

Preface

The Era of Globalization

We, as human beings, are at the crossroad of development. The trend of globalization has brought us limitless possibilities in terms of communication and information, and yet globalization has also brought devastating consequences to humans and nature that seem to be out of control. As the information era approaches, along with the arrival of Internet and many more new technology, such as clouding computing and iPad, our education content and teachers are also found themselves strained at the crossroad, confronting the unexpected challenges and struggles that our students face and also present to us.

What choices and options do we have? What direction should we choose in order to cope with this overwhelming global phenomenon? As the Confucious saying, Singing and having fun with your friends will foster “social trust,” and consequently, this will lead to social harmony (Bell 2008). But does this belief still hold true in this highly competitive global erae? How education can make a difference when people are encountering this world of uncertainty?

The intent of this book is to examine the processes of schooling in Taiwan amidst the social, cultural, economic, and political conflicts resulting from local and global dilemmas and issues. The book opens with an introductory chapter detailing recent

worldwide phenomena in education, i.e., globalization and localization, followed by parts 1 through 5 to showcase the different perspectives on Taiwan's education system. The book's underlying thesis is that the mechanisms of both localization and globalization have led to issues and dilemmas that Taiwan's educational system now faces. These phenomena also relate to governance, financing, the provision of mass education, issues of equitable educational opportunities, and outcomes for differently situated social groups. They are also defined as common dilemmas endemic to school environments everywhere, and represent global challenges of the twenty-first century that have in one way or another transformed the lives of almost everyone.

The education system in Taiwan, similar to other education systems in East Asia, has undergone an enormous transformation over the last two decades. Education has become interconnected with trends of globalization and internationalization, the development of information communications technology, and a set of political, sociological, economic, and managerial changes. These shifts together have produced multifaceted influences that have an impact on the education system in Taiwan. In particular, the forces of globalization and localization in recent decades have acted as the driving policy agendas in Taiwan. The notion of globalization encompasses a plethora of meanings. According to Mok and Lee (2000, 362), globalization is "the processes that are not only confined to an ever-growing interconnectedness and

interdependency among different countries in the economic sphere but also to tighter interactions and interconnections in social, political and cultural realms.” Governments in Taiwan have endeavored to follow the trend of globalization, especially in education.

Nations’ moves towards globalization and internationalization have caused a striking transformation in the character and functions of education not only in East Asian countries but also throughout the world (Burbules and Torres 2000; Mok and Welch 2003; Mok 2006). In addition, globalization processes have increased the wide and steady circulation of individual goods and services, and also of people(s) and their cultural norms and values (Hershock et al. 2007). Similarly, changes in the nation-state’s international relations coupled with advancements in information technology, the expansion of business and commerce, and increasing mobility in the workplace are undoubtedly placing greater demands on higher education (Neubauer 2007). In the last decade, these events have become even more critical, requiring higher education to respond in an intentional and comprehensive way (Siaya and Hayward 2003).

Globalization and Internationalization

Since the early 2000s, the term “globalization” has grown in popularity not only in Europe and North America but in East Asia as well (Teichler 2004). Friedman (2005) mentioned that globalization in our age started with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the

launch of the Worldwide Web in 1989. Many people have discussed the impact of globalization on economic, social, political, and cultural fronts for the past two decades (Giddens 1990, 1999; Robertson 1995; Sklair 1995). In fact, there is no generally agreed upon definition of globalization (Mok 2000). It is, rather, viewed more as a paradigm shift—a move from separation to integration, from heterogeneity to homogeneity (Robertson 1995; Friedman 2000).

Globalization is a multidimensional term (Levin 1999). Commonly, globalization is defined as the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world, brought about by the enormous reduction in costs of transportation and communications, and the breaking down of artificial barriers to the flows of goods, services, capital, knowledge, and people across borders (Stiglitz 2002). It also refers to the process and consequences of instantaneous communication and advanced technology, which have generated tremendous growth in the quantity of information and the degree integration (Grunzweig and Rinehart 2002). While academic systems and institutions may accommodate these trends in different ways, the overall impact on the educational sector is unavoidable. Globalization, as it applies to higher education, involves information technology and the use of a common language for scientific communication (Altbach 2005; Mok and Welch 2003).

Globalization also includes the broad, largely inevitable economic, technological, political, cultural, and scientific trends that directly affect higher education (Altbach 2005). Consequently, this trend has strongly impacted higher education because it influences what universities must teach, in order to prepare students for their professional lives (Currie and Newson 1998; Currie et al. 2003). In effect, the rapidly changing world requires students to possess broad international knowledge and strong intercultural as well as social skills, in addition to the more traditional disciplinary knowledge from a university education (Paige 2005).

Along with the process of globalization, internationalization has also become an important concern in the development of higher education. Kerr (1990) mentioned that internationalization is perceived as one of the laws of motion propelling higher education institutions (HEIs). In fact, internationalization has been a major issue of the past half century (Altbach 2000). It is also one of the most important trends in higher education of the last decade (Teichler 1999), and it will definitely be one of the major themes for the next decade (Davies 1997). In essence, internationalization has always been part of the fundamentals of HEIs as universities encounter the era of globalization (Scott 1998).

Typically, internationalization is defined as the creation of an environment that is international in character, whether in teaching or in research. It also includes the

exposure of students to the cultures and languages of different countries (Paige 2005). In addition, it should also include the policies and programs adopted by governments, and by academic systems as well as subdivisions to cope with or to exploit globalization, thus allowing institutions significant autonomy, initiative, and creativity in dealing with the new milieu (Altbach 2005).

Internationalization at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of higher education (Knight 2004). Expanding the definition further, Ellingboe (1998) added that internationalization is the ongoing process of integrating an international perspective into HEIs. It should encompass a multidimensional, interdisciplinary, and future-oriented leadership vision, which involves the many stakeholders of an institution, in order to respond and adapt appropriately to the increasingly diverse and global environment. Hence, the many definitions and dimensions of internationalization have definitely given grounds for discussion to its complexity.

Comparatively speaking, globalization and internationalization are similar in two respects. Both issues tend to drive the traditional closed system of higher education towards a more open and complex system and to pose a challenge for higher education to change its context and structure (Knight 1997; van der Wende 2001; Teichler 2004).

Yet these two forces contrast with respect to their implications. Globalization tends to trigger the blurring or even the disappearance of national borders and economic systems (Ohmae 1990); while internationalization tends to address increased (physical) cross-border activities within national systems of higher education (Teichler 2004; Mok 2006).

Responding to Globalization

In the context of Taiwan, neither higher education nor primary and secondary education, can avoid the impact of globalization. Currently, there are around seventeen international schools in Taiwan, which include not only schools that serve primarily foreign expatriates' children but also Catholic and Protestant schools, which mostly offer curricula for primary and secondary education. Bilingual schools and classes, mostly for local students, are also new trends in fulfilling the needs of global mobility.

In higher education, a sudden influx of international students into Taiwan's HEIs has been clearly evident. For example, in 2011, the total number of students from abroad enrolled at Taiwan universities and technical colleges studying for degrees, learning Mandarin, or participating in exchange programs was approximately 45,000, according to the Ministry of Higher Education (Taiwan Today 2011a) The

majority of international students study business, Chinese literature, history, or social science, and less than one-fifth study engineering (MOE 2010–2011).

In order to attract more degree students from abroad, Taiwan launched a four-year NT\$5.68 billion (US\$196 million) plan in May, 2011, with the hope to increase education sector competitiveness, improve learning environment for international students, and promote Taiwan's higher education credentials (Taiwan Today 2011b). The rationale behind this policy, in addition to the motive of enhancing university internationalization, is also due to the drastic declining birthrate in Taiwan whose annual enrolment rate of university students will drop from 320,000 per year to around 270,000 by 2016. The MOE anticipates that international students will comprise 10 percent of total university population (from 130,000 to 140,000 students) by 2020 (Taiwan Today 2011a).

The Cross-Strait Paradigm: Beyond Globalization and Localization

Related to the trends of cooperation between China and Taiwan within the last decade, an official treaty of Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) has recently been signed for Taiwan to reach out to the international community in the light of China (Sharma 2010). The treaty also works as a threshold to the ongoing cross-strait relations for the further development and ripening of the regional exchanges, in terms

of diplomatic relations, economic expansion, technology enhancement and, last but not least, education between China and Taiwan.

It is worth noting that the authors here attempt to present a unique notion of the *cross-straitization* of education along with a discussion of globalization and localization. Like many other states that have experienced political and social conflicts, Taiwan was faced with issues of identity during the Japanese colonization period (1895–1945), which was followed by re-Sinicization after World War II, and during the de-Sinicization era under the Lee and Chen regime (1988–2008). The constant struggle of Taiwan for a national identity goes beyond the conflicts encountered between globalization and localization due to troublesome cross-strait relations. Nevertheless, unlike other countries in conflict such as the former East and West Germany, North and South Korea, Israel and the Arab world, and even the United States and the Soviet Union, Taiwan and China through the *cross-strait paradigm*, have, quite uniquely, developed ongoing cultural and educational exchanges, in particular as a result of increasing economic cooperation since the 1990s. In this process, the interaction of traditional Chinese culture, the country as a whole, and its intellectuals shaped a national identity that is not only multifaceted and dynamic, but is also emerging with some uncertainty in Taiwan. It will be worthwhile to see how education

in general terms affects the shaping of the national identity while encountering multifaceted forces from globalization and localization (Wilde 2005)?

In conclusion, contemporary efforts in Taiwanese education are seen as an exemplar for the shifting of ideas about globalization and localization. In retrospect, all reform programs adopted in Taiwan's education system have led to major changes inside and outside the academic arena. The questions still exists whether academia and the public will be able to embrace such changes and adapt, or will resist and fight back. Such issues remain for all of us to see, as the educational paradox of the twenty-first century continues to elude everyone. It is also interesting to see whether or not the ongoing relationships between Taiwan and China will go beyond the existing framework of globalization and localization and develop into their own unique model as "cross-straitization," which prioritizes cultural and educational exchanges and then creates more acceptable ways of communication based on mutual respect and understanding. Many answers are yet to be known, but, hopefully, with this book, readers may find some inspiration out of these questions.

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Acknowledgments

For centuries, Taiwan was referred to—especially in the West—as Formosa and has been renowned for its breathtaking natural scenery, and its miraculous economic development which earned the title of one of only four Asian Tigers. In the mid-sixteenth century, when their ships passed through the Taiwan Straits, the Portuguese were astounded at the forested island, and said, “Ilha Formosa,” which means “Beautiful Island.” And this was the first encounter of many between the Western world and Taiwan.

After 1949, Taiwan became one of the main shelters for the mainland Chinese who left to escape the communist occupation. More than one point two million Chinese civilians, government officials, and military troops relocated from mainland China to Taiwan. Over the next five decades (1949–2000), the ruling authorities gradually democratized and incorporated the local Taiwanese within the governing structure that existed at the time. In 2000 and 2008 Taiwan underwent its two peaceful transfers of power between the Nationalists and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The island has prospered and become one of East Asia’s economic “Little Tigers since 1970s.” The dominant political issues across the island remain the question of eventual unification with mainland China, or whether to try to maintain a “live-and-let-live” status (or the Status quo) regardless of differences. Moreover, as a result of more and

more interaction as well cooperation that has been taking place among all societal sectors, the education system in Taiwan, similar to other education systems in East Asia, has undergone an enormous transformation over the last two decades. Education has become interwoven with the trends of globalization and localization, along with the development of information and communications technology, after a series of social changes.

These changes altogether have produced multifaceted influences on education in Taiwan. In particular, the trends globalization and localization represent not only one of the driving policy agendas in Taiwan but also the origin of education reforms over the last two decades in the island. Even more importantly, these shifts have generated a “cross-strait” relationship between Taiwan-China, which will eventually drive education reforms to levels yet to be attained. It is also worth noting that Taiwan’s overall education development coincides with the great transformation that many countries have experienced due to this globalization/localization convergence, coupled with the impact of neoliberal principles worldwide since the 1980s. This is the reason why the authors here tend to share a common approach to presenting Taiwan’s education system to the world as an ideal testimony to how an educational restructuring process can take place in response to the nature of market economy competition. They also demonstrate how Taiwan is setting an example for its counterparts, which have

also undergone and therefore struggled with the bewildering forces globalization and localization in the twenty-first century. Alongside the cross-straitization trends mentioned above, parallel and in contrast with the competing forces between two rival states such as in the current and historical situation of former West and East Germany, and North and South Korea.

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Dedication to My father, J.T. Hu (胡金台 , 1932-2005) and
father-in-law, Y.S. Chen (陳宇樹 , 1923-2003), who went
through and witnessed the transformation of Taiwan's education
over their life time.

Series Editors' Introduction

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Taiwan's economic achievements have been impressive over the past few globalization decades, and this is true of its educational system as well. It is a complex and complicated story and one told well by Chuing Prudence Chou and Gregory Ching. We are pleased to be able to welcome their study into our series on comparative and development education. The authors trace the history of these achievements in the context of globalization and localization in a way that sets Taiwan in the context of the broader economic and educational development of East Asia. The historical context occupies a significant portion of the study, and rightly so, as it is this history that defines Taiwan's place among its more powerful and larger neighbors. Once the discussion turns to the nuts and bolts of the education system, the treatment is detailed and analytical. The statistical and curricular background is discussed along with specifics of teacher education, the "shadow" educational system (*buxiban*), and the various levels of schooling. Much attention is paid to Taiwan's impressive growth in higher education and quest for world-class university status.

Throughout this discussion the interplay between global forces and factors and local needs is apparent and skillfully woven into the discussion. Not all is as it seems, especially with respect to capacity and access issues. Some may not know that Taiwan seems to be in the enviable position of being able to offer a seat in a postsecondary institution to any student who might want one; in other words, higher education enrollment and capacity for enrollment is near 100 percent. Yet, there is great diversity and differentiation in the system, and the quality of many of the institutions has recently been called into question. Quality assurance, accreditation, and accountability are all issues that are very much in the forefront of the higher education discussion in Taiwan, at both the ministry level and institutional levels. Difficult decisions will have to be made on both levels if Taiwan is to proceed into the twenty-first century in a competitive and distinctive fashion. Critical to all of this will be cross-strait relations with China. This too the authors discuss, thus rounding out a well-conceived book that will be useful for students and scholars of Taiwan as well as the East Asia region as a whole.