



VOLUME 5 ISSUE 2

The Global Studies Journal

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Education

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THE GLOBAL STUDIES JOURNAL

<http://onglobalisation.com/>

First published in 2013 in Champaign, Illinois, USA
by Common Ground Publishing
University of Illinois Research Park
2001 South First St, Suite 202
Champaign, IL 61820 USA

www.CommonGroundPublishing.com

ISSN: 1835-4432

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The Global Studies Journal is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal.

Typeset in CGScholar.
<http://www.commongroundpublishing.com/software/>

Package, Seal, and Sell: Global Flows and Transformations in Teacher Education

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Abstract: During the second half of the twentieth century, teacher education was seen primarily as the responsibility of the nation state because it was an integral part of preparing national citizens. The role of teacher education was to prepare preservice teachers to pass on to the next generation national culture and traditions, as well as the skills and knowledge necessary for fulfilling different roles in the national society. However, with the increased influences of economic and cultural globalization, the notion of the nation state and its functions has been re-framed. If the nation state is rescaled due to the increased influence of transnational organizations and its functions are curbed to ensure the existence of free and unfettered markets, what role can and should it play in shaping education and teacher education? If globalization has contributed to the creation of a “borderless” world, then what kind of preparation should teachers receive? What cultures and what traditions should be passed on in the world dominated by discourses of competitiveness and global markets? Finally, with the increasing role of international comparisons and the growing rate of transferred educational reforms and models, what cultures and what traditions end up being taught in the teacher education programs? This paper examines how globalization has affected teacher education around the world. First, it analyzes research on the impact of the Bologna process on teacher education programs in several European countries. Second, it examines the neoliberal discourses on teacher education reforms in the US and in Russia. Third, it traces exports of teacher education programs from high achieving nations to several regions around the world in the last twenty years. Overall, this paper problematizes the de-professionalization, commodification, and de-culturalization of teacher education under the influence of global neoliberalism.

Keywords: Globalization, Teacher Education, Neoliberalism, Educational Reform, Global Discourses

Michael J. Sandel, an American political philosopher, critiqued the deep penetration of market values into all spheres of social life, claiming that society has been turned into a market. He argued that the difference between a market economy and a market society lies in the following:

A market economy is a tool—a valuable and effective tool—for organizing productive activity. A market society is a way of life in which market values seep into every aspect of human endeavor. It’s a place where social relations are made over in the image of the market. (Sandel 2012)

Economic priorities captured in the notions of global competitiveness have had a profound impact on re-defining education. Subsequently, they began to transform teacher education, as Sandel suggested, “in the image of the market”: the area that has traditionally functioned according to the purposes of social cohesion and cultural tradition is now being redesigned according to economic principles and industrial formulas. The paradox of this re-conceptualization

is that while at the rhetorical level connections are made between the knowledge economy, economic prosperity, and education, the application of market mechanisms and neoliberal policies contributes to the de-professionalization, commodification, and deculturalization of teacher education. I believe that it is important to examine this paradox because as a future-oriented project, teacher education has important consequences for the well-being of societies. Applying untested measures to reform this project under global pressures can lead to unforeseeable results. In this paper, I present a synthesis of primary and secondary documents and analyze three processes of global or transnational scope that are affecting teacher education programs in various locales and are transforming the notions of teaching and teacher education “in the image of the market.”

Conceptual Frameworks

Research in comparative education has for the most part been rooted in the traditions of methodological nationalism – an approach in which “social scientists in doing research or theorizing take it for granted that society is equated with national society” (Beck and Sznajder 2006, p. 2). For example, through a study of elementary education in five nations, Alexander (2001) argued that educational systems and the pedagogy that shapes them stem from their cultural contexts bound by national borders. Based on an extensive comparative historical study of six nations, Cummings (2003) suggested that there are six institutional trajectories that educational systems around the world follow. He used the notion of “ideal person” to explain why different nations have designed their education according to different models and have followed different paths of reforms. Tatto (2007) applied Cummings’ framework to the study of teaching and teacher education in several countries around the world and suggested that there may be a re-orientation of national systems towards a global ideal of an ideal person. Milojević (2005) extended this argument by suggesting that it is the vision of the future in addition to the notion of the ideal person that defines the education policies of the present.

To counteract the research paradigms that hold up the nation-state as the focal point in the study of globalization, Appadurai (1996, 2000) promoted a focus on interconnectedness and interrelatedness of various groups and social movements mediated through various dimensions of globalization. In his theory, globalization is “a world of disjunctive flows” that “produces problems that manifest themselves in intensely local forms but have contexts that are anything but local” (Appadurai 2000, p. 6). His framework is helpful for the analysis of phenomena that may seem unrelated at first glance but are interconnected through the *imaginary* of the knowledge economy and global competitiveness. One of the dimensions of globalization that is particularly relevant for the study of education is the construct of *ideoscapes*, or “concatenations of images, [that] are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counterideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power or a piece of it” (Appadurai 1996, p. 36).

In comparative education research, Carney (2009) used the notion of an ideoscape to develop the construct of a *policyscape* to analyze disjointed yet deeply interconnected educational phenomena in Denmark, Nepal, and China. The underlying features that connect the processes that unfold in tertiary, elementary, and community-based educational programs in these disparate countries are the ideologies of neoliberalism and liberalism. It is the ideology of neoliberalism that promotes market values in traditionally public enterprises, with the state acquiring the responsibility for protecting the market, rather than guaranteeing citizens’ rights by providing them with services. Carney (2009) used these two ideologies as the background to demonstrate how powerful actors have articulated global visions and have undertaken steps to transform educational programs and institutions to align them closer to the “international” best practices. In response, everyday participants of these programs have resisted and reinterpreted global ideologies and appealed to “international” best practices to promote their own agendas.

Unlike much of the scholarly literature on teacher education that focuses on case studies bounded by institutions or nation-states, I draw on these conceptual frameworks to analyze several transnational processes that are transforming teacher education programs in different locales around the world. Despite the surface differences among these processes, they constitute a part of a common neoliberal agenda that re-defines the professional preparation of teachers and introduces a market logic to an enterprise that has been historically viewed as a task of high cultural, moral, spiritual, and civil value. The examination of these processes is important in order to consider how the contradictory policy discourses are interpreted by various actors and how today's policies may affect the lives of various societies tomorrow (Milojevic 2005).

Package: Transnational Influences and the Bologna Process

Initiated by the Bologna Agreement in 1999, the Bologna Process is a set of higher education reforms aimed at increasing Europe's competitiveness and building its knowledge economy (European Ministers of Education 1999). It has transformed higher education institutions in forty-four participating countries towards the Anglo-Saxon model by introducing two tiers of higher education degrees and credit units to measure the learning process. Discourses surrounding the Bologna Process bifurcate along ideological lines. The official reports issued by the European Commission often refer to the process as harmonization (European Commission 2010) and argue for the intensification of the Process to accomplish its constantly shifting and expanding objectives. In contrast to the official discourses, some scholars treat it as the process of convergence or standardization that is creating a unified system built on capitalist and neoliberal principles (Paraskeva 2010). In this line of research, the term *standardization* carries a negative connotation because it reveals the elimination of diversity and national and institutional autonomy, whereas the application of capitalist and neoliberal principles is perceived as a threat to intellectual freedom and cultural distinctness of academic institutions (Jessop, Fairclough, and Wodak 2008).

Analyses of the impact of the Bologna Process on teacher education can also be divided into two different categories. The official perspective carries the justification and the laudatory analysis of the advantages of the Bologna Process for teacher education programs. For example, drawing on the principles of universalism and the imaginary of the global economy, Pavel Zgaga, a former minister of education in Slovenia, argued for the advantages of the Bologna Process for teacher education in a collection of essays on *Teacher Education Policy in Europe Network*:

In the modern period, the specific troubles people can encounter as they try e. g. [sic] to gain recognition of their qualifications in another system have provided ample evidence that the *national character of education systems* in principle contradicts the '*universal character of human knowledge*, understanding and skills. On the other hand, today it seems that it also contradicts the '*global character of the economy*. (Zgaga 2008, 18) [emphasis in the original]

This quote demonstrates the shifting scales of the national agendas that become surpassed by the priorities of the global economy. It also reveals the localization of national approaches that occurs through the appeal to the universal nature of knowledge and through blaming "national" educational systems for limiting people's ability to be mobile. With this justification as the underlying framework of his argument, Zgaga proceeded to state that the Bologna Process has contributed to the professionalization of teacher education by requiring that all professional preparation should be conducted in universities. According to Zgaga, an additional benefit that the Bologna Process brings to teacher education is standardization in credit requirements and in setting benchmarks for degrees at different levels.

The unofficial perspective represented by scholarship examining the impact of the Bologna Process on various national teacher education programs has not concurred with Zgaga's positive assessment. In contradiction to Zgaga's praise, two problems have been identified by education scholars in different contexts: increased professionalization has eliminated the diversity of professional paths, and the standardization of credit requirements has contributed to the decrease in teacher preparation quality.

The first problem, discussed by scholars from Germany, Russia, Romania, and Portugal, is the elimination of diversity in educational and professional paths. In the case of Germany, Blomeke (2006) demonstrated that while the previous system allowed greater flexibility in students' development of their individual educational trajectories, the standardization of degree requirements has led to the creation of more uniform paths that pre-service teachers have to follow. This unification has eliminated the subjects that are not directly related to school practices, such as philosophy or history, from teacher education curriculum. The Bologna Process contributed to the narrowing of teacher education curriculum towards more "'useful' knowledge and efficacy" (Blomeke 2006, p. 322).

Similarly to German teacher education, in Russia the introduction of the Bologna Process has led to an increased pragmatic approach to teacher preparation, with the removal of subjects of less immediate relevance to pre-service teachers' specializations. For example, in foreign language teacher preparation, foreign literature was a prominent course that was seen by many instructors as "spiritual elevation" for the students: through the exposure to foreign cultures, students learned about the value and moral systems of their own and other cultures (Kostina 2007). With the introduction of the Bologna Process, this class became peripheral, either completely removed from some of the curricula or turned into a short optional course. This transformation begs a question: is increased pragmatic orientation synonymous with increased professionalization? Can more competent experts be created with reduced curricula?

One of the widely debated aspects of increased professionalization was elimination of diversity in professional paths. Trubina (2005), in her analysis of the transformations in the educational systems initiated by the Bologna Process, argued that the flexibility of the multi-path professional preparation should not be eliminated in the process of standardization. A flexible system of multiple paths into teaching was developed to address the needs of a profession where different types of teaching jobs require different levels of professional preparation. For example, primary school or kindergarten teachers were traditionally trained in pedagogical colleges, whereas middle school or high school teachers received education in pedagogical institutes or universities. Multiple paths allowed for high flexibility and high adaptability of a stable system, in which innovation and experimentation occurred in well-defined environments.

Addressing a similar concern about the preparation of primary school and kindergarten teachers in Romania, Monalescu (2006) argued that a move from pedagogical high schools or colleges to university-level programs has been problematic for the identities of teacher education departments. The identity crisis has come from the change in responsibilities placed on teacher education programs: instead of carrying responsibilities for future teachers' psycho-pedagogical development, they now train teachers for "a socio-educational and managerial dimension" (Manolescu 2006, 86).

In Portugal, the upgrade of teacher education to university status contributed to the professionalization of teacher education, but not without negative side-effects (Flores 2011). Integrating teacher education programs into universities has reduced the quality of teacher preparation because it led to the separation of the study of academic subjects from the study of teaching methodologies and professional practice. As a result of this curricular change, pre-service teachers are less prepared for work in school contexts.

The second problem of the changes in the credit hour requirements is much more important in the context of the knowledge economy *imaginary*. The standardization of credit hour requirements, for example that a bachelor's degree cannot take more than 300 credit hours and cannot

take longer than four years, leads to the decrease in the number of subject knowledge courses. In the countries where teachers at the secondary level were prepared as subject disciplinarians, this change is seen as the decrease in the quality of teacher preparation. For example, Bankov (2007), writing about the case of Bulgaria, bemoaned the fact that the Bologna Process reduced the number of hours dedicated to the study of mathematics for future mathematics teachers. The decrease of credit hours affected the subject knowledge courses the most, thus making teachers less qualified to teach their subjects in the future. The decrease in credit hour requirements may have negative consequences for pre-service teachers' opportunities to learn the subject matter, but it does allow national ministries of education or other government agencies responsible for education to cut expenditures on teacher preparation. For example, in Ireland, despite the official rhetoric of higher standards in teacher education because of the Bologna Process, the decreased educational budget eliminates the implementation of innovative initiatives that contribute to teacher growth (Harford 2010).

Despite the official claim that the Bologna Process leads to the professionalization of teacher education, minimal gains in status are far outweighed by the actual de-professionalization of the enterprise. The decrease in variability of professional paths is significant because it reveals the lack of autonomy or power that teacher education programs now have in shaping their work. The decrease in credit hours set the bar of maximum allowed academic preparation quite low, thus limiting the knowledge, dispositions, and skills that pre-service teachers can gain during their studies. With the Bologna requirements of focusing on narrow job-related competences, teacher education programs lose the opportunity to contribute to their candidates' intellectual, cultural, and philosophical development that is central to the social and cultural mission of the teaching profession.

The fact that not all countries have allowed teacher education programs to participate in the Bologna Process reveals the contentious nature of transnational influences on teacher education and demonstrates that teacher education occupies a highly politicized and protected space in national societies. The Eurydice report on the impact of the Bologna Process on higher education systems in Europe (European Commission 2010) stated that Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Croatia, Poland, and Slovenia excluded teacher education and teacher preparation from participation in the process. In these countries, preserving national traditions in teacher preparation appeared to be more important than participation in international processes.

The irony and the paradox of international influences can be further revealed if we briefly examine the European policy proposals that target teacher education programs. Not only affected by the actual higher education reforms, but also elevated to the status of transnational priority, teacher education became open to international influences. In this case, the Bologna Process facilitated the penetration of international forces into national decision-making, both by creating a shared higher education space and by placing teacher education programs into the network of European Commission Policies. Teacher education became the target of discursive contestations over the meaning, significance, and contents of teacher preparation. For example, *Improving the Quality of Teacher Education Report*, issued by the European Commission in 2007, states the following:

The quality of teaching is one key factor in determining whether the European Union can increase its competitiveness in the globalized world. . . . Studies . . . suggest that teacher training may provide a less costly means of increasing test scores than reducing class size or adding school hours. . .

Ensuring a high quality of Teacher Education is . . . important, of course, to secure sound management of national resources and good value for money: approximately two thirds of expenditure on schools is allocated to teacher remuneration. (European Commission 2007, 3)

These excerpts demonstrate the link between economic priorities of competitiveness and financial mechanisms of cost effectiveness. The measure of educational quality in this paradigm, strangely enough, is not social cohesion or knowledge production, but rather “good value for money” or “less costly means of increasing test scores.” The document lays out four principles for the development of teacher education programs, such as a well-qualified profession, a profession of life-long learners, a mobile profession, and a profession based on partnership. While well-qualified is explained as possessing knowledge and skills, the document focuses mostly on skills, thus re-framing teaching as a skilled job, rather than a profession of knowledge experts. This re-framing, along with the standardization processes of the Bologna Process, takes an unruly context-embedded teacher education process and packages it for easy comparison, benchmarking, and manipulation.

Seal: Attacks on Teacher Education in the US and in the Russian Federation

The neoliberal attack on teacher education as a cultural and social institution contributes heavily to the processes that de-professionalize, commodify, and commercialize teacher education. Zeichner (2010) observed that neoliberal ideology leads to decreasing teachers’ roles to those of “educational clerks who are not to exercise judgment in the classroom” (p. 1545), introducing non-university pathways to teaching, decreasing funding for public education, and increasing the state monitoring of teacher education programs. Below I present the contestations between various actors on the subject of teacher education reform that reveal the impact of global neoliberalism on the official framing of problems and proposed solutions.

In 2009, arguing that education is central to America’s ability to maintain its competitive edge in the global knowledge economy, Arne Duncan, the U.S Secretary of Education, in an oft-quoted speech said:

by almost any standard, many if not most of the nation’s 1,450 schools, colleges, and departments of education are doing a mediocre job of preparing teachers for the realities of the 21st century classroom. America’s university-based teacher preparation programs need revolutionary change—not evolutionary tinkering. (Duncan 2009)

In October 2011, Arne Duncan added that almost two-thirds of teacher education graduates feel unprepared for work, and that this suggests that there needs to be a feedback loop that will reveal to the programs what they can and cannot do well. The programs should therefore be evaluated based on “the job placement and retention of program graduates, or their impact on student learning in the classroom” (Duncan 2011). This framing of the problem, while not without some merit, puts the primary responsibility for the dysfunctions of the social and educational systems on teacher education programs. Evaluating teacher education programs based on the outputs may be a worthwhile proposal; but it is not clear whether it is reasonable to hold them accountable for the career decisions and job choices that their graduates make. Despite numerous limitations, Duncan’s framework became the foundation for *Our Future, Our Teachers: The Obama Administration’s Plan for Teacher Education Reform and Improvement* (United States Department of Education 2011).

In the spring of 2012, a panel was organized to discuss teacher education reform as envisioned in Duncan’s proposal. The panel included various actors representing the voices of “schools of education, alternative teacher preparation programs like Teach for America, state education departments, and other stakeholders” (Nelson 2012). Three aspects of the proposal were particularly troublesome for some of the panel members and for the teacher education community that was intently following the reports on the panel’s progress: the use of value-added measures, job placement data to assess the effectiveness of teacher education programs, and the allocation

of financial aid only to the programs ranked as excellent or good quality based on these and several other indicators.

In a letter addressed directly to the panel, Lezli Basquerville, on behalf of the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and Predominantly Black Institutions, voiced the concerns common among the educational community:

Our members have three primary concerns. They believe that the proposed use of value-added systems as a primary measure of the effectiveness of teacher education programs will have an adverse impact on our efforts to prepare an excellence [sic], diverse, teacher workforce. They are concerned that linking the states' rankings of teacher preparation programs to student financial aid eligibility might similarly deny excellent, diverse students an opportunity to become a teacher; and that the proposals will create an additional and undue regulatory burden especially for smaller institutions and programs. (Basquerville 2012)

The letter apprehends the impact of Duncan's proposals on the ability of teacher education programs to recruit and maintain students from diverse backgrounds. If hampered, teacher education programs will not be able to address the growing gap between a predominantly white teaching force and an increasingly diverse student body in the US schools (Apple 2001).

The mobilization of forces among educational researchers and the teacher education community underscores the contentious aspects of the proposal. In May 2011, a Washington Post blog published an open letter to the New York Regents Board that denounced the use of value added measures (VAM) as an unreliable and poor way to measure teacher performance (Strauss 2011). In March 2012, 88 researchers on behalf of Chicagoland Researchers and Advocates for Transformative Education (CReATE 2012) submitted an open letter to the Chicago mayor, the Chicago Public Schools CEO, and the Chicago School Board, arguing that research has shown that VAM measures are detrimental to education and should not be implemented on a large scale.

The panel could not reach a consensus on how to evaluate effectiveness of a teacher education program, leaving the Department of Education alone in the decision-making process. The importance of the panel's impact lies in the ideological undercurrents of the official proposals and the threat that these present to teacher education as a part of a higher education system. With teachers comprising a large proportion of the workforce, weakening the position of traditional teacher education programs opens the market up for new players, such as for-profit organizations or entrepreneurial agencies. The process of presenting teaching as a set of skills that can be gained through short-term training allows imagining teacher education as a commodity that can be broken down into manageable units, packaged, and sold under a catchy brand name, such as GREAT Teacher Academies or Teacher U. Teaching and teacher education, when evaluated by applying measurable indicators, can become a product with a price tag attached to it. What matters more to the advocates of the reform, however, is not the transformations in conceptualizations of teaching or the detrimental effects thereof, but the ability for "states ... to cut costs and raise standards" (Epstein 2012), the theme that emerged in the earlier discussion of transnational influences on teacher education.

At a time when battles are being waged over greater accountability for traditional teacher education programs, grants are being offered to support programs outside the traditional teacher education institutions, such as the Master of Arts in Teaching offered by the Museum of Natural History in New York. Alternative route programs vary in quality and the level of professional and practical preparation with which they provide their students. What often brings these programs together are the deregulation tenets that it is enough for a person to know their subject matter well to be a good teacher, or that one learns teaching by doing (Co-

chran-Smith and Fries 2001). The patterns of de-professionalization and commodification manifest themselves in the de-theorized and de-politicized curricula of the alternative programs: the first courses that are removed or down-played in the alternative programs are “theoretical” courses in pedagogy, or courses that examine issues of social inequality, analyze broader cultural processes, and question the processes of socialization into systems of oppression. By emphasizing the knowledge transmission aspects of teaching, alternative programs downplay the enculturation and character-formation that are central to the process of public education. This balance shift removes the moral, cultural, and spiritual aspects from the conception of teaching and promotes the conception of the teacher as a technician (McConney, Price, and Woods-McConney 2012). De-politicizing and de-theorizing teacher education seals it off as a neutral enterprise and precludes its participants from engaging in cultural, theoretical, or political critiques of the evolving neoliberal social order.

One of the outcomes of these battles is a growing variability in teacher preparation paths, not only in the US but also around the world. For example, Teach For America, a non-profit organization run like an elite club (Labaree 2010), has developed a global network consisting of 24 partner organizations in such countries as Argentina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Israel, Japan, Germany, and the UK. These organizations hire graduates of elite colleges majoring in anything but education and place them in high-poverty schools to work for two years after only two weeks of training. Thus, the lingering question becomes what will be the cultural, moral, and social consequences, if market priorities and neoliberal agendas become the dominant forces in teacher education on a global scale.

The flow of neoliberal ideas around the world is not bounded by the networks of non-profit organizations. In 2010, Dmitry Medvedev, the president of the Russian Federation announced the program of educational modernization called *Our New School*. According to this program, pedagogical universities have to be eliminated or attached to classical universities, and professionals with no pedagogical education should be allowed to work in schools. This proposal has created a wave of protests from the pedagogical community.

The forces of opposition and resistance to official policies were mobilized at the *Second All-Russian Pedagogical Assembly*, held at Herzen State Pedagogical University in Saint Petersburg in 2012. The assembly brought together teacher educators, principals, and teachers who discussed possible paths of moving forward without destroying the national traditions of teacher education. Assembly attendees approached attacks on teachers’ professional preparation as a threat to the future of economic competitiveness and an assault on preserving the distinctness of the Russian culture. For them, what distinguishes professional teachers from those who were trained for other professions is their commitment to cultural, spiritual, moral, and social growth of their students, not simply to knowledge transmission. The outcome of the assembly was a resolution: a statement of disagreement and a proposal for alternative reforms from the professional community, addressed to the policy-makers and power-holders. Whether the resolution will have the intended response remains to be seen; nevertheless, the assembly managed to create the space for critical engagement with official proposals.

Sell: Commodification and Deculturalization of Teacher Education

International bench-marking and the discourse of global or international standards has facilitated the orientation of educational reforms towards high-performing countries. Therefore, when national leaders envision educational change, they turn to the high-achievers on international tests for expertise and for guidance. Teacher education has not escaped the fate of change through external models: when K-12 reform is envisioned, teacher preparation becomes the target for reform as well. In this climate, teacher education programs in high-achieving countries, encouraged to act as entrepreneurs in the current neoliberal global climate, offer their services

or their curriculum for a fee. For example, the National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore is built on a business model and provides a list of its clients on its website.

In the 2000's the United Arab Emirates embarked on large-scale educational reforms in order to develop its competitiveness in the knowledge economy and global markets. In 2003, the Abu Dhabi Education Council in the United Arab Emirates became one of NIE's clients. The initial agreement of cooperation grew into the creation of a teachers' college based on the NIE's curriculum. The issues that emerged in this transfer are discussed elsewhere (Aydarova 2012). What matters most is the simple notion of educational reform that this transfer is indicative of: instead of embarking on large scale social and political transformation while simultaneously developing local expertise in education or teacher preparation, a nation takes a short cut by purchasing a curriculum framework from a business-oriented entrepreneurial institution in another country. The curriculum of one country — the site of value struggles and cultural contestations — becomes a commodity, a taken-for-granted package that serves as a token of modernization, democratization, or educational development in another country. Its token nature is further evident in the language of curriculum implementation, when English becomes the language of instruction at the expense of the local language.

Spring's (2010) notion of deculturalization, or "the educational process of destroying a people's culture ... and replacing it with a new culture" (p. 8), indicates that teacher education curriculum transfers threaten the vitality of national and local cultures. As a result of these transfers, the activity of transmitting cultural values to future teachers becomes transformed into creating teacher-mechanics who can presumably teach subjects irrespective of the cultural context in which they live. As NIE's list of clients and partners has grown to include both the UAE and Bahrain, pre-service teachers in the countries where Islam plays an important role in transferring cultural values and in facilitating social relations are prepared based on the Singapore model and curriculum that follows the orientation of a secular multi-cultural state. The transferred curriculum can potentially have unique local references removed from it; but it is not likely to be infused with the local beliefs, values, and practices. As a result of this commodification, the local foundations of morality and spirituality are lost with each new generation of teachers; teacher education is deculturalized — the process that further feeds into solidifying economic priorities and weakening the cultural and social functions of teacher education. One of the Emirati academics, Dr. Hessa Lootah, in an interview on the Westernization of Emirati education, explained this process in the following way:

Language is the most important factor because it is the tool for transferring knowledge, thought and culture . . . If this tool is broken all the remaining components, especially the relations with heritage and culture, would give way . . . Cultural invasion in educational institutions affects values and consequently rids the national identity of its main base represented by religion, language, heritage and history. This could afflict the society with slackness and diminish social coherence besides eliminating the values that drive the will to progress. . . (El Dessouki 2010)

This quote alludes to the weakening of cultural and social foundations that can be further examined through the lens of critical studies. Said (1978, 1994) argued that the West constructs the rest of the world through the language of chaos and disorder to prove their lack of development and to suggest that the superior Western ways are necessary to reform their systems into order and smooth functioning. The image of the West becomes the image of a superior system which facilitates the colonization of "inferior" peoples through cultural means. This inferiority is necessary to preserve the hegemonic position of either transnational or domestic political elites. Pre-service teachers prepared through transferred, de-theorized, or de-politicized curricula, be it a pre-packaged NIE curriculum or a commodified short-term training, may have the sense of inferiority instilled in them which they will further transmit to their future students, thus

perpetuating the cycles of domination and control (Said 1994; Spring 2010). Ultimately, de-professionalized, de-politicized, and deculturalized curricula are easy to sell and are just as easy to use for social and cultural reproduction of existing inequalities.

Conclusion

By looking at several transnational flows of reforms and discourses, I have shown how globalization is affecting teacher education. Intentionally or not, the national agendas are diminished, but the transnational ones are interpreted as damaging and destructive by the people who are directly involved in the implementation of transformations. What does the future hold if market values continue to define those areas of life that have been social and cultural? Is it possible to counteract the processes and the discursive formations that are being put forward to re-define and re-conceptualize the institution of teacher education so that it will no longer be under the attack of de-professionalization, commodification, and deculturalization? I offered a glimpse at the global transformations in teacher education, much more uneven and complex than this paper can fully present, to spur conversations about the future of which we all want to be a part. No longer should conceptualizations and transformations be solely in the hands of powerful elites or profit-seeking entrepreneurs, but they should reside with the people who have a vested interest in pursuing a just and fair world. In other words, all of us.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Michael Sedlak and the members of TE922 Micro-politics of Teacher Education seminar — Amanda Baumann, Jillian Cavanna, Walter Cook, Joseph Harris, Chris Kaiser, Elizabeth Kenyon, Tara Kintz, John Lane, Qin Kongji, Tamara Shattuck, and Zhou Yisu — for the engaging and thought-provoking conversations that were critical for conceptualizing this argument. I would also like to thank Dr. Doug Campbell and Bevin Roue for their help in revising this paper.

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ISSN 1835-4432

