

# Culture, Society, and Praxis

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Volume 2 | Number 1

Article 4

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January 2003

## Implications of Globalization on Education

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### Recommended Citation

Praxis Collaborative, Anthropology and (2003) "Implications of Globalization on Education," *Culture, Society, and Praxis*: Vol. 2 : No. 1 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/csp/vol2/iss1/4>

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## Implications of Globalization on Education By Anthropology and Praxis Collaborative

*This piece actually began as an assignment in which each of us were to write a paragraph on “education.” As I remember it, this led to the idea that we collect them together in a kind of anthology. This was followed by the chain-letter method of sending on paragraph around to each person for comment. The result of that is what you see here.*

The distinction between the global and the local is becoming very complex and problematic to the extent that we should now perhaps, speak in such terms as the global institutionalization of the life world and the localization of globality. *R. Robertson*

This quote from Robertson (1992: 52). captures the phenomena and complexities of issues surrounding globalization. Globalization of culture, information, corporatism, consumerism, and social activism impact education in positive and negative ways. In our discussions, the Anthropology and Praxis team decided to run a collaborative and personal discussion of some implications of globalization on education. Our individual development is symbolized, as Derber (2000) notes, by our higher education, and we would add, by the propensity we share as globally conscious students to constantly refine our understanding of the world. The questions remain: what are people actually saying when referring to schools as global institutions or as *globalized*? What is the meaning of such process of globalization of the schools for future generations? What are the values utilized to model children as social actors in prevalent processes of social reproduction.

For many of us, higher education can be defined as another contemporary marker for the measurement of worth. Higher education is related to ability but more explicitly concerned with the extent to which talents, skills, and faculties have been cultivated and actualized “in a sense, to the extent to which ability has been realized” (2000: 75). This definition is closely related to a description of outcome-based education, where an ultimate end of our pursuit of higher knowledge is its application. This is also the backbone of praxis: an ever-increasing, ever-more applicable understanding of the world in which we act - as it acts on us.

In California, the institutions of higher education have been organized since the 1960s into three distinct systems, namely the community colleges, the teaching universities, and the research universities. The community colleges are for many students a reachable opportunity for higher education. These colleges serve a wide range of people, from young students from families with modest means as well as return students. It is a common practice among students to attend for two years to the community college, and once the General Education Requirements have been fulfilled, transfer to a state university. The California State Universities are

fundamentally teaching universities, that is, faculty are expected to dedicate a substantial part of their time to their scholarship of teaching. Research at levels of excellence often takes place in these universities, but overall it is justified as conducive to teaching instead as an end in itself, as it is the case and emphasis at the University of California System. While the overall philosophy and practice has been to offer higher education to all those who wish to do so, we have grown complacent into taking for granted that the achievements of such system will sustain indefinitely and by its own inertia. While the Higher Education system in California continue to thrive throughout the 1990 a chronic deficiency in funding for elementary and middle education across the state has created a new generation, that we would like to call the *Prop 13* generation,<sup>1</sup> comes ill prepared to face the challenges of higher education. Paradoxically, while the world looks for leaders and leadership that will be able to engage an increasingly complex and inter-dependant global environment, California will challenge universities and city colleges to invest a substantial amount of resources in the remediation of a deficient basic education.

California State University, Monterey Bay's (CSUMB) vision statement recognizes this challenge by acknowledging diversity and polarization of socio-economic classes: "The campus will be distinctive in serving the diverse people of California,

<sup>1</sup> California's educational plunge has been traced directly to placing excessively stringent financial constraints on educational spending at the state and local levels. At the local level, Proposition 13 constitutionally limited local property taxes to 1% of assessed value with inflation increases limited to no more than 2% per year. Overnight, local governments lost 57% of their revenues.

especially the working class and historically undereducated and low-income populations...[and a] substantive commitment to multilingual, multicultural, gender-equitable learning (CSUMB, 1994)" Through this commitment, CSUMB has recognized the diversity of our global social environment and made a proactive decision to support a local, underserved population. The dichotomy of global and local has coalesced at this institution and the university has responded by proposing a fully integrative environment: "Integrate the sciences, the arts and humanities, liberal studies, and professional training; Integrate modern learning technology and pedagogy to create liberal education adequate for the contemporary world; Integrate work and learning, service and reflection."

Further, CSUMB has made it part of their core values to embrace the varied cultures present in our world by creating "a model pluralistic academic community where all learn and teach one another." As such, CSUMB serves as a model of globalization and is forced, at a micro level, to deal with the ramifications of a "small" world, much as Smith has indicated:

Such is the nature and complexity of the forces involved in globalization that any discussion of its impact upon education raises fundamental issues and is a matter of considerable debate. The forces associated with globalization have conditioned the context in which educators operate, and profoundly altered people's experience of both formal and informal education. Schools and colleges have, for example, become sites for branding and the targets of corporate expansion... The impact and pervasiveness of these forces of globalization also means that they should be a fundamental focus for education and

learning - but there are powerful currents running against honest work in this area... (Smith, 2000: )

As we continue to develop our paths of learning, the vortex of the globe encircles our minds and implements forms of persuasion beyond our control. Globalization, embodying this tumultuousness, can be viewed as an undeniable force: on one hand, creating institutions of education to reinforce ideals of non-containment of research and discovery; on the other, perpetuating corporate globalization and domination. Praxis in education means the constant pursuit of teaching and learning techniques designed to further the academic growth that must inevitably occur in response to the always-changing nature of the world.<sup>2</sup>

The presence of globalization in education, then, is one of the main forces allowing such environment (i.e., the university) to recognize the reflexivity of the world's parts. This, in turn, points out the main problem that I think we and most critics of corporate globalization have: that corporate globalization is often reckless, paying no heed to that aforementioned reflexivity, seeking to manipulate and reengineer even the most cherished educational structures at will. Let's take a minute to go back to the division of labor of the current

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<sup>2</sup> I did further editing to the document, but with much hesitation, as I know my additions and transitions will have an impact on the overall tone of the document, and on what "we" – whoever "we" is – want to communicate. Upon further reading I am now satisfied that if not a single voice, or a unified message, there is indeed a collective sentiment and interest in the transformation of education as a space for liberation. Globalization is no longer an entity with a mind of its own, but conditions that "we," in individual and collective acts of transgression can utilize *to solve, to create, and to sustain*.

institutions of higher education in California. If we have a pull of brilliant students graduating from mediocre schools looking for professional degrees under present conditions, we can't but observe that the budget constraints faced by the state today will step up a tendency of world class higher education to be an opportunity reserved for the privileged.<sup>3</sup> Globalization has an influential, often overpowering effect on education and its environment. One can expect education, at least ideally to be balanced (objective) as it offers opportunities for learners to become critical readers of the information at hand. The lack of attainment of such ideal is certainly a point for criticism and a call for transformative action (praxis against certain elements of globalization in an academic setting). At the same time, however, globalization itself is evidence that the world is a much smaller place than is often neglected in the actual practice by academics, students and teachers.

Going back to the initial questions in this reflection, globalization in education is one of the main forces allowing such academics to recognize the reflexivity of the world's parts, which in turn points out to the main problem that I think we and most critics of globalization have: that globalization is often reckless, paying no regard to that aforementioned reflexivity, seeking to

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<sup>3</sup> Notice that the original version of the next section begins with "I agree with the ideas presented here..." In redaction criticism, there is always a sensitivity to the presence of a new authorial entity. In this case, this new author announces him/herself. According to his/her understanding of the project there is no need for the pretense of a single voice. But notice that in the actual comments, there is no questioning the assumption that this piece is about globalization and education.

manipulate at will and reengineer even the most cherished educational structures. In this sense one can say that globalization constrains, but also enables. On the one hand it generates important distortions at the local level, relentlessly bending the layers of the will and interest of communities into unrecognizable shapes. But globalization is at the same time an enabling phenomenon, as it provides us with the most powerful instruments for its own reform.<sup>4</sup>

## References<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> I had an enlightening conversation with a fellow member during the process, and he stated that he was very unsatisfied with the essay as he received it. He noted its disjointedness and the overall lack of cogency. He was wrestling with whether or not he should edit out anything (which I took to mean “clean things up”). I thought this was an intriguing contradiction. It seemed to me that if the essay were traditional enough to have a “Works Cited” page, then it is certainly traditional enough to stand a good copy edit! But more than anything, I was struck by how early writers had made decisions that presented later writers with (seemingly) deep dilemmas. I resisted the temptation to express my ideas to my comrade and let him struggle to his own resolution.

As you can see by my grandstanding, I have resolved the problem in my own way. So, I'll end with this: Whatever importance the end product might have, it is the ethics of your action; the how and why you made the decision you made; what you did with what you were presented with (a manifestation of your “thoroughness”); that is, did you act as a ward in an institution or did you act in such a manner that freedom is furthered by what you did?

<sup>5</sup> We have here another gap and a “Works Cited” page. I believe this was appended to the germ (“first”) essay and has survived (and possibly been added to during) the process. This is interesting. This very experimental text is given a very traditional supplement (I would also note in passing that our AP or Chicago style is standard for most of our material, so it beats me what an MLA protocol is doing here.)

CSUMB California State University, Monterey Bay. (1994). “Vision Statement of California State University of Monterey Bay” [Online]. Available: <http://csumb.edu/vision/> (2003, November 11).

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## Information on Proposition 13

### [CBP Publication - Proposition 13: Its Impact on California and ...](#)

The onset of the recession in the early 1990s made **Proposition 13**'s impact on **California** more apparent. ... [www.cbp.org/1997/9704pr13.htm](http://www.cbp.org/1997/9704pr13.htm) - 7k -

### [Stop blaming Proposition 13 for school woes - 1998-06-15 - ...](#)

... During the years since, public **education** in **California** declined even faster than it had previously. **Proposition 13** often has been demonized as the ...

### [LWV California Nonpartisan Analysis of Prop 13](#)

[ca.lwv.org/lwvc.files/mar00/pc/prop13.html](http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc.files/mar00/pc/prop13.html) - 7k -