

Introduction

In a competitive global world and at a time of nascent knowledge society (that is a society where the axial principle of the economy is the production of knowledge), education assumes an importance bigger than ever before. As no education system can be better than its teachers corps, the same could be said of teachers and, ipso facto, of teacher education. It is therefore not inexplicable that teacher education reform is on the agenda in virtually every country in the world. Facing to a large extent similar challenges, the countries can learn much from each other, benefit from other countries' experience with teacher education reform.

The problem with cross-national educational transfer today, as it has always been, is that policy makers tend to invoke (real or fabricated) foreign practices in an attempt to lend credibility to pre conceived ideas (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2007; Steiner-Khamsi, 2010); instead of working around the other way. Rectifying this, in the field of teacher education, a first step would be to explicate the global panorama of teacher education reform. The aim of this article is to survey global patterns in higher education, and to determine the effect of globalization, widely taken to be the prime force shaping societies world wide today.

After clarifying the concept of globalization, and how studies in the field of Education presents the force of globalization and its effect on education, the article surveys the various issues in teacher education world-wide, which the author identified in his work as co-editor of the volume *International Handbook on Teacher Education World Wide* (Karras & Wolhuter, 2010). The second part turns to salient worldwide societal trends at the beginning of the twentieth century. In conclusion, the promise of Comparative Education

research, in guiding and facilitating these reform processes in an age of globalization are then suggested.

Globalization and Education

The term “globalization” was originally used to describe economic developments at the world level, specifically, scholars invoked the concept in reference to the process of global economic integration and the seemingly inexorable movement toward a single economy in the world (Clayton, 2004). Beyond economic inquiry, the globalization concept has proved useful in exploring other recent world-level processes and developments, such as the world-wide communication information network and the resultant cultural and political integration. In recent years, globalization has become a focal point or a buzz word among Education scholars (Wolhuter, 2008, 2011).

In presenting globalization vis-à-vis education, scholars of Education are taking a variety of stances. These could be classified along two dimensions: views on the effect of globalization on education, and an evaluation of these effects. Views on the effect of globalization on education range from scholars contending that globalization is a force of inexorable isomorphism (i.e. obliterating any effects of national context and/or policy, and creating a uniform education system world wide) (Boli, Ramirez, & Meyer, 1985) to scholars expressing caution that the persistent force of national/local context and/or policy should not be discounted (Palomba, 2008). In between are those scholars who are of the view that national context will co-determine how processes of globalization find expression within particular national settings (Schriewer, 2000). The title of the publication *Comparative Education: The dialectic of the global and the local* (Arnove & Torres, 1999) suggests that global en local/national forces will be in a dialectical process, producing each