The effects of globalization phenomena on educational concepts

Barbara Theresia Schröttner

(Department of Education, Institute of Continuing and Adult Education, University of Graz, Graz 8010, Austria)

Abstract: It is becoming more and more apparent that globalization processes represent, theoretically as well as practically, a challenge for educational sciences and therefore, it must be addressed within the sphere of education. Accordingly, educational conceptions have to adapt to globalization phenomena and focus more on alternative and innovative educational concepts. The observable phenomena that appear as part of globalization then lead to the following question: Is there still space for educational concepts like emancipation, self-determination, equal opportunities and fairness in distribution, democracy and common sense? The most indispensable tools for the development of equitable and peaceful contemporary education perspectives are a differentiated reflection on globalization phenomena and consequences, an intensive analysis and disclosure to address (global) conflict lines, the questioning of well-established concepts, the formation and embodiment of visions of the global future and the articulation of innovative education concepts. Modern social and political structures and practices have to be reoriented to combat the negative effects of globalization processes through the incorporation of more humane, socially fair and ecological principles. Educational science is sure to make an important contribution in making this a reality.

Key words: globalization; educational concepts; crisis response; cultural exchange; dialogical competence; critical dialogue; adult education; global thinking

1. Introduction

Globalization can be understood as part of a modernization and westernization process via which a tendentious global transition from traditional to modern societies takes place. The level of impact of globalization varies depending on the region and criteria which do not automatically lead, as one might expect, to global homogeneity (Varwick, 2004, p. 159). In the current context of globalization, virtually, everyone is affected by the outcomes of globalization processes, and the biographies of the actors on the globalized stage have also become global, often without intent or knowledge (Kemper, 2003, p. 17). A consequence of these occurrences is that through transoceanic relationships, people often live in parallel time frames and are organized in virtual global networks. They are confronted with heterogeneous, multi-dimensional and multi-regional dynamics, and they simultaneously face related inequalities. All of the previously mentioned factors produce unintentional side effects as well as contradictory results (Wulf & Merkel, 2002, p. 14). Current globalization processes can be characterized by sets of tensions: the global and the local, the universal and the individual, the traditional and the modern, and the spiritual and the rational. Other tensions lie in the expansion of knowledge, economic competition and the issue of equal opportunities (Wulf & Merkel, 2002, p. 15). Globalization refers simultaneously to differentiated social phenomena and its shaping of new systems, such as changed realities and

Barbara Theresia Schröttner, Ph.D., Department of Education, Institute of Continuing and Adult Education, University of Graz; research fields: adult education, globalization and development studies.

actors characterized by globalized interaction. In addition to processes of extension and expansion, and reorientation and major shifts in perspective, globalization entails the structuring and restructuring of power relationships. As a result of globalization phenomena, the centers of power are gradually becoming more distanced from the local level participants, thus the elites within the major metropolitan areas of the world have increasingly more control-over as well as the ability to manage global networks (Munoz, 2006, pp. 275-276). To summarize briefly, it is understandable that finding consensus regarding the complexity and non-linearity of globalization processes is not at easy all and tends toward contradiction (Plate, 2003, p. 6).

2. New dimensions of globalization

What are the precise differences between the global movements in the last decades of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century when compared to earlier global movements? World history is rich in cultural interaction, relationship building, knowledge exchange, trade, travel and migration, and contemporary globalization trends are largely an extension of what has been going on for thousands of years. Over recent decades, the influence of globalization processes has certainly progressed in different directions, while in the last few hundred years, the direction has been mainly from the West (Sen, 2007, p. 117). Currently, the power among the world's countries and regions is shifting largely because the global economy has grown more dynamically in the past five to ten years than in prior decades. The recent shift in power is perhaps only comparable to the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century. This reallocation is certainly important (Janning, 2006, p. 60).

However, much of the form, volume, values, complexity, intensity and the widespread nature of today's globalization differ from previous human experiences. The density of globalization forces brings together multiple issues, introduces an avalanche of concepts and practices, and exposes the powerful intersections of economics, politics, culture and technology which simultaneously affect values, institutions and expectations (Stromquist, 2002, pp. 87, 93). Additionally, today's globalization is characterized by the high speed of global interactions and processes. The worldwide systems of transportation and communication increase the potential speed of the global transmission of ideas, goods, technology, capital and people. Moreover, the vastness of the global movement is tremendous. Both the volume and the speed of global flow have intensified the entanglement of the local and the global, thus many local developments have enormous global consequences and vice versa. Due to the great number of global interconnections made in recent decades, one can observe an obvious increase in transnational cultural flows. The discussion of the globalization of "ethnoscapes", "mediascapes", "technoscapes", "financescapes" and "ideoscapes" (Arjun, 1996) provides a useful means for identifying global movements and connections. The terms "financescapes" and "technoscapes" refer to aspects of economic globalization, including production and financing, which flow more and more readily around the world. The term "ethnoscape" describes the landscape of persons such as immigrants, refugees, guest workers, tourists and other individuals and groups moving from place to place who constitute this shifting world (Derné, 2008, p. 19).

The well-respected Indian psychoanalyst and writer Kakar (2006, p. 122) explained that the phenomenon of globalization is often seen as a homogenizing process, i.e., as a project which has no respect for cultural pluralities and diversities. Nonetheless, globalization has not yet produced homogenization because the images and effects of globalization are mostly mediated and interpreted by local interests and actors. Local consumers indigenize products to serve their own cultural interests. They often cannot identify themselves with the global images offered, thus they respond to globalization phenomena by highlighting their local identities (Derné, 2008, p. 27).

Rather than simply harming local cultures, globalization can actually assist in inspiring local cultures. In the cultural field, globalization adds to cultural diversity and pluralism rather than replacing the local culture (Nayar, 2007, p. 22). However, local cultures often contrast strongly with the global images which are presented and this can bring about a revival of local cultures, often in the form of religious movements, or an escape into the security of ethnicity or tradition (Derné, 2008, pp. 27-28). In conclusion, it is clear that through the exposure to different value systems and lifestyles, traditional social and cultural identities are nowadays called more into question worldwide. Societies have to react to the challenges presented by cultural differences and social transformation, therefore, cultural identity is becoming the flashpoint of social change (Boecker, Debroy & Wieck, 2005, p. 10).

3. Reorientation through education

Of all the forces having an effect on education, it is perhaps no more important than globalization (Stromquist, 2002, p. 87). The field of education cannot be considered to be an isolated discipline which changes according to the current challenges created by the macro and micro forces of globalization, but part of a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach within the social sciences (Stromquist, 2002, p. 93). Understanding the consequences of globalization has also become a serious concern for sociologists, anthropologists and economists as well as social scientists from other disciplines. It seems that a great number of social theorists agree that all areas of modern social life are increasingly characterized by the content, the character and the interconnectedness of global processes (Derné, 2008, p. 20). The future of society in the global knowledge and information age is therefore increasingly dependent on the future of education. Education is thereby regarded as one of the most important resources and as a result, it must be accessible to all individuals in the same manner (Wimmer, Reichenbach & Pongratz, 2007, p. 7). Due to the shift away from the ideal of humanistic personality and character formation as well as preparation for international employability, a paradigm change in the meaning of education can be seen. An increasing number of the previous actors having public control over education, science and technology are handing over their directive powers to supranational organizations as well as transnational groups and foundations. In economies as well as education, a massive loss of the nation-state influence in shaping structures and policies is observable (Laitko, 2005, p. 2). Consequently, within the institutional education system, a reorientation is taking place. Previously, the focus of the political and educational officials was the underpinning of national identity and the stabilization of social cooperation. Currently, there is a reorientation towards economically centered objectives and a demand for education reforms that respond to the intensification of international economic competition. One can find the call to increase efficiency at all educational levels accompanied by the demand for shorter training periods, an increase in speed or output as well as the desire to form an economically educated elite (Steffens & Weiß, 2004, p. 26). Thus, with globalization influences, public goods become tradable services, and due to privatization or the opening up of economic markets, they are increasingly left in the hands of private providers. This pattern of behavior has directly impacted educational practice, insofar as the legal and technical conditions for "trading" education have already been developed to a large extent (Steffens & Weiß, 2004, p. 19). As a consequence, education degenerates more and more, becoming a service which is dealt with on the private market and which thus becomes more cost intensive. Elements of education systems appear to act as initiators and amplifiers of globalization processes. One can argue that with regards to an initiative to positively confront the challenges of international discrepancies in education, in the sense of readiness for a global reconciliation, institutional education lags far behind. Education currently does not

fulfill the role that it could be as a stabilizing global force, and the traditional educational institutions are not able to transfer the competences that they possess to the global identities, which have transcended the confines and limitations of globalization's current structures (Steffens & Weiß, 2004, p. 28).

Although there might be a tendency to think of all globalization forces as essentially macro processes, the individual is being challenged by these forces in crucial ways as well. Individuals and, particularly, educators need to develop a wider and deeper understanding of the meanings, challenges and consequences of globalization phenomena (Steffens & Weiß, 2004, pp. 87, 91) so that they are able to competently and systematically review, modify and assess the effects of globalization processes on educational practices. The development of a global consciousness as a universal key competence that prepares people for living in the world community should be at the center of education, but simply adding the dimension of global awareness to previously existing educational aims is not enough. Education that claims to be actively responsible cannot be limited to merely providing the contents of curricula. It needs to enhance the basic political conditions that are essential in response to global challenges. Hence, the goal lies in the ability of people to dynamically participate in the solving of current global problems (Wintersteiner, 2004, p. 320). Education systems have to adapt to certain global demands which call on people to interact and compete in global economies and politics, as well as to fulfill the specific roles and needs of their respective society. Moreover, individuals have to be educated to become more critical and self-aware to world citizens and to act more meaningfully in their local milieus. These requirements may appear to be contradictory, but they actually characterize the challenges which globalization presents for education processes worldwide (Adick, 2002, p. 52). However, it is insufficient to define globalization processes in educational contexts alone; it is also necessary to examine the effects and consequences of globalization processes in relation to educational strategies in order to gain an overall picture of the problems, challenges, realities, tasks and possibilities. Thus, educational settings and goals have to incorporate the relevant key problems of the future in order to be able to cope with the coming consequences of global changes (Wintersteiner, 2004, p. 318). It is possible to conclude that the pedagogical discourse of education must be revised to enable education to be a formative agent of change so as to create the type of globalizing that will be a service to the world rather than a harm (Steffens & Weiß, 2004, p. 25).

4. Asymmetrical effects of globalization phenomena

There have been many debates about the merits and harms of globalization in recent years. Indeed, the real debate concerning globalization is neither about the efficiency of markets nor about the importance of modern technology, instead, it is about the extreme asymmetries of power (Sen, 2006, p. 341). The global movement which is often seen as a one-sided Western movement reflects an imbalance of power which needs to be resisted (Sen, 2006, p. 345). Because the stretch of globalization has been unevenly distributed, the involvement of the developing countries in globalization has been, with some exceptions, very low (Nayar, 2007, p. 18). The rules of globalization have been mostly determined by the advanced industrial countries to serve their own interests—often to the noticeable disadvantage of the developing world. Globalization thus faces enormous resistance, particularly in the developing countries of more southern regions, although it has been told as bringing prosperity to the billions of people who have lived with insecurity and have been caught up in poverty (Stiglitz, 2007, pp. 133-134).

The failures of globalization processes are often related to the oversight of globalization. Many critics argue

that globalization has undermined democratic processes (Stiglitz, 2007, p. 134) because global capitalism is, in general, not concerned with expanding education, establishing democracy or enhancing social opportunities for the poor, but instead, with expanding the domain of market relations (Sen, 2007, p. 129). Through global movements, some regions of the world have benefited over time from the progress and development occurring in other regions in various ways (Sen, 2006, p. 345). Despite the huge contribution that globalization and the global economy undoubtedly make to the prosperity of the world, it is also necessary to reflect on and confront the far-reaching manifestations of global inequality and injustice (Sen, 2006, p. 342). However, globalization has offered opportunities from which the whole world could do and does benefit. Questions remain: Is there fairness or inequity in the distribution of these opportunities? Are the benefits of globalization evenly shared? Can a more equitable sharing of opportunities be secured through institutional transformation? It is essential to pay attention to the interests and needs of the less well-off members of the world community, in particular those who suffer from special vulnerabilities, various interlinked inequalities and insecurities as well as injustice and deprivation (Sen, 2007, p. 132). Deprivation in this context can be understood not merely as an absolute lack of income—It is marked by various "unfreedoms" such as hunger, the prevalence of preventable or curable illness, premature mortality, social exclusion, economic insecurity, denial of political liberty, etc. The expansion of "basic freedoms", which is a crucial aspect of development, and the ability of the poor to participate in globalization processes and economic growth depend on a variety of enabling social conditions. These conditions are drastically influenced by social arrangements for (basic) education, health care, economic safety nets, democratic practices, micro-credit facilities, land reform, fair public policies, civil and human rights, and other means of empowerment and participation (Sen, 2007, pp. 122-123).

Globalization processes have been accompanied by increasing instability and insecurity in different areas over recent decades and relatedly, a number of worldwide countries have experienced crises. Those at the lowest income levels in developing countries suffer most from the numerous insecurities caused by crises because they have inadequate social safety nets and lack reserves to protect themselves from economic shocks (Stiglitz, 2007, p. 147). The advocates of globalization shift the blame to the developing countries: for their overpopulation, corruption, lack of transparency, lack of needed reforms, etc. There is little doubt that these problems exist in developing countries—as they do in developed ones. Nevertheless, with or without corruption, globalization has worsened the troubles of many developing countries; however, the policies of the developing countries alone cannot be blamed for its failures (Stiglitz, 2007, pp. 134-135). The precarious economic situation of the poor countries around the world cannot be changed if they are not able to make use of the advantages of contemporary technology, the efficiency of international trade, economic interrelations and the social benefits of living in open societies (Sen, 2007, p. 118).

Many nation-states have already exploited the opportunities that globalization offers in the facilitation of their transition from underdevelopment to development. Since their initial encounter with colonialism, this transition has been the central challenge for many states in the developing countries. Undeniably, there are a lot of negative consequences associated with globalization, but in the context of making a transition for the better, they are more often not seen as side effects that have to be managed (Nayar, 2007, p. 43).

5. Competence in crisis response

The American economist and author Stiglitz (2006a), who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in

2001, argued that there are problems in every part of the global system with many related crises, insecurity and global instabilities. It is obvious that something is systemically wrong, but at the same time, little has been done to prevent the recurrence of the problems. Crisis scenarios occur because political structures are overwhelmed by a high level of external pressure along with transnational factors affecting the business, political, cultural and social arenas. In the coming decades, one can expect to see failed states in diverse parts of the globe, though this will not necessarily occur through a spectacular implosion but via a creeping erosion of political power instead. The problem is the enduring inability of political actors to take effective action which leads to social, humanitarian, ecological and health catastrophes due to the world's increasing interdependence. As political power erodes, the generation of an adequate response will become a key task of what one can refer to as intervention or crisis response. If this response is understood as being a task for the military, it will not succeed. An appropriate crisis response is not primarily a task to promote democracy, but a task that requires an intelligent promotion of governance which includes the adequacy of infrastructure and provides citizens with basic public services. This requires new and intelligent strategies for taking action which cannot be reserved exclusively for the world's major powers (Janning, 2006, p. 65). This re-evaluation needs to be carried out not only in the West but in all parts of the world (Munshi, 2006, p. 128); it is thus a direction for international initiatives as well as local and national leadership (Sen, 2007, p. 121).

The question is in an age of global interdependencies: What might an international system that is able to ensure peace look like? Additionally, which role can civil society play in bridging the gap between cultural differences, both within pluralistic societies and internationally (Boecker, Debroy & Wieck, 2005, p. 10)? There are a number of policy issues and institutional reforms that the global community has to address, which can facilitate the type of change that is needed to make globalization a fairer arrangement. The range of necessary actions includes international initiatives and global arrangements such as global policies concerning education, health care, human security, etc. (Sen, 2007, p. 132). The goal is to address the various sources of insecurity and instability, discuss the questions and develop means to reduce and possibly eliminate the problems (Sen, 2007, p. 119).

The rough consensus at the end of the World War II was that the war had brought on the Great Depression, surging nationalism, protectionist trade barriers and the inability of global institutions (e.g., the League of Nations) to foster stability. These effects challenged the world community to provide a framework and working definition of progress which allows improvement in the quality of the people's lives in order to forestall another depression, prevent another world war and guarantee peace and security, economic development and the observance of human rights. Each of these goals was eventually enshrined in one or more global institutions: the United Nations Charter, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and later, the World Trade Organization, and the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the Helsinki Accords. Even though there were many violent conflicts along the way, the new framework basically worked (Friedman, 2008, p. 48). In the 1980s, things started to change: (1) In 1987, the UN's Brundtland Commission argued that economic development was not working because more people suffered from poverty and the environment was increasingly being degraded; (2) The Montreal Protocol mandated the phasing out the use of ozone-depleting chemicals; (3) In the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in 1992, governments agreed to a non-binding action plan "Agenda 21", to address the problems which were identified by the Brundtland Commission using a concept called "sustainable development"; (4) In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol set binding limits for greenhouse gas emissions in developed countries. These environmental treaties were only

treated as options, not as imperatives; the United States never accepted the Kyoto Protocol and China and India have generally kept them distanced from the goals outlined in the treaties (Friedman, 2008, p. 49).

Today, the need for international organizations like the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations has never been greater, but confidence in these institutions has rarely been lower. The world has become more interdependent over recent decades and the need to act together is on increase, but the institutional frameworks for doing this effectively and democratically do not exist (Stiglitz, 2006b). Unfortunately, the United Nations, the quintessential global organization of the 20th century, still represents the global situation as it was in 1945 when the World War II ended. The United Nations has become outdated and is no longer representative of the majority of the world community (Singh, 2005, p. 39). To conclude, one can argue that it is probably not possible to expect continued economic growth, peace and security, good governance, sustainable development and respect for human rights if the key problems such as education, health care, poverty, political instability as well as inequality and insecurity, climate change, energy poverty and loss of biodiversity are so often ignored and a strategic path into the future is not developed (Friedman, 2008, p. 49).

6. Cultural exchange through changing orientations

The history of cultural exchange has always been intensely interconnected with the history of trade and commerce. If one thinks of the Silk Road or the Amber Road, both connecting Europe and Asia, it is possibly easier to understand that trade has traditionally been a powerful force in cultural transmission. The development of civilized societies in Asia as well as in Europe was facilitated by the process of passing on culturally relevant knowledge, skills, competences, attitudes and values from person to person and from culture to culture. Economic development driven by international trade was closely connected with cultural exchange and paved the way for great cultural achievements. Cultural exchange and transmission was always an evolutionary process and therefore, a relatively slow phenomenon which took place over the course of decades or even centuries. Replacements and adjustments were, in most cases, the result of choices made for reasons of efficiency and utility. Contrastingly, globalization processes have totally transformed the processes of cultural exchange, and evolution has nowadays turned into a kind of "turbo-evolution" which is driven by accelerated and expanded flows of information, technology, capital, goods, services and people throughout the world. This turbo-evolution is driven by the power of multinational corporations which have multiplied through free trade agreements and other liberalizing factors that have arisen as part of globalization. However, cultural exchange was never balanced, so that one culture integrated everything that it received from another culture and at the same time, preserved its own features. On the contrary, because many of the new cultural concepts were not only different from what had been previously known but even perceived of as being better, they replaced traditional cultural elements (Körber, 2006, pp. 80-81). Thus, cultural globalization intrinsically affects structural arrangements and the meanings people attached to those arrangements. Transnational cultural flows then only affect local cultures when new meanings can be layered on top of the existing structural realities (Derné, 2008, p. 162).

One consequence of Western dominance is that other cultures and traditions are often identified and defined by their contrasts with the contemporary Western culture. In other words, different cultures are interpreted in ways that reinforce the political conviction that Western civilization is somehow the main or the only source of rationalistic and liberal ideas with exclusive access to the values that lie at the foundation of rationality and reasoning, science and analysis, liberty and tolerance and rights and justice. This view of the West, which is seen

as a confrontation with the rest, tends to justify itself. A non-Western civilization can then be characterized by referring to those elements of the other civilization which are the most distant from the identified Western traditions and values. As a consequence, the selected elements are taken to be more authentic or more genuinely indigenous than the elements that are fairly similar to what can be also found in the West. Through the elements which point out the differences with the West, other civilizations can be redefined in alien terms as being exotic and charming, bizarre and terrifying or simply strange and engaging. But when identity is defined by contrast, divergence with the West becomes central. As a result, showing how other parts of the world differ from Western civilization can shore up artificial distinctions. However, it is important to note that many ideas that are taken to be quintessentially Western have also flourished in other civilizations and these ideas are not as culture-specific as is sometimes claimed (Sen, 2006, p. 285). A willingness to respect the cultural identity of different nations and societies as well as a respect for local cultural roots are needed because without such respect, the process of globalization will be threatened by a backlash that will discredit its past (economic) achievements (Körber, 2006, p. 85). The *New York Times* journalist and its author Thomas Friedman (Körber, 2006, pp. 81-82) described the need to support the value of and right to cultural identity—in particular, the right of a society to protect its cultural heritage and uniqueness:

> You cannot build an emerging society—which is so essential for dealing with the globalization system—if you are simultaneously destroying the cultural foundations that cement your society and give it self-confidence to interact properly with the world .... My concern is that ... without sustainable culture, there is no sustainable community and without a sustainable community, there is no sustainable globalization.

7. Cultural exchange through dialogical competence

Globalization inherently contains powerful forces for equalizing cultural differences, these forces certainly clash with cultural traditions which cannot be readily reconciled with modernity. If cultural exchange does more than only scratching the surface, it must include such long-standing traditions, but how can such traditions be made useful in modern life without destroying them in the process? The ability to utilize dialogue in the form of a questioning and gradual process of search and discovery can be a worthy method. Through dialogue, people are able to better comprehend their differences and use them in achieving common goals. Cultural exchange thus means defining one's own cultural identity and transforming it via the process of dialogue (Knopp, 2006, pp. 118-119). If a culture which is made up of values, attitudes, traditions, lifestyles and dreams that provide a framework for politics, business and other social activities is deprived of its roots, conflict is sure to arise (Mohn, 2005b, pp. 18-19). Only when cultural values encounter each other and do not clash with each other can they be the subject of a productive transnational dialogue (Kakar, 2006, p. 125), which can ensure the recognition of variety that makes coexistence possible and provides a solid foundation for freedom, non-violence and respect for the dignity of every human being. Across all social orders and cultures, humanity's core values have found their expression in concentrating on what different cultures share instead of focusing on what separates them (Mohn, 2005b, p. 19). Many of humanity's core values therefore have a privileged place in the histories of all societies and cultures and through dialogue people are able to discover that fact (Mohn, 2005a, p. 6).

Only if we respect other cultures and religions and value their uniqueness and diversity can we take advantage of what globalization has to offer. In ensuring a peaceful coexistence in the contemporary world, dialogue among cultures has to play a key role (Mohn, 2005b, pp. 18-19). Dialogue illuminates the countless

layers of globalization from political and economic restructuring at the local and global level to communication between different cultures (Zieghan, 2007, p. 2). To strengthen the dialogic process, it is essential that the dialogue involves community members as well as governments (Sen, 2006, p. 42): Through collective dialogue, alternatives for action can be identified ideas which do not lead to oppression but lead to liberation (Zieghan, 2007, pp. 5-6). Dialogical competence can be enormously important in countering social inequalities and removing poverty and deprivation. To give voice to the people is then a crucial component of the pursuit of social justice (Sen, 2006, p. xiii).

Differences are usually not the cause of conflict, instead, it is often the misunderstandings arising from the differences which cause disputes (Knopp, 2006, p.117). Sources of misunderstanding which lead to tensions in dialogue between people of different cultural backgrounds are often caused by the misinterpretation of basic cultural values such as individualism and collectivism, time, gender, power distance, uncertainty and avoidance of interaction. One will talk about intercultural communication competence when he/she is able to manage the challenging differences and misunderstandings which are inherent in communication with a person or people from unfamiliar cultures (Zieghan, 2007, p. 10). Intercultural competence refers to social competence which can be described by characteristics such as cooperation, communication, competition and self-awareness that refers in turn to intercultural aspects in local and global contexts. Intercultural competence is essential in understanding and being able to communicate well with people of different cultural backgrounds. Dialogue is an accepted and practical way in which these features can be demonstrated (Briede, 2006, p. 58). Through dialogical competence, it is possible to increase tolerance for diversity. Tolerance, as one of the features of dialogue, is crucially important because of the inevitability of stereotyping and prejudice. Tolerance in interaction involves skills which are essential for individuals to act appropriately in diverse cultures, societies and groups. The term "tolerance" is strongly tied to the term "dialogue" because dialogical competence is a means of coping with extensive diversity and related conflicts. Dialogue then means tolerance of one another which is necessary in equal partnership interactions. Because the human developmental process is dialogical, it is vital to reveal and understand the diversity of the dialogue. To solve dialogical problems therefore means solving the problems of being human (i.e., existence) (Briede, 2006, pp. 60-61).

8. Adult education and the competence of critical dialogue

The well-known Indian economist, philosopher and winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1998, Sen (Zieghan, 2007, p. 2) suggested that the role of adult education in a globalized world, which is characterized by increased diversity and economic and political imbalance, is the promotion of material and cultural changes. The challenge in adult education is to encourage critical dialogue that seeks to achieve a more just and equitable global environment (Zieghan, 2007, p. 13). Adult educators are tasked with nurturing the cultivation of the intellect, spirit, kindness, and the commitment to support the cultural development of humanity. This role of adult educators reflects the radical tradition of adult education inspired by the philosophy of liberation of Brazilian educator Paolo Freire (1970; 1990) and its emphasis on freedom from oppression (Paolo, 1970; 1990, p. 2).

Talking about global issues through critical dialogue is an important dimension of adult education (Zieghan, 2007, p. 9). Dialogue is considered critical when it actively questions the instinctual responses to forming meaning in particular situations instead of passively tolerating social realities. Critical dialogue explores underlying assumptions about the way the world works, and forges new views on both personal and sociopolitical

relationships. The following characteristics emerge as important for critical dialogue: (1) an open environment free of fear and oppression; (2) respect for the stories of individuals and communities; and (3) active problem-posing through dialogue that includes a plan for action. The problematization (Freire, 1970; 1990) of the various paradoxes and contradictions which characterize globalization thus starts with listening to the stories of the individuals, which leads to a mapping of connections between individuals, communities and beyond (Zieghan, 2007, p. 3).

Knowing about the common value dimensions of cultural variations can be useful for engaging in critical dialogue concerning globalization. In the context of adult education, the structuring of a critical dialogue about global issues has to take into account the problem-posing nature of the dialogical process in addition to the values of individuals who may differ in their cultural backgrounds. Adult educators are therefore challenged to develop methods which give voice to stories about experiences with race, gender, being the other, etc. This gives voice to doubts, fears and potentially unpopular opinions surrounding the social and cultural aspects of globalization; this in turn questions the habitual thinking and long prevailing prejudices around global topics and encourages viewing past experiences in a new light through familiarity with different cultural values (Zieghan, 2007, p. 9). The future lies in the competence of cultivating dialogical responses to this situation such as the tendency to respond to people with certain kinds of respect and sympathy—caring about the miseries and the happiness of others. In other words, the hope for the future depends on the sympathy and respect with which people can dialogically respond to things happening to others. These competences are particularly important and should be adequately recognized (Sen, 2006, p. 278).

9. Concluding thoughts: Responsible education through global thinking

Global interactions have enriched the world over millennia (Sen, 2006, p. 347) and thus, a one-sided criticism of globalization phenomena ignores the enormous opportunities that globalization offers to both individuals and nations in increasing their ability to act (Mohn, 2005b, p. 17). It would be a great mistake to reject globalization in favor of insularity and isolation (Sen, 2007, p. 118). The ability to think globally is of fundamental significance, but to be concerned with ideas that are relevant to the whole world does not by itself qualify as global thinking. Instead, global thinking is an inclusive way of thinking using knowledge of and sensitivity towards the whole of humanity and the earth itself. An adequate answer to the question of how people can peacefully live together can only be reached via a dialogue between thinkers from different parts of the world (Munshi, 2006, p. 129). To solve current problems, dialogical competence, critical dialogue, innovative educational ideas, new ways of thinking, new ways of collaborating with others and new scientific breakthroughs are necessary to better understand the new era that the world's cultures are heading towards. Friedman (2008, p. 27) argued in this context that it is necessary to stop thinking of ourselves as "post-something"—postcolonial, postwar, post-cold war, post-post-cold war, but instead as something new.

Today, in an age of mass innovation, it is very likely to find profitable ways to deliver solutions to the 21st century's greatest problems. Interestingly, the history of innovation is filled with elite actors and centralized processes, but if one looks closer, ordinary people have always played a quiet role in innovation. Countless small innovations have been achieved through the creative potential of individuals from all rungs on the social ladder, and they contributed to the advances that people enjoy in today's post-industrial and post-modern societies (Friedman, 2008, p. 166). Friedman (2008, p. 165) argued in this context:

Imagine—imagine—if we could tap into the creativity and innovative capacity of the world's poorest people. Imagine if we could empower them with the tools and the energy they need to really compete, connect and collaborate. It would lead to an explosion of innovation—from science and technology to art and literature—the likes of which the world has never seen. … In doing so, it would unlock the innovative power of the very people who will help us solve the last remaining big problems we have (around health, education, and energy). These solutions need to come from both the bottom up and the top down.

As we learn from the past, the threat for the future is a dead end culture which believes that truth belongs to it and that God is with it. The point postmodernism makes in this context is that there is no truth, but instead only different interpretations of the world. In other words, postmodernism proceeds from the assumption that no one has the right to impose his or her truth on other people—that no civilization is better than another. In this view, a conflict is not only a struggle between different views of life and world—it is a conflict of interpretations. The truth, which is created through social dialogue, will be only reached when different peoples' interpretation of the world agrees (Weiming & Vattimo, 2007, p. 15). It is possible to side with Stiglitz (2006b) who argued that globalization could be changed and without doubt it will be changed; the question is whether the changes will be forced upon people by crises or whether they will result from careful democratic deliberation and competence in dialogical communication. While crisis-driven changes risk is producing a backlash or a haphazard reshaping of globalization, controlled changes through cautiously lead cultural exchange, critical dialogue, innovative educational concepts and democratic efforts can positively reshape globalization processes. Only in this way will globalization be able to develop its potential and promises.

References:

Adick, C. (2002). The impact of globalisation on national education systems. In: Wulf, C. & Merkel, C. (Eds.). *Globalisation as a challenge for education: Theories, fundamentals, case studies*. Münster, New York, München, Berlin: Waxmann, 45-58. (in German)

Arjun, A. (1996). *Diversity and disciplinarity as cultural artifacts: Disciplinarity and dissent in cultural studies*. In: Nelson, C. & Gaonkar, D. (Eds.). New York: Routledge.

Boecker, M. C., Debroy, B. & Wieck, H. G. (2005). Editors' note. In: Mohn, L. (Ed.). Cultures in globalization: A Europe-India dialogue on global challenges and cultural visions. Proceedings of the *International Cultural Forum New Delhi (Volume VI)*. Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 9-11.

Briede, B. (2006). Dialogue in the context of intercultural competence. In: *Studies about Languages (Kalbų Studijos)*, (8), 58-63. Retrieved September 9, 2009, from http://www.ceeol.com.

Derné, S. (2008). *Globalization on the ground, media and the transformation of culture, class, and gender in India*. New Delhi: SAGE.

Friedman, T. L. (2008). *Hot, flat and crowded: Why we need a green revolution and how it can renew America*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Janning, J. (2006). Conflict patterns in global change: Challenges for India and Europe. In: Mohn, L. (Ed.). Cultures in globalization. A Europe-India dialogue on global challenges and cultural visions. Proceedings of the *International Cultural Forum New Delhi (Vol. VI)*, November 2005, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 60-65.

Kakar, S. (2006). Cultural encounters in the era of globalization. In: Mohn, L. (Ed.). Cultures in globalization: A Europe-India dialogue on global challenges and cultural visions. Proceedings of the *International Cultural Forum New Delhi (Vol. VI)*, November 2005, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 122-125.

Kemper, P. (2003). Thinking globally, acting locally: The everyday consequences of globalization. In: Kemper, P. & Sonnenschein, U. (Eds.). *Luck and globalization: Daily life in times of a global community*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 15-26. (in German)

Knopp, H. G. (2006). Intercultural competence between India and Germany. In: Mohn, L. (Ed.). Cultures in globalization: A Europe-India dialogue on global challenges and cultural visions. Proceedings of the *International Cultural Forum New Delhi (Vol. VI)*, November 2005, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 116-121.

Körber, H. J. (2006). Economic globalization and cultural exchange: Chances and challenges from a retail company's point of view. In: Mohn, L. (Ed.). Cultures in globalization: A Europe-India dialogue on global challenges and cultural visions. Proceedings of

the *International Cultural Forum New Delhi (Vol. VI)*, November 2005, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 80-85.

Laitko, H. (2005). Education and globalization: Minor approximations relating to a major topic. In: Gräbe, H. G. (Ed.). Knowledge and education in the modern society. Texts of the *V. Rosa-Luxemburg Conference of the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Sachsen, Number of Texts in Political Education*, Heft 34. Leipzig, 25-74. (in German)

Mohn, L. (2005a). Forewords. In: Mohn, L. (Ed.). Cultures in globalization: A Europe-India dialogue on global challenges and cultural visions. Proceedings of the *International Cultural Forum New Delhi (Vol. VI)*, November 2005, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 6.

Mohn, L. (2005b). Introduction and agenda-setting. In: Mohn, L. (Ed.). Cultures in globalization: A Europe-India dialogue on global challenges and cultural visions. Proceedings of the *International Cultural Forum New Delhi (Vol. VI)*, November 2005, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 15-26.

Munoz, F. (2006). Imperfect peace. In: Dietrich, W., Echavarria, Alvarez, J. & Koppensteiner, N. (Eds.). *Key texts of peace studies*. Wien: LIT-Verlag, 241-281.

Munshi, S. (2006). The need for global thinking. In: Mohn, L. (Ed.). Cultures in globalization: A Europe-India dialogue on global challenges and cultural visions. Proceedings of the *International Cultural Forum New Delhi (Vol. VI)*, November 2005, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 126-129.

Nayar, B. R. (2007). *Globalization and politics in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Plate, V. B. (2003). Main features of globalization. *Information for Political Education: Globalization, 280*, 3-6. (in German)

Sen, A. (2006). *The argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian culture, history and identity*. London: Penguin Books.

Sen, A. (2007). Global inequality and human security. In: Nayar, B. R. (Ed.). *Globalization and politics in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 117-132.

Singh, K. (2005). Identities in globalization—An Indian perspective. In: Mohn, L. (Ed.). Cultures in globalization: A Europe-India dialogue on global challenges and cultural visions. Proceedings of the *International Cultural Forum New Delhi (Vol.e VI)*, November 2005, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 38-45.

Steffens, G. & Weiß, E. (Eds.). (2004). *Yearbook of educational science 2004: Globalization and education*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag TB. (in German)

Stiglitz, J. E. (2006a). Taking control of globalization. In: *The Seattle post-intelligencer*. Retrieved September 11, 2009, from http://www.seattlepi.com/opinion/288524_ourplace13.html.

Stiglitz, J. E. (2006b). Making globalization work. In: *The guardian*. Retrieved September 11, 2009, from http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2006/sep/07/stiglitz.

Stiglitz, J. E. (2007). The overselling of globalization. In: Nayar, B. R. (Ed.). *Globalization and politics in India.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 133-148.

Stromquist, N. P. (2002). Globalization, the I, and the other. *Current Issues in Comparative Education, 4*(2), 87-93.

Varwick, J. (2004). Globalization. In: Woyke, W. (Ed.). *Concise dictionary of international politics*. Bonn: National Centre for Political Education, 159-169. (in German)

Weiming, T. & Vattimo, G. (2007). Prologue toward a dialogical civilization: Identity, difference and harmony, dialogue between Tu Weiming and Gianni Vattimo. In: Dunhua, Z. (Ed.). *Dialogue of philosophies, religions and civilizations in the era of globalization: Chinese philosophical studies, XXV*. Washington DC: Department of Philosophy, Peking University, 11-18.

Wimmer, M., Reichenbach, R. & Pongratz, L. (2007). Preface. In: Wimmer, M., Reichenbach, R. & Pongratz, L. (Eds.). *Justice and education, series of publications of the commission education philosophy of the German society for educational science*. Paderborn and others: Ferdinand Schöningh, 7-11. (in German)

Wintersteiner, W. (2004). Peace education: Educational science in the age of globalization. In: Steffens, G. & Weiß, E. (Eds.). *Yearbook of educational science 2004: Globalization and education*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag TB, 319-329. (in German)

Wulf, C. & Merkel, C. M. (2002). Introduction: The global challenge for education. In: Wulf, C. & Merkel, C. (Eds.). *Globalisation as a challenge for education: Theories, fundamentals, case studies*. Münster, New York, München, Berlin: Waxmann, 11-28. (in German)

Zieghan, L. (2007). Critical dialogue around the social justice and cultural dimensions of globalization. *PAACE—Journal of Lifelong Learning, 16*, 1-15.

(Edited by Nicole and Lily)