

## **Critical Analysis of Globalisation within Early Childhood Education and Care**

This essay begins with a review of a scholarly article which is interwoven throughout the main body. This becomes critical to inform the reader as to what the article contains as well as creating a framework as to how further literature is analysed and linked around this piece.

### **Review of a Scholarly Article**

Campbell-Barr, V. and Bogatic, K. (2017) 'Global to local perspectives of early childhood education and care' *Early Child Development and Care*, 187(10), pp.1461-1470, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2017.1342436>

### **Thesis Statement**

I strongly believe the article presented collates a multitude of issues regarding Early Childhood Education and Care services on a global perspective, directly relating to the issues globalisation may present. Campbell-Barr appears to have a previous history and interest in the research of diversity within ECEC practices. The author's previous publications may have caused her to present an unbalanced argument, concentrating primarily on the negative impacts of such services. Bogatic's previous research has been based within child-led pedagogies in order to support diversity within education (REF). Therefore, the combination in this article seems to present a complimentary and balanced piece when reflecting on how the global impacts the local. This article was written due to the ever increasing interest of ECEC services from a macro perspective, which was 'framed by narrow perspectives of ECEC as a social investment strategy' (Campbell-Barr and Bogatic, 2017).

### **Supporting Argument**

Globalisation appears to be at the centre of this case study with other issues such as the influence of organisations, how ECEC services are funded and aspects of culture interwoven throughout. The term 'effective' is seen to be the overarching discourse, correlating to the issues of how diversity was not being met in pedagogies that were distributed world wide. Examples such as the Reggio Emilia approach (Yelland, 2010) demonstrate how pedagogies steeped in culture and history, pose 'questions of its relevance and

applicability in other cultures.' I firmly believe that globalisation can be witnessed in the growing analyses of ECEC services, with reference to assessments such as IELs mentioned in the article, due to the competitive nature they serve to each country. Furthermore, this can lead to cultural identity being lost or placed with a low value, as cultures with prescribed pedagogies can feel that the practice and teaching of early education is unworthy. Campbell and Bogatic (2017) also state that the influence of such world rankings is viewing children as a future object, positioning them as a lifelong investment as opposed to them being present.

### **Summary of your review**

Overall, many factors contribute to the impact globalisation can have on culture and culture identity such as cultural imperialism and cultural relativism. Evidently, it becomes clear that despite the article evaluating the effects of globalisation on a macro level, each aspect can be further analysed to how this impacts children's daily lives, thus providing the reader with a clear view that the global and local effects are to be without one another and cannot be assessed separately.

Globalisation and cultural identity can be seen to have a direct impact on children's everyday lives, with the evaluation of wider issues involving culture, aiming to provide a holistic analysis as to how they are potentially impacted (Campbell and Bogatic, 2017). The following critical analysis seeks to provide clarity of how Early Childhood Education and Care is at the heart of global issues impacting children's development in their everyday lives, centering Campbell and Bogatic's (2017) case study. It becomes vital this piece is interwoven throughout and used as a basis to explore further perspectives, relating to other literature and definitions, to answer the questions of what cultural identity and globalisation are and how they impact children's everyday experiences.

### **Defining cultural identity**

The defining of culture can be seen to be limitless and open ended, with an amalgamation of ideologies serving a more holistic definition. Due to the content of the case study being discussed, it becomes more appropriate to assign this term on a macro level relating to the wider impact from government or international law (Bronfenbrenner, 2009), correlating with the positionality the reader upholds. Maynard and Powell (2012), state that culture is how people understand who they are, giving meaning to their lives promoted by practices and characteristics to which they share. Furthermore, these trajectories progress to the definition of cultural identity, where people of any age share commonalities such as language, heritage, or beliefs to withstand a group or categorisation. It can be noted that cultural identity does not follow a rigid assessment and therefore, cannot be taught, gained or projected on a macro level which justifies a heuristic acquisition (Rai and Panner, 2010). Juxtaposing this, cultural relativism plays a part in confirming cultural identity, with reference to classifying societies which have differing attitudes towards specific social phenomena, entailing that there are no universal criteria to compare cultures (James and James, 2012).

### **Cultural identity: How it affects children's lives on a global and local level.**

Campbell-Barr and Bogatic (2017), continue with the rejection of universal criterion, highlighting the global discourse of children's school starting age. This becomes relative to cultural identity as one country can include multiple cultures and therefore, the starting school age can differ throughout municipalities within one nation, rejecting many sociocultural contexts. An example of this can be seen with the exclusion of local ECEC services to indigenous children in Australia. Grace et al. (2019), demonstrate that previous research has shown that there have been low levels of engagement with ECEC services due to the apprehension of feeling that their culture would be widely misunderstood and scrutinised. Such scrutiny can derive from their cultural perspectives of co-sleeping and having older siblings left responsible for the care and provision of

younger children. Furthermore, indigenous parents have expressed a level of mistrust in local services, with fear they may be reported to child protection (Grace et al., 2019). The school starting age places emphasis on children's future success, with reference to institutionalisation. This term views children as an investment, with ECEC services being highlighted to 'lay the foundations for lifelong learning' (Campbell-Barr and Bogatic, 2017, p.1464). Constructions of how children are viewed globally within ECEC services, can be seen to be embroiled in association relating to knowledge and power. This therefore accentuates intrinsic tensions to which adults assign children's position in a global perspective, justifying previous notions that children's future capacities should be served within a well-defined, culturally-sensitive milieu (Ang, 2017).

### **The impact of organisations on ECEC services**

The school starting age can be seen to undervalue parental and cultural differences by generating a universalist tone with a 'one size fits all' approach. Global organisations emphasise the dominance of Anglo-American theories, parallelly to Westernisation which underpins ECEC services. Categorisation as to whether a territory or country is positioned within the global north or south due to the inequities between the two, becomes a battleground of ascendancy. This can be caused by International Non-Governmental Organisations placing their headquarters in the north, whilst funding ECEC programs in the south (Penn, 2011). The encouragement of globalisation can be projected from INGOs such as UNESCO, by the dominance of Euro-American pedagogies, referred to as the global north, which are encased in a child-centered approach to education. Evidently, conflict arises, clashing with traditional values and cultural aspects of ECEC services (Pearson and Degotardi, 2009). Moreover, this intensifies the intertwined notions of global versus local, accentuating their relationship and equilibrium that one cannot be argued without the other, similarly to the case study. It can be noted that the global and local perspectives are balanced between the understanding of wider issues, with reference as to how they impact at the local level, with development of a 'multi-directional and dynamic relationship between the two' (Campbell-Barr and Bogatic, 2017, p.1468). This contests cultural identity of specific groups which can be noted with the example of Indigenous children, undervaluing the heterogeneous nature and celebration of diversity. Campbell-Barr and Bogatic (2017), discuss the role of supra-national organisations such as UNICEF, giving rise to the influential power they have to national policy which in turn, contributes to the role and function of ECEC services from a global perspective. UNICEF (2020), are the only organisation included with the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child, demonstrating their link and specifying that all of the organisation's work is based on the legally binding agreement to uphold children's rights. This seems to create a utopian vision using a cosmopolitan approach of what the best interests of the child should be, specifically to Article 31 (UN General Assembly, 1989), the rights to play. It can be argued that this article amongst others,

creates a view of Western notions, with the delineation of defining what play is. It therefore demonstrates a lack of critical perspectives on children as participants within a culture or community (Goncu and Vadeboncoeur, 2015). With further analyses, literature also separates the contributors directly involved in the development of play such as parents and the community, reaffirming their undervalued position (Evers, Vadeboncoeur and Weber, 2015). This converges with cultural identity and its everyday impact on children's lives within the article, as it confirms that Westernisation can refract a community and cultural groups identity, thus positioning the child as a politicised object (Campbell-Barr and Bogatic, 2017).

### **Bronfenbrenner and the macrosystem: defining the globalisation and its relationship to the local**

Continuing with culture, Bronfenbrenner (1979, cited in Agosto et al, 2017) places it within the mesosystem, trickling down the importance of family, community and education, and how they create a child's cultural identity within their microsystem. With further evaluation, it can become clear that conflicts of community and culture have a direct repercussion on the child, stemming this fragmentation from the macrosystem in relation to supra-national organisations. It therefore becomes validated that globalisation has a direct effect which impacts children's daily lives. Globalisation is a multifaceted concept, referring to the application of rapid change. It seeks to provide a cohesive process, with the uniformity of consequences on a macro level (Faas and Wasmuth, 2019). This definition can ascribe the image of normality for cultures becoming irrational, giving opportunities for some and dissolving for others.

The case study highlights the discourses on ECEC services through a global and macro lens, by detailing the construction of the International Early Learning Studies, founded by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The IELS illustrate a concise interpretation of ECEC services as a 'social good based on a set of predetermined indicators' (Campbell-Barr and Bogatic, 2017, p.1463). This effectively allows for other countries to compare their rankings on ECEC services with one another, based on predetermined indicators such as social skills, self regulation and executive function. Enrolling such studies to a global perspective can cause discourses to arise such as those relative to ambiguity and the refutment of culture (Moss et al, 2016). It becomes apparent that these predetermined factors reinforce the definition of globalisation selected, highlighting its uniformity. They also show a disregard of culture with the example of the Te Whariki approach, due to their ECEC services being based upon a socio-cultural approach, with an inclusive ethos of bi-culturalism being at the heart. It therefore becomes questionable how the IELS would serve a purpose to New Zealand but more importantly, how this form of globalisation would position such educational practices (Moss et al, 2016).

The paradox of global to local continues with notability to cultural imperialism, closely linked to colonialism (Faas and Wasmuth, 2019). This is a subcategory of globalisation, being defined as the potential threat to local cultures endured by other dominant cultures from around the world (Ritzer and Dean, 2015). Within the case study, it can be noted that the authors highlight the discourse as to whether specific pedagogical approaches such as Reggio Emilia become relative and transferable in other cultural contexts due to Italian history underpinning the approach (Campbell-Barr and Bogatic, 2017). The dissemination of specific pedagogies not only shares the values of child-led practices, but can also impose cultural imperialism on local cultures. Tobin (2005), states that the historical context which underpins the Reggio Emilia approach was developed from a local desire for new pedagogical approaches in the fascist era.

In conclusion, the case study provides an analytical basis for understanding the key aspects relating to ECEC services and how they can be further criticised in affecting children's everyday experiences. It is worth noting that the influence of world wide organisations plays an important role in defining both globalisation and its transcendence on cultural identity. Evidently, the interplay and connectedness of global and local perspectives become inseparable, demonstrating the impact of projecting well known pedagogies from the global north to the south, and how they do not meet the cultural identity of other countries. Finally, it becomes apparent that the use of world wide rankings have added to the discourses within ECEC services. Despite appearing to be for the benefit of children's learning, it becomes questionable within the case study as to whether they outweigh the disadvantages, causing children's everyday experiences to be further impacted.

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