

Fundamentals of the Development of Ideological Education in Students in the Context of Globalization

Eshnazarov Murod Karimovich

Lecturer, Termez state university

Abstract

A major aim of this article is to present a global overview of developments in education and policy change during the last decade. By examining some of the major education policy issues, particularly in the light of recent shifts in education and policy research, the editors aim to provide a comprehensive picture of the intersecting and diverse discourses of globalisation, education and policy-driven reforms. The impact of globalisation on education policy and reforms is a strategically significant issue for us all. More than ever before, there is a need to understand and analyse both the intended and the unintended effects of globalisation on economic competitiveness, educational systems, the state, and relevant policy changes – all as they affect individuals, educational bodies (such as universities), policy-makers, and powerful corporate organisations across the globe. The evolving and constantly changing notions of national identity, language, border politics and citizenship which are relevant to education policy need to be critiqued by appeal to context-specific factors such as local-regional-national areas, which sit uncomfortably at times with the international imperatives of globalisation. Current education policy research reflects a rapidly changing world where citizens and consumers are experiencing a growing sense of uncertainty, and loss of flexibility; yet globalisation exposes us also to opportunities generated by a fast changing world economy.

Keywords: global, regional, analyse, evolve, change

The perception of education policy research and globalisation as dynamic and multi-faceted processes clearly necessitates a multiple-perspective approach in the study of education and this book provides that perspective commendably. In the book, the authors, who come from diverse backgrounds and regions, attempt insightfully to provide a worldview of significant developments in education and policy research. They report on education policy and reforms in such countries as India, China, Japan, Nigeria, Brazil, Canada, UK, USA, Australia and elsewhere. Understanding the interaction between education and globalisation forces us to learn more about the similarities and differences in education policy research and associated reforms in the local-regional-national context, as well as the global one. This inevitably results in a deeper understanding and analysis of the globalisation and education Zeitgeist. Clearly, the emerging phenomena associated with globalisation have in different ways affected current developments in education and policy. First, globalisation of policy, trade and finance has profound implications for education and reform implementation. On the one hand, the periodic economic crises coupled with the prioritised policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (e.g., SAPs) have seriously affected some developing nations and transitional economies in delivering basic education for all. When the poor are unable to feed their children what expectations can we have that the children will attend school? The provision of proper education in a global world seems at risk. This is particularly so in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Asia, Central Asian Republics (former member states of the

USSR), South East Asia, and elsewhere, where children (and girls in particular, as in the case of Afghanistan, Tajikistan and rural India) are forced to stay at home to help and work for their parents; they cannot attend school. Second, the policies of the Organisation for Economic and Cooperative Development (OECD), UNESCO, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) operate as powerful forces, which, as supranational organisations, shape and influence education and policy, and deny the access of the less privileged to the assumed advantages of an expanding global society. One might well ask what are the corporate organisations doing to enhance intercultural sensitivity, flexibility and mutual understanding, and are those excluded by the demise of democratic processes able to work together for the common good? It has also been argued that in the domains of language, policy, education and national identity, nation-states are likely to lose their capacity to tangibly control or affect their future directions. Their struggle for knowledge domination, production and dissemination becomes a new form of knowledge, occurring as it does amidst Wilson's "white heat of technological change". I believe it is likely to have profound and wide-ranging implications for the future of education policy and reforms globally, in the conception, planning and educational outcomes of "communities of learning". The community-of-learning metaphor reflects the knowledge society, and offers us a worthy insight into the way individuals and formal organisations acquire the necessary wisdom, values and skills in order to adapt and respond to change in these turbulent and conflict-ridden times. The authors thoughtfully explore the complex nexus between globalisation, democracy and education – where, on the one hand, democratisation and progressive education is equated with equality, inclusion, equity, tolerance and human rights, while on the other hand globalisation is perceived (by some critics at least) to be a totalising force that is widening the gap between the rich and the poor, and bringing domination and control by corporate bodies and powerful organisations. The authors further compel us to explore critically the new challenges confronting the world in the provision of authentic democracy, social justice, and cross-cultural values that promote more positive ways of thinking. In this volume, the editors and authors jointly recognise the need for genuine and profound changes in education and society. They argue for education policy goals and challenges confronting the global village, which I think are critically important. Drawing extensively and in depth, on educational systems, reforms and policy analysis, both the authors and editors of this book focus our attention on the crucial issues and policy decisions that must be addressed if genuine learning, characterised by wisdom, compassion, and intercultural understanding, is to become a reality, rather than rhetoric.

The mean expenditure on education in the OECD countries in the 1990s was 5.7% (the highest was Denmark – 7.2%, and Australia, surprisingly, was below the mean). The 2002 indicators show that the country mean of expenditure on tertiary education the OECD countries was just under 1.5% of GDP, with Australia spending under one percent. It was behind 20 countries, and significantly behind Sweden (almost double), Denmark, Canada and Finland (the highest). There appeared to be a considerable variation in spending per student. Austria and Australia, although with similar spending on education, tended to spend "very different proportions of their GDP per capita per student" (p. 61). In Austria, the proportion of income spent per primary student was 26 percent, whereas in Australia it was 16 percent, which is below the OECD average. The highest percentage of population that had completed at least upper secondary education in 1999 was in the USA and Norway (87% and 85% respectively). The performance ranking of countries by annual expenditure per student was affected by institutional differences, especially the way relevant Ministries of Education define full-time and part-time students. The average expenditure on education in 1998 in the OECD countries per student (in US dollars) was \$3,940 for primary, \$5,294 for secondary and \$9,063 for tertiary level (p. 67). In USA, \$6,043 per student was spent on primary, \$7,764 for

secondary, and \$19,802 for tertiary level. Access and equity continue to be “enduring concerns” in education (p. 26). A significant gap in access to early childhood education is documented in about half of the OECD countries. We learn that in some countries, fewer than half of children participate in the pre-school sector, ranging from over 90% in France to less than 5% in Turkey, with Australia (under 30%) in the nineteenth place (p. 46). Those who eventually complete secondary education have very different literacy levels, ranging from 10% to 60%. Finland had the highest literacy scores and the lowest under-achievement rate (10%), where as the United States and Poland had the lowest mean literacy rates (under 30%) and the highest under-achievement rates (60% and 50% respectively). The United States, with one of the highest upper secondary completion rates, has the ‘second lowest mean literacy score’ (OECD, 2001. Education Policy Analysis p. 50). Obviously some countries face serious challenges to ‘raise or sustain participation rates’ and to improve the ‘quality of outcomes’ (p. 49).

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