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Apple, Michael W. (Ed.). (2010). *Global Crises, Social Justice, and Education*. NY: Routledge.

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I am always delighted to find scholarly work that connects dots in educational contexts around the planet. Michael Apple's book does just that. The major aim of *Global Crises, Social Justice, and Education* is to demonstrate, through cases set in the US, Japan, Israel/Palestine, and Mexico, the interconnections between neoliberal and neoconservative policies and their impact on education. In six chapters, this book attempts to answer the questions: What do the realities that make it so hard to change education look like? And, what are the things we as educators and community members can do to alter these realities?

In the opening chapter, "Global Crises, Social Justice, and Education," Apple provides a background on *globalization*, explaining that education cannot be understood outside the context of an increasingly integrated international economy

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and the impact of immigration and population flows that have a significant impact on how knowledge is defined and what counts as effective and responsive education. The language of the markets – choice, competition, performance management, individual responsibility, and risk management – cuts across geo-political boundaries in ways that marginalize and silence oppositional or alternative ideas and practices, and oppress people. Apple identifies four specific parts of the world – the United States, Japan, Israel/Palestine, and Mexico – as centers of global crises that can show this marginalization, silencing, and oppression from four different perspectives. He also promises to show ways in which critical and democratic educational and social movements and activists are attempting to fight back. Apple recognizes two problems with much of the existing literature on progressive educational reform. First, schooling is rarely placed within its social and political context, thereby ignoring its complex relationships with things like gender, race, and class. Secondly, education tends to be naively romanticized in ways that imply that schools themselves can be reformed in ways that will transform society.

Case one, “New Literacies and New Rebellions in the Global Age,” by Ross Collin and Michael Apple, situates student-activist efforts at resistance in the US, taking particular aim at immigration policy and that issue’s appeal to youth. This chapter calls on educators to seek opportunities for students to network with allies, and to acquire the literacies that are useful for activism, as well as to help students explore ways that digital literacies can be used in activism. Teachers have the power and potential to help students transform their worlds through activism grounded in critically literate practices (see, for example, Rogers, Mosley, Kramer & the LSJTRG, 2009). It ends with a challenge for educators and researchers to make student-activist mobilization and action visible so that youth-led efforts toward social justice can be multiplied.

The second case, “From the Rightest ‘Coup’ to the New Beginning of Progressive Politics in Japanese Education” traces the history of education in Japan, from the 1890’s imperial state, through WWII and US occupation, up to the

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current trend toward neoliberalism/neoconservatism that call for a return to imperial traditions and a prewar-like state intervention in education that borrows from the crisis language of the United Kingdom and the back-to-basics rhetoric seen in US education reform. The author, Keita Takayama, also describes a progressive counter-movement, and outlines the task for progressives – to understand how neoliberal/neoconservative proposals partially address the needs of the people and learn to better articulate how more progressive agendas better represent their voice. The author suggests that this can be done by building alliances with some elements of neoliberal and neoconservative movements in Japan, as well as cross-national alliances, and calls for coordinated efforts to challenge politics in education and society in general.

The third case, “Israel/Palestine, Unequal Power, and Movements for Democratic Education” by Assaf Meshulam and Michael Apple, begins with a critical examination of the interrelationships between education, the state, social conflicts, and differential power. A Gramscian (1971) frame situates the argument as hegemonic – counter-hegemonic in an attempt to understand how the control of culture relates to the reproduction of asymmetrical power relations. Using examples from three schools, the authors show evidence of global influences on educational policy and practice, and also demonstrate the building of coalitions between schools and the communities they serve. Each of the three schools was the result of community activism and grassroots democracy in action, and as such, empowered people who had otherwise been silenced. The chapter ends with a challenge: are small and scattered attempts at building solidarity, in times of political tension, capable of contributing to just and democratic solutions to deeply entrenched conflicts? It is only through such attempts, and the connecting of these kinds of institutions, that we will ever be able to answer the question.

In the last case, we are asked to look to Latin America, and specifically, Mexico, which have been the sites of deep, lasting social, political, and economic transformations for the past thirty years. Latin America has been impacted by

globalization through trade liberalization (ex. NAFTA) and changes in public sector spending following the Latin American debt crisis of the 1980s. The resulting neoliberal policies have changed both the state and the public's perception of the role of the state. The authors, ethnographers Jen Sandler and Erika Mein, framing their projects in the work of Paolo Freire (1970; 1992) explore two popular education organizations that work in rural Mexico with women who suffer economically due to challenges such as the growth of agribusiness and the migration of Mexicans seeking opportunities in the US. The chapter concludes with a call for activists and progressive educators join the struggle in addressing neoliberalism and its impact on communities.

The final chapter in the book serves as a call for progressive educators and activists to push back in ways that are cohesive and organized around a set of educational and social projects with which we can all engage. Apple acknowledges the difficulty in forming such a “decentered unity,” which can seem overwhelming considering its call for global thinking despite our own theories, approaches, and stands on national and international issues.

This book is particularly timely work in light of current reform efforts that center on market-driven mentality – Race to the Top, sanctions, teacher incentive pay for student performance, and an ever-increasing move to privatize public resources in the US, and similar movement around the world. In reading the four cases highlighted in the book, I was struck by the parallel nature of the impact of globalization on education and socially just forms of society. While there are fledgling attempts to make connections in multiple sites (ex. TAG – <http://teacheractivistgroups.org>), more, particularly in multinational collaborations, are needed.

Because the issue of global crises is as large as the name implies, the four cases presented in this book need to be looked at as small snapshots rather than as a complete panorama. The stories presented in this book would couple well with stories straight from schools and popular

education sites that reveal more about curriculum, school systems, teaching, and learning in light of current policies – issues this book largely skipped. They would also join text that discusses the nature of power and oppression as seen in the 21st century. Finally, text that goes further in identifying practical, concrete ways that multi-national networks that support progressive and socially just forms of education can be built would be good companions for this book. *Global Crises, Social Justice, and Education* has an important place within the literature that is just beginning to connect instances and impacts of neoliberal and neoconservative policy in multiple locations, and sheds light on how important is it that critical educators and activists listen and learn and act with one another.

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