and education. To be added in refs/bibliography)

Globalization is about connection, sometimes negative, sometimes positive, often both. Any encounter leads to disruption and change, whether for better consequences or worse. In order to understand this further, let’s examine some of the driving forces that have brought us to our current phase of globalization. Remember that Robertson describes this as the uncertainty phrase.

1.3 (a) Globalization as social progression

The term globalization came into wide academic use after 1990 with the symbolic and physical fall of the Berlin Wall and consequent changes to the global world order. Political, economic, cultural, and technological changes have fueled the discussion amongst scholars about the rise of an interconnected, interdependent world. But globalization as a concept existed long before the term was coined. Roland Robertson (Robertson, R 1992. Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture. Sage Pub UK) theorizes globalization as a movement of society through certain phases. While this is an incomplete conceptualization, and is largely a eurocentric one, it is helpful for building our understanding of globalization.

The germinal phase (15th-16th centuries) features the increased role of the Catholic Church across borders, the movement from medieval systems of governance to the beginning of the concept of nations, and the cultural questioning of the concept of humanity. The adoption of the Gregorian calendar throughout Europe is the beginning of a ‘global’ concept of time.

The incipient phase (17th-19th centuries) includes the ascendance of nation-states and the development of formal international relationships. We see the rise of diplomacy and an infrastructure to
support it. Meanwhile, the Industrial Revolution and consequent industrialization causes a fundamental reworking of production and distribution methods.

**The take-off phase** (late 19th-mid-20th century) is the acceleration period where globalization processes are intensified. Nation-states have assumed primacy and jostle for power on the global stage. Engagement between nations takes many forms. Among these are a benign competition for national recognition demonstrated by such things as the Olympic Games and the Nobel Prize, and international conflict, as demonstrated by two world wars and the Cold War. We see the rise of concern for the global impact of events, such as genocide and the development of the atomic bomb.

**The uncertainty phase** is the present condition of globalization, featuring the rise of faster human connections made possible through technology. It is marked by the realization of the increasing fragility of all of humanity due to environmental degradation, climate change, depletion of natural resources, population explosions, unpredictable and uneven development, religious and civil conflict, and more. This realization has raised the awareness of a shared responsibility for the well-being and sustainability of the world.

1.3 (B) Globalization as process

Certain world events mobilized and gave impetus to the process of globalization. These events globalization processes unite the globe through the degree of their influences on the world stage:

**Colonialism**

*Colonization* refers to the spread of foreign populations across native territories. In other words, alien or foreign insertions into a cohesive, native system may take root and grow, sometimes taking over or replacing the native population. For example, the emerald ash borer arrived in the United States from eastern Asia and is destroying ash forests. *Colonialism* is a theory that explores the practice by which a foreign entity (or country) seeks to exert influence and control over a native population. The driving impetus for colonization is economic. The practice and the policies that come from it are designed to exploit native resources for the enrichment of the colonial or imperial power.

Colonialism, as we understand it in its social and historical sense, is the spread of western european people, systems, thought, manners, and social organization over many regions of the globe. There have been non-western colonizers too and space is opening up in which to have informed discussions about those. However, the current global discourse has largely been shaped by the effects of european colonization across the world and remains the centre of our study.

The global connections formed by colonialism were underscored by relationships of unequal power and control, and purposeful establishment of imperial supremacy over native populations. This relationship also created the conditions that made it possible for ideas of the Renaissance in Europe to spread around the world. In the same way, the industrial revolution brought new technologies to various parts of the globe, fundamentally changing the means of production of material and goods; as well as the patterns of life and work for most communities. Therefore, the concurrent effects of this relationship was to cement a dominance of exploitative power and control as well as the sharing of knowledge, culture
and technologies. Arguably, this process still exists, albeit as a morphed form, called neo-colonialism. Neo-colonialism is the continuation of the colonial enterprise of exerting control or influence for the sake of gaining and consolidating (and maintaining) wealth and power. Neo-colonialism is the practice of developed or rich countries exerting control over poorer or underdeveloped countries in patterns of dominating political or economic power. Colonizing entities now may take the shape of multinational companies, banks or other governmental (as well as governmental) groups who use economic, political or social pressures to exert their power and influence. Not all global entities are neo-colonial powers, it needs to be remembered, just those who have the specific mandate of self-enrichment through the exertion of power. Later in this book we will explore the concept and workings of power more extensively, generally and in particular case studies.

The Great Wars and their consequences:

Among the drivers of globalization is the era of the two great wars that engaged and affected almost the entire globe. World war I and II had a profound effect on connecting communities across the globe as well as changing a world order that existed until the disruption caused by the major wars. After each of the world wars, there were changes in the fabric of social life, a derangement and dissipation of communities, the use of science and information to advocate for ways of organizing societies and wealth (socialism/capitalism etc). Wide-spread and catastrophic loss of life and property led also to the need to rebuild and reconstruct economies. Perhaps most importantly, the recognition of the world as an interconnected, interdependent world became clearer, as conversations about rebuilding economies, reparations and support for the war-afflicted, disease-ridden and poverty stricken regions of the world became supra-national. The globe seen as ‘First World’ and ‘Third World’ came to be coined in this era, as were ideas of ‘development’ (ushering the ‘Third World into modernization) and progress for the betterment of all humanity.

Global institutions:

The postwar era saw the sudden rise of influential global organizations. Not only did the wars produce winners and losers politically, it also rendered some countries rich, while some remained or became poorer. Philanthropy became institutionalized as well as agencies that worked specifically towards stronger trade ties, peace and justice, social reform, as well as open-markets. This period saw the sudden and powerful rise of such institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and its many branches (such as UNESCO which deal with social and educational matters globally). We also see the rise of transnational and multinational companies and their growing influence. The discourse on education, social progress and justice in the rebuilding of nations is now intertwined with economics, minority rights, global politics and nationalism, as individuals and communities struggle to be heard and valued on the global stage.

Global Innovations in information and communication technologies

The internet and attendant communication platforms have perhaps been and still are, the fastest way to send information, news and opinions around the world, now at record speeds. Governments may try to restrict access to information; however, by and large, having a robust information infrastructure is seen to be a key factor in a nation’s ability to participate in the global economy. The world is now connected
through social media, email, elearning, electronic ‘Apps’ (applications) that have connected people and their ability to communicate across time and geographical space in an unprecedented network of relationships. This cyber connection is on-going, a process that is continuing and extremely powerful as a globalizing force.

1.3 (C) Globalization as ‘Scapes’

In contrast with Adam Smith and others, cultural theorist Arjun Appadurai (1990) turns away from the construct of the globalized world as binary poles (of rice/poor/Global North/South) that are separate, but as flows of influence that move between and within what he calls culture ‘scapes’. According to Appadurai, globalization can be conceptualized as five broad spaces that interact, overlap and influence each other:

1. **MediaScapes**: Global media platforms, as well as the internet construct this space, where news and information, as well as opinions and ‘fake’ information have come a long way from radio and television. These platforms are quickly changing and adapting to ‘demand’ of how news is conveyed and in fact, what is conveyed as long as there is an audience and consumer for it. Scholars of globalization think of ours as the Information Age, in process since the late 20th century, and characterized by an insatiable drive for information. Digital media and entertainment constitutes most time at work, learning and leisure across the globe.

2. **Technoscapes**: Technology connections cross borders easily and form communities in cyberspace that are as vibrant, active and flexible as any other population. We see evidence of a global economy here as well, with the ubiquity of Japanese and Chinese hardware, software designed in India for the world, and US companies like Apple forming a customized global market.

3. **Financescapes**: The movement of financial devices and platforms is also unprecedented. Cashless economies, the global nature of Visa and Mastercard, the connections made by banks and other financial institutions worldwide, ATM machines and other co-operative measures that remove the barriers to transferring finance across the globe, constitutes this ‘scape’.

4. **Ethnoscapes**: While there are communities that stay in one place for many generations, more than ever before, we see communities of people (migrants, refugees, tourists, scholars) move between cities, nations, and cultures. These populations, as groups and individuals, appear to influence politics and socio-cultural, blending and changing these relationships through their mobility.

5. **Ideoscapes**: ideas, symbols and narratives that sweep the world, are powerful and global in their influence. These ideas seize the imagination and lead to action, policy changes and shift global discourse. The Enlightenment is one such powerful ideoscape, as is democracy.
The Example of the Arab Spring:

A series of protests and popular uprisings against governments comes to mind. Social media is largely credited with the rise and significant impact of protest movements across the Arab world. Thus, social media (technology) became a force for social change globally.

It is important to remember that these spaces of thought and engagement overlap and intersect. The so-called ‘4th Industrial Revolution’ is another idea that is gaining ground. The 4IR is the idea that our technologies, media, the internet of everything etc., is changing the way we live our lives. It is, however, also seen as the next step for nations to become global players by investing in technological know-how, infrastructure and training. Another illustrative example is the Arab Spring, which in the end did not sustain but shows how these global culture flows occupied several ‘scapes’ and led to revolutionary action.

1.4 Glocalization: Global Meets Local (an infographic)

Glocalization is a term that combines ‘globalization’ and ‘local’ to indicate the hybrid nature of products that are distributed globally but have taken on specific local aspects in order to make them contextually sensitive. The global idea or design has been adapted to have both global and local attributes. This infographic is an example.
Glocalization: When Global meets Local

What is glocalization?

Glocalization is the practice of introducing a product or service using both local and global considerations with the assumption being that in a global marketplace success is more likely when it is customized for the local culture.

The term glocalization, popularized by Roland Robertson, combines the words globalization and localization.

Examples of Glocalization:

McDonald’s in India
The international fast food chain is a good example of the concept of glocalization. McDonald’s changes their restaurants’ menus to appeal to local tastes and customs. For example, in India, a country where the cow is...
1.5 Chapter Summary

In order to understand the complexity and pervasiveness of globalization, it is useful to have a general starting point of ideas, general meanings and notions that we can use to build up fundamental understandings of a phenomena that can be studied largely through the patterns of change it generates. In this way, one can begin to conceptualize this difficult, process-driven and constantly changing idea. It is important to resist thinking of globalization as a static state or a product, an end point, result or goal; but rather as movement. If we accept that globalization is the continuous process of bringing people, communities and ideas closer together, then we also understand that conceptualizing globalization may require a relearning and reexamination of the changes it brings.

1.6 For Review

1. What does globalization mean to you? (reflection)
2. Find illustrations of people or communities who have benefited from globalization and those who have not, explain why.
3. How can globalization be both a positive force for change as well as a negative one?
4. Why is Internationalism different from Globalism? How are they connected?
5. Find examples of Appadurai’s global cultural flows. How do they intersect?
6. Make a list of International/global institutions. What functions do they execute? Discuss their missions and mandates as instances of global consciousness.
7. How do you think learning has changed with access to the internet?

References


Media Attributions

- starbucks_infographic
Chapter 2:
Theories of Globalization and Their Impacts on Education

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Historically, the dominant discourse around globalization has been unidimensional, focusing solely on economics. More recently, a multidimensional discourse has emerged, focusing not only on economics, but also on social and cultural issues. In this chapter we discuss the theoretical filters that have been used to understand globalization, the consequent world views that affect policies and actions, and their impact on educational processes. The theories discussed here are Neoliberalism, World Systems, and World Culture and are chosen for their relevance to global issues in education.

2.1 What Do We Mean by Theory?
2.2 The Neoliberal perspective of Globalization
2.3 Neoliberalism’s effect on Education
2.4 World Systems perspective of Globalization
2.5 World Systems Effect on Education
2.6 World Culture perspective of Globalization
2.7 World Culture Effect on Education

2.1 What Do We Mean by Theory?

In education studies, a theory is an ideology that informs an individual’s view of the world, how it works, and how problems should be solved. Groups, political parties, governments, and other organizations may adopt and institutionalize a particular view of the world that is embedded in theory. Theories become
filters—rationales—that justify choices in how to address social issues such as poverty, climate change, and education. While there are many theories of globalization, in this chapter we will specifically look at theories that have had a significant impact on education policy and practice: neoliberalism, world systems, and world culture.

2.2 Globalization Through the Lens of Neoliberalism

While the term neoliberalism has been around since the 1930s, its use by scholars and popular media increased in the early 1980s. It was used to describe an ideology that developed around the economic policies and international relations advocated by President Ronald Reagan in the United States and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom.

Neoliberalism has its roots in the classic liberalism developed by economists and political thinkers like Adam Smith, John Locke, and Thomas Jefferson, who advocated for limited government, laissez-faire economics, and the Rights of Man (that government should exist to safeguard the inherent rights of its citizenry). This brought social concerns, like the dignity of the individual, to bear upon economic arguments. Neoliberalists, however, focus entirely on economics, advocating for the privatization of industry, fiscal austerity, deregulation, free trade, and reductions in government spending in order to enhance the role of the private sector in the economy. It is not that neoliberalists ignore social issues, but rather they believe economic mechanisms will address all social concerns. They argue that governments are inherently inefficient at creating sustained social and economic progress when compared with free markets. Government regulation and oversight of trade and fiscal policies simply interfere in the free market. Competition is the mechanism for progress in this economic approach to the world, and is the defining characteristic of human interaction. The market, driven by citizens/consumers, determines the value of systems and products, rewards wealth creation, and punishes inefficiency.

Neoliberalists promote all kinds of global competition, whether in markets, employment, technology, communications, the production of goods, or the availability of services. This supports their meta-narrative that more competition creates an equal playing field of opportunity.

The main points of neoliberalist thought are:

- **Freedom of the Market**: There should be unrestricted movement of money, goods, and services to markets, both local and international, and government should not impose any limits on private enterprise.

- **Limited Public Spending**: Government should not be responsible or pay for public and social services such as building roads, bridges, provide drinking water or fund education, health care, public libraries etc..

- **Deregulation**: Governments should withdraw all or most oversight of the market, because the market is believed to regulate itself, and all resources should be used to make profit

- **Privatization**: Public services should be given to private investors so that their capital value, or profitability, may be enhanced.
• **Rewarding individual responsibility over community engagement:** An important neoliberal value is the idea that all human beings can succeed if only they try hard enough. Therefore, if you have not succeeded in society, this is largely your responsibility.

• **A flat world of equal opportunity:** If markets are unrestricted, global flows of products, services and information allow enterprises to flourish anywhere and everywhere there are entrepreneurs willing to put their hard work and merit to use. This also means the best products, goods, and knowledge will emerge from such competition, a positive outcome for consumers everywhere.

An example of neoliberalist objections to governmental social programs: In order to pull back the country from the Great Depression, President Roosevelt instituted the New Deal for America, which included financial and banking reforms, and large public works programs designed to give people work and a living wage. Neoliberalists opposed this insertion of government into the market. In their view, these kinds of policies are responsible for the repeated periods of inflation and stagnation that have caused harm to the economy and to society.

If you would like to explore more:

Thomas Friedman connects these ideas with global flows of production, enterprise, and technology in his 2005 book *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*. He claims that the world has become flat because the speed and efficiency of communication, competition, and collaboration create a borderless world accessible to individuals or organizations willing to compete through application, hard work, enterprise, and innovation. Transnational corporations, for example, would be able to exist anywhere on earth with very little consideration for national borders.

### 2.3 Neoliberalism’s effect on Education

The key concepts of neoliberalism have affected global education in many ways.

Viewing education policy through the unidimensional lens of neoliberalism creates the need to find efficiency, best practices, and a continual effort to standardize education processes. On a global scale, when this neoliberalist view becomes the driving force behind change, education systems begin to converge and look the same, favoring standardization and competition. Education systems, even at the local level, tend to institute standardized tests, national achievement benchmarks, global education indices, and so on. This neoliberalist view ignores historically suppressed or marginalized communities and their knowledge systems, and consequently delegitimizes them on a global scale. It also has the effect of disengagement with, and devaluing, diversity or hybrid and multicultural representations of knowledge.

Neoliberalist influence may also be seen in movements to develop an open market for schools by
creating private schools or voucher systems (often referred to as school choice). This is frequently accomplished by making government educational funding portable—that is, allowing students to take government funds provided for education and use them to attend the school of their choice. Neoliberalists put forward that this approach to education creates a free market economy around education and will spur innovation and success in schools. Critics argue that this turns education into a commodity. While the idea of allowing educational choice sounds attractive, in practice this approach has led to significant loss of funding for public schools, funneling money towards private or for-profit schools. This emphasis on individualism favored by neoliberalists creates market competition for funding in education.

Furthermore, the neoliberal approach pressures the poorest students and schools in society to find their own solutions for structural social challenges imposed upon them. Thus, the successful (or rich, advantaged) schools are rewarded. One result is that money is siphoned away from weak and low-performing schools (primarily attended by low- and middle-income children) and towards wealthy, high-performing schools. This creates a vicious cycle of winners and losers in the educational landscape. The neoliberal approach to education is so deeply established idea of how the world works that it becomes a taken-for-granted assumption, or truth-claim: that there is the only way to maximize resources or be successful. This has been a trend for international monetary systems (like the world bank) as well as for donor countries who help fund and support education systems around the world. In the new millennium, however, neoliberalism has been questioned, causing many organizations to rethink their lending practices; however, neoliberalism is a very powerful set of entrenched values, and continues to be used.

ACTIVITY 1

Describe an example of neoliberal theory represented in an educational institution, idea, practice or group.

- Explain why you think this is a manifestation of neoliberalism.
- What do you see as positive (or generative) in this theory?
- What do you see as negative (or destructive) in this theory?

2.4 Globalization Through the Lens of World Systems

Another discourse around globalization, also focusing primarily on economic issues, is world systems theory. Unlike the market-driven, laissez faire neoliberalist view of globalization, which largely ignores existing power dynamics between nations, world systems takes into consideration the unequal relationship between the Global North and the Global South. The theory was developed most extensively by Immanuel Wallerstein in the 1970’s. Scholars using this theory reject the idea that globalization creates a common playing field of equal opportunities. Instead, they argue that globalization further empowers those already made powerful through historical and socio-political maneuvering.

In the world systems approach, the world is divided into regions: the core (rich and developed countries like the U. S. and Western Europe), the semi-periphery (semi-industrialized countries like Brazil and India), and the periphery (poor, often unstable and dependent countries, like much of Latin America and...
World systems developed out of the earlier dependency theory which became popular in the 1960s and 1970s. Dependency theorists argued that the world is starkly divided between the haves and have-nots. The core nations of the Global North intentionally caused peripheral nations to remain underdeveloped, keeping them in a state of dependency. This relationship of exploitation and dependency occurred historically through slavery and colonialism. World systems modified dependency theory by introducing the concept of the upward and downward economic mobility of nations. This system of dominance and dependency continues today through the Global North’s dominance of the international trading system, the practices of transnational companies, and the reliance on Western aid—which is sometimes referred to as neo-colonialism.

### 2.5 World Systems Theory Effect on Education

World Systems is still primarily an economic view of the world, with an attention to how power changes and controls the relationship between economies. In this, neo-marxist analysis of a global class system, scholars are interested in questioning the whole project of modernization as being essentially an unequal, exploitative one. In their view, there is a direct consequence of core countries using the resources, labour and knowledge capital of the periphery countries: education is in the service of the global economy, and as this global economic system expands, the required labour force is supplied by knowledge and skill coming from the semi-periphery and periphery countries as they seek to join the global economy. In the same way, cultural and economic dominance from the core means that education policy is also dictated by a particular group of countries. For example: western colonial education systems rooted in past power hierarchies would continue to operate in former colonial states, preventing or at least suppressing other kinds of education systems. World system theorists see this as neo-colonial ways of deploying education, where local elites take on the ed system, keeping colonial power structure intact even without de facto colonial rulers.

The World System theory allows for a sociological analysis of a class and capitalist analysis of education on a global scale. As such, it becomes an important theory because it also questions the whole project of development and global education policy that comes out of the push to modernize. To understand this, we will have to understand the education-development connection, which we do later as a separate section.
Describe an example of world systems theory represented in an educational institution, idea, practice or group.

- Explain why you think this is a manifestation of world systems.
- What do you see as positive (or generative) in this theory?
- What do you see as negative (or destructive) in this theory?

2.6 Globalization Through the Lens of World Culture

So far we have explored theories that examine globalization primarily as a set of economic processes. For example, globalization occurs through trade, the opening of markets, and the availability of goods and services across national borders. World culture goes beyond the economic explanations used by neoliberalism and world systems in order to provide a more complete picture of globalization. World culture theory takes into consideration other factors, beyond economics, that influence social behavior such as politics, social justice, conflicts, social media, migration, and more. As a theory, world culture is somewhat difficult to pin down, because it is still evolving.

World culture developed from 18th century western Enlightenment ideals, such as individual dignity and personal freedom, equality, and the use of scientific advancement to improve the human condition. The Enlightenment was also called the Age of Reason; the flowering of scientific exploration bred a culture of rationality. Rationality combined with Enlightenment ideals led to concepts such as global citizenship, universal human rights, education for all, international law, and global fair trade. At the same time there was an emphasis on economic development through the modes of capitalist production and distribution leading to the growth of wealth of individuals and nations. Progress was framed as modernization. The potent mix of capitalism, the push to modernization, and Enlightenment ideals drove western civilization’s expansion across the globe. There is a tension, however, between Enlightenment ideals, capitalism, and progress through modernization.

ACTIVITY 3

Reflect on what is meant by tension between capitalism and ideals of the Enlightenment.

Western civilization’s expansion had many consequences, among them the rise of events that affected the entire world. For example, wars between nations became global wars, organizations developed with international focus rather than national, and laws and standards were developed that were intended to apply to everyone. We went from the United States’ national Declaration of Independence to the international Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

World culture frames globalization as a process that changes social behaviour and creates a metaculture
that transcends local context. The process of globalization cultivates principles (ideologies, philosophies, meaning, values) that go beyond those that come from a local context within local histories. Culture is not bound by the norms and practices of localities alone, as they once may have been. This world culture comes from an awareness of, and response to, a connected global society where the world is perceived as one single space, although containing a multiplicity of forms, representations, identities and practices. This theory echoes Roland Robertson, introduced in chapter one, who described globalization as, “Both…the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole.” [Cite: see global culture, nationalism, globalization and modernity, M. Fatherstone, 2002]. World culture theorists argue that no matter what local culture you come from, you are still exposed to and impacted by a larger, overarching world culture.

Globalization leads to changes in ontology (ways of being) as well as epistemology (ways of learning) on both local and global levels. How you live or behave in the world is different and how you might learn is different because of global contexts. For example, people recycle their local trash, motivated by their understanding of global environmental degradation. The context, or reference points for social behaviour is now beyond borders, and is the outcome of forces that bring individuals and communities in contact with each other. Thus, world culture, as an interpretation of globalization, focuses on the way in which people become conscious of, and find meaning in an interdependent world. Keep in mind, however, that this meta, or overarching culture, not only affects local culture but is itself affected by local cultures.

The Concept of Convergence

A tenant of world culture is the concept of convergence. Metaculture encourages the growth of collective consciousness — our awareness of and connection to each other. This leads to the spreading of common values and a gradual homogenization of language, policy, standards, methods, and more. Convergence describes the growing similarities and commonalities of certain aspects of human interaction and activity. An example of this is the homogenization of language in the global sphere: an engineer in New Delhi will likely use English when he communicates with his counterpart in Vietnam. Thus, the English language is becoming even more of a global, mainstream language. At the same time, English itself is changing to serve a global purpose. In another example, doctors from various parts of the world working to solve a global epidemic develop standardized systems of care, as well as more efficient ways to communicate with one another. This is a homogenization of methods (or actions).

There has been much debate about world culture’s process of convergence. There is an understandable fear that local culture is usurped or destroyed by a more pervasive overarching metaculture. This has led to a backlash and attempts to preserve, protect and isolate cultural practices against influences of globalization. Featherstone (2002), however, describes convergence as the development of a truly shared culture rather than the dominance of one culture over another. He argues, while convergence leads to common forms of expression, it is debatable whether this leads to common ways of thinking. We will examine this issue later and in more depth. Let us proceed now to discuss world culture theory’s effect on education in global perspective.
2.7 World Culture Theory Effect on Education

World culture is one of the dominant theories by which to understand the continuing interconnectedness of the world, and education in global perspective.

Firstly, the theory is of particular interest to global education scholars because it brings a multidisciplinary approach to globalization, and examines how education is thought about, constructed and implemented within the larger influences of globalization in regions around the world.

Secondly, the underlying narrative of world culture is that science can be deployed in the uplifting of human dignity, improving the quality of life for all people, everywhere, that all humans are equally deserving of this upliftment. Flowing from these Enlightenment values, the world came together (through the League of Nations, after WWII) in 1945 to articulate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Within this sweeping declaration, two fundamental human rights were embraced: 1) the right to education and 2) the right to development. Governments the world over took these to be imperatives that became development goals and frameworks for expanding their numbers of educated citizens. Indeed, education was seen as the primary and critical base required for a nation to accelerate socioeconomic development on the way to becoming modern societies and political players on the global stage. The idea of progress and justice is deeply entrenched in education: education for all enables society to progress. Justice is also served when the benefits of a modern society is distributed to its citizens equitably, so that all enjoy those advantages towards further personal fulfillment.

Perhaps we take the right to education for granted, but in fact, the declaration of universal human rights was a fundamental shift in the way education was managed in a pre-war environment. In many regions of the world, education was a privilege earned by birth, merit or status, not a clear right given to all. For example, in colonized nations, education was deployed in the use of empire building and citizens were educated on the basis of how well they could serve this (empire building) purpose. In a more extreme view, Eugenics also played a role in planned, genetic selection of who should receive the benefits, and could add to the prosperity of a nation; and therefore who was ‘worthy’ of quality education.

Thirdly, global education experts (such as comparative education scholars, international development professionals etc.,) identify world culture as having given rise to ‘carriers’ of the message of progress and justice. According to them, there are 4 carriers of world culture in the global environment of education:

- The global discourse of education
- International organizations
- Global education professionals (global epistemic-or learning, scholarly-communities such as professors, researchers, consultants of education on a global scale)
- Major international conferences, contracts between nations and global declarations, treaties or pacts (such as The Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All conference)

These carriers form the bedrock from which global education policy is constructed and conducted, putting an educated citizenry as central to social progress and justice, a globally desirable requirement.

Global Educators also pay attention to the idea of convergence or isomorphism that is part of world cul-
ture outcomes. Isomorphism has special consequences for education studies. Iso (the same) morphism (to change, to take shape or form) refers to the process of convergence by which the representation and meaning of something begins to look similar and have similar patterns, have increasingly similar reference points, and use the same language across many different contexts. This has many implications for global and local education policies and for education standards. For example, a certain standard of achievement, success or progress may be adhered to when policies are written to improve a country’s education system. This may prove problematic if the meaning of progress is rooted in the wrong context or is deployed for the wrong audience. We will explore this further in upcoming chapters. As we all come together, engage with one another and form patterns of relationships, we begin to develop common, standardized ways of communication and shared value systems. For example, the diverse, regional meanings of human rights converge, through global discussion and the concern for action, to create a more standardized or universally accepted meaning (of human rights in this case) that then can be used to develop plans of action or policy.

Scholars (such as C. Chabott (2003) and others- cite please) point out that world culture exists because of a global narrative that gained prominence because of the spread of colonial, conquering powers originating from Europe. Thus, world culture is arguably largely a foil for western enlightenment values and not necessarily the combination of many, diverse cultures connecting on an equal footing.

ACTIVITY 4

Describe an example of world culture represented in an educational institution, idea, practice or group.

- Explain why you think this is a manifestation of world culture.
- What do you see as positive (or generative) in this theory?
- What do you see as negative (or destructive) in this theory?