

Introduction

The impact of globalization on education has been profound and overwhelming (Dale & Robertson, 2003; Spring, 2008, 2009). Globalization joins such earlier concepts as industrialization, urbanization, and modernization. Like its predecessors, globalization has created tensions among opposing interest groups (Antikainen et al. 2011; Burbules & Torres 2000; Dworkin et al., 2013; Spring, 2008, 2009; Torres & Teodoro, 2007). The term was originally attributed to Theodore Levitt (1983) in his Harvard Business Review article, “The Globalization of Markets”. In Leavitt’s usage globalization referred to the consequences of new communication technologies that have had the effect of homogenizing the world and creating global corporations to replace multi-national corporations. Such global corporations are not concerned with local issues or local demands, but find it preferable and more cost-efficient to create global demands for identical products. George Ritzer, in *The McDonaldization of Society* (1993 through the fifth edition in 2008), sees globalization as the homogenization of culture and identities around the metaphor of the fast-food chain, whereby efficiency, speed of production and delivery, predictability of product, the deskilling of workers through technology, and the dehumanizing of the society are all central components. For Robertson and Habib (1998), globalization depicts the process of an accelerating compression of “reality” into a singularity of consciousness and identity such that our own biographies and even such demographic characteristics as race and gender become less relevant. Instead, we all belong to a common, globalized culture. Globalization often results in multi-national corporations, as well as the richest and most powerful nations, seeking to dominate markets, customers, clients, workers, and

other nations in order to maximize their own profits and enhance predictability, thereby reducing risks associated with investments. Privileged nations, as well as intergovernmental organizations, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) impose homogeneous and Western models of development and educational standards on developing and dependent nations. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and multinational proprietary organizations (many of whom develop tests, textbooks, and curricular materials to be sold worldwide) further promote educational products that homogenize education, almost always along a Western model (Ball, 2003). Inherent in a globalized education system is the mandate to demonstrate the effectiveness of teaching and learning practices. Globalization arose out of a business model which is based upon efficiency and effectiveness, which is driven by reliable and equivalent data. When globalization is applied to education it too demands accessible measures of successful outcomes. Optimally, these measures should be interpretable and comparable across all educational settings and across societies.

Neoliberalism and The Standards-Based School Accountability Movement

While globalization encompasses many elements, we want to focus on an element that is often troubling and fraught with unanticipated consequences in education. In a globalized economy, the desired labor force is not restricted to regions or even nations/states. Corporations can select employees from any part of the globe, and select on the basis of easily identifiable evidence of labor