GLOBALIZATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

Globalization is a term that is increasing in popular usage. It is not, however, well understood. This philosophical paper attempts to broaden understanding of globalization and discuss its implications for agricultural and extension educators as well as AIAEE. Two keys to a broader understanding are presented: 1) aspects of a comprehensive definition, and 2) differing perspectives on globalization. A reference section provides the beginning of a bibliography for those who wish to study globalization further.
Introduction

“Globalization” is a term that has become very popular in the last five years. Questions about globalization were raised by the demonstrators at the World Trade Organization meetings in April, 2000, and at subsequent international events. Yet much confusion exists as to the meaning of this term. According to Easterbrook (2000), nobody knows what it means. For Marrs (2000), it means a conspiracy of secret societies or transnational corporations to control world events in order to increase profits for the conspirators. For many people, globalization means markets that transcend national boundaries. Yet all of these opinions raise doubts and seem incomplete.

For international agricultural and extension educators, globalization is a key term. Understanding that term will be important for developing educational programs and for communicating with colleagues in other countries. Understanding globalization has implications for international development projects, for collaborative research across national boundaries, and for enriching the curricula of schools, universities and extension programs.

Purpose of the Paper

The purpose of this philosophical paper is to explore the meaning and implications of globalization. Specific questions to be answered are: 1) what is globalization, 2) what are the key issues for agricultural and extension educators, and 3) what are the implications of globalization for AIAEE?

Method and Data Sources

The method for this philosophical paper is literature review and synthesis through discussions, formal and informal, with faculty and students. Data sources include a wide range of books, monographs, and articles from diverse periodicals, as well as web pages on the internet. The published sources are listed in the reference section. This section is the beginning of a bibliography for individuals who wish to understand globalization more broadly and deeply.

Findings

Findings based on the review of literature include a working definition, a list of issues that authors have identified, and a number of implications for consideration for members of AIAEE. The authors often contradict each other in their perspectives (assumptions). So a table describing six different “perspectives” was constructed (Figure 2). Finally a beginning bibliography which will allow the reader to investigate globalization and draw specific conclusions for specific circumstances is provided.

What is globalization?

Surprisingly, most of the data sources did not provide a definition when discussing globalization. Those who did provide a definition gave one that was very limited in scope. The best definition was from Rahnema (1998) who saw globalization as “...the decline of the nation-state due to the forces of
technology and the world market and the resulting assertion of cultures, ethnicity, nationalities, pluralism and the violence of terrorism and fundamentalism” (p. xv).

Even this definition is incomplete based on the issues raised by the different authors (Figure 1). Virtually all of the sources agree that globalization, today, is something special given the unique historical context. Apart from that agreement, each of the sources has a different point of view. Many of the sources overlap but none of them provides a definition that includes all of the issues and disciplines mentioned on Figure 1.

To complicate the situation even more, each of the issues listed in Figure 1 is only one example, representing other issues for each of the disciplines. Some of those issues are very familiar. Others may be new to agricultural and extension educators. The issues that seem to this author to deserve the attention of members of AIAEE are noted with an asterisk. Other members might disagree on which issues are important and which are not. Issues related to global markets and the internet were not on this author’s list since these issues seem to him to already be very familiar to his colleagues. Underlying all of these issues is the element of change. Virtually all of the authors agreed that change is a constant for globalization. Since a definition that encapsulates all of the issues raised in Figure 1 is unwieldy, perhaps Rahnema’s definition is most suitable for general usage until a better one is developed.

The perspectives on globalization (Figure 2) emerged from the literature review as a critical piece. It is needed to put any definition of globalization in context and it is a necessary framework for understanding and applying the issues. The various issues take on diverse implications depending on one’s perspective.

**Figure 1. What Is Globalization?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some Definitions - Globalization Is:</th>
<th>Discipline/Subject Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A shrinking world (which is nothing special since the time of Alexander the Great)</td>
<td>Technology – Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*A “post colonial” phenomenon (since 1960) (Ashcroft, 1995)</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging global corporations and markets (Hawken, 2000)</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanishing borders as national boundaries become less important (French, 2000)</td>
<td>Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Decline of the “nation state” as international organizations become more influential (Parenti, 1995)</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Internet (American Forum for Global Education, 2001)</td>
<td>Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Global warming and other such issues that ignore national boundaries (Swarts, 2000)</td>
<td>Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*A.I.D.S. and the potential for pandemics</td>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A phenomenon which changes our personal responsibilities since local actions increasingly impact others around the world (Lynne, 2000) (UNESCO, 2001)

Loss of minority languages (Bollag, 2000)

*Threats to local cultures, ethnicity, literature as a global culture emerges (Jameson, 1998)

*Increased scrutiny of “schooling” as the predominant institutional approach to learning (Illich, 1968) (Rahnema, 1998)

*The post communist period (Third Way) (Giddens, 2000)

A new focus on faith (ecumenism versus fundamentalism) (Ansell-Pearson, et al, 1997)

*A growing realization of the finite nature of food, water, petroleum (Postel, 2000) (Chimelli, 2000)

Change

Figure 2. Some Perspectives on Globalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Positive aspects</th>
<th>Negative aspects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disneyland</td>
<td>Utopian</td>
<td>Idealistic</td>
<td>Naive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small World</td>
<td></td>
<td>Simplistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding leads to love and peace</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Improving living standards through efficiency and technology</td>
<td>Managed future</td>
<td>Discredited in many countries, particularly by intellectuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fits a U.S. cultural world view</td>
<td>Imperialistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unjust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspectives</td>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>Balances efficiency and sufficiency. Emphasizes community.</td>
<td>Attempt to avoid negative aspects found in other perspectives.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New World Order</td>
<td>United Nations enforces peace and order. Assumes a benevolent UN Spaceship Earth Idealistic Internationalist.</td>
<td>Naively allows a UN conspiracy or a capitalist conspiracy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Frontier</td>
<td>Competitive Win Lose game Capitalistic. Opportunity for all</td>
<td>Cynical, Unjust Imperialistic The poorer countries will be exploited Environmental nightmare.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster</td>
<td>Ecological Catastrophe Social Chaos End of Civilization Armageddon Based on current trends</td>
<td>Alarmist Negative outlook This perspective has been wrong in the past</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first three perspectives accept globalization and see it, to some degree, as a positive phenomenon. The last three perspectives are either pessimistic or cynical, and therefore negative. Figure 2 should generate much discussion and, probably, considerable disagreement. The author prefers the “partnership” perspective and is committed to further clarify and implement that perspective.

What are the key issues for agricultural and extension educators?

University curricula in agriculture should prepare students to work in an era of globalization. This means we should examine the need for study abroad opportunities and additional courses that deal with international agriculture and related issues. We should also examine current courses to see how international perspectives and content could be added to better serve U.S. students and those from other countries who are studying in the U.S. Taken together these steps constitute the globalization of the curriculum, a concept that is not new, but neither has it been sufficiently addressed at most universities.

Agricultural educators should also examine the need to internationalize the high school
curriculum in agricultural education. Likewise, extension educators should examine the need to internationalize their educational programs in light of current conditions and the needs of learners. Globalization will likely continue to impact extension audiences in many ways.

Because promotion and tenure criteria at most universities ignore international work, and since many promotion and tenure committees undervalue excellent international work, attention should be given to the academic reward system. International tourism should not be rewarded, but international work which supports the faculty member’s position description, demonstrates excellence in scholarship, and produces beneficial results for clients, should be encouraged and rewarded.

Collaborative research should be supported in this highly competitive grant environment. Because collaboration will be necessary to avoid paternalistic approaches in international work, research partners will need to clarify personal and institutional values and build balance into research designs if they are to be truly collaborative. Balance means planning a program in a manner so that the interests of U.S. researchers are balanced by the interests of the other country’s researchers, conditions (including culture, values and ideology) on both sides are considered, and benefits of the research to each institution are balanced.

Leaders of international projects of all kinds will need to note the changed (and changing) environment for international work in this time of globalization. Traditional policies and procedures will need to be carefully examined and sensitively implemented in order to avoid errors of past “development” projects. We need to insure that scholarship and research reflect globalization occurring in today’s world.

Terminology which has become imprecise, given current conditions, should be revisited and, perhaps, revised. Globalization, for instance, should not be used as a synonym for “free trade.” “Development” should not be used as a synonym for increase in gross economic indicators (Sachs, 1992; Sen, 1999). “Developing country” should not be used only as a synonym for countries that are economically below some norm or elite group. “Developed country” should not be used only to describe certain Western economies and their imitators who have defined development primarily in economic terms. “Third World” should not be used at all unless a new definition, other than the original one, is given.

What are the implications for AIAEE?

AIAEE can provide a forum where the issues related to globalization can be discussed and debated. Our organization will need to acknowledge, however, that globalization is an important topic that merits time on the agenda.

AIAEE can provide support for its members who see the need to work through the issues raised in the previous section. It can encourage case studies that attempt to deal with different aspects of globalization. It can encourage the consideration of research and evaluation methods in the light of new problems and opportunities brought on by globalization.

Perhaps a standing committee on globalization should be formed to raise awareness of AIAEE members, particularly conference planning committees, of the issues of globalization. Perhaps a conference theme related to globalization would be appropriate. In this sense, globalization must be understood as a theme distinct from the international theme that permeates all of our activities.
Conclusions

In summary, some of the key conclusions of this paper include:

- Alternative perspectives and terminology must be understood in order to communicate beyond one’s small circle of friends;
- “Developing countries” and “development” are terms that should no longer be used until we rethink their connotations and agree, more precisely, what each of those terms really means in the current context of globalization;
- “Participatory” research, program planning, and project management are essential to avoid association with colonialist and imperialist actions;
- What agricultural and extension educators in the U.S. call “partnerships” are often unequal relationships that our colleagues identify more with colonialist or imperialist mentalities;
- Educators must clarify and communicate their ethical and ideological positions when working with others.

AIAEE can and should take a position on globalization, its meaning, and the AIAEE perspective, given the new and changing international context. AIAEE should promote a lively dialogue among its members, encouraging more precise and sensitive usage of the term globalization along with related terminology. At the very least, AIAEE should include further reports from the GASEPA (Globalizing Agricultural Science and Education Programs) group that made a presentation at the 2000 AIAEE conference (GASEPA, 2001).

Educational importance

The common thread in the definition of globalization, its key issues, and the different perspectives, is “rapid change.” Agricultural and extension educators who ignore globalization, and its current manifestations, are in peril of being left behind in current discourse. They may be criticized for a “development” mentality which is no longer acceptable to many international scholars. They are in danger of proposing educational programs at home and abroad that are insensitive or out of date.

Brit Kirwan, President of The Ohio State University, noted that in our world today almost nothing is certain. But among those things that are certain is today’s global imperative, “… the necessity for our colleges and universities to make the fact of internationalization and globalization a greater, deeper, broader and richer part of everything we do” (2000).

References and Beginning Bibliography
