

Part 1

Comparative Education & History of Education

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STATE OF PUBLISHED RESEARCH ON THE TEACHING OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

Introduction

The original self-declared brief of this conference, at its inception in 2002, was to be an International Conference on Comparative Education in Teacher Training. This remained the title of the conference, even after the creation of related thematic sections since 2005. The first thematic section, the direct descendant of the conference in its original form, has since evolved to assume the general name of Comparative Education and History of Education, but this author, as the chairperson of that thematic section since its founding, still thinks of this section and the conference as stemming from the mission of “Comparative Education in Teacher Training”, as a central component of that, the teaching of Comparative Education at universities.

As such this conference occupies a unique niche in the international landscape of organised Comparative Education. And at that, a facet gruesomely neglected by the Comparative Education fraternity. Yet as Erwin Epstein (2011) put it, “for the future of the field of Comparative Education, one can hardly think of something more crucial than the teaching of Comparative Education”. Despite attention given to the teaching of Comparative Education, during the Comparative Education World Conference in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1998; and despite a few sessions devoted to that topic in subsequent CIES (Comparative and International Education Society) conferences, notably in San Antonio, Texas in 2000; the formation of a teaching of Comparative Education SIG (Special Interest Group) of the CIES in 2011, and despite the activities of the Bulgarian conference, as explained in the preceding paragraph, the teaching of Comparative Education remains a grossly underdeveloped field in the broader field of Comparative and International Education scholarship.

The aim of this paper is to take stock of and to reflect on the current state of published literature on the teaching of Comparative Education, as part of the run-up to the planned book volume on the teaching of Comparative Education. Comment and input by and involvement of delegates at this conference are then invited.

The body of literature on the teaching of Comparative Education

The body of published literature on the teaching of Comparative Education, falls into three major parts, namely a series of articles published in the *Comparative Education Review*, three editions of a book on Comparative Education at universities worldwide, and a series of articles on students' expectations and experiences of Comparative Education courses.

Articles published in the *Comparative Education Review*

Since the inception of the *Comparative Education Review*, the top journal in the field, an article on the teaching of Comparative Education has appeared first very regularly, and then with increasing less frequency. In one of the first volumes of the journal, one of the founding fathers of Comparative Education and the first editor of the journal, George Z. F. Bereday (1958), published an article entitled "Some methods of teaching Comparative Education". In this article he distinguishes between the area and the problem (thematic) approach in the teaching of Comparative Education, and a combination of the two. He supplies examples of these various approaches from programs which were running at that stage at universities in the United States of America, as well as of textbooks used in such programs. This article was followed up by a number of others in the next issues of the journal. These include Edmund J. King (1959) "Students, Teachers, and Researchers in Comparative Education", Isaac L. Kandel (1961) "A New Addition to Comparative Methodology", Robert Belding (1958) "Teaching by Case Method in Comparative Education", and Anthony Scarangelo (1959) "The Use of Motion Pictures in Comparative Education".

Then the spate of articles on the teaching of Comparative Education came to an end. Only seven years later, two other eminent comparativists of the 1960s, Harold J. Noah and M. A. Eckstein (1966) published another article in the *Comparative Education Review*, entitled "A design for teaching Comparative Education". In this they reflect on their recent teaching of a Comparative Education course to graduate students at Teachers College, Columbia University and Queens College, City University of New York. They contrasted their teaching of Comparative Education in the mold of the positivist social science paradigm of Comparative Education in the 1960s, i.e. teaching students about the relations between education and social phenomena. This stood in contrast to the old teaching which focused on the description of foreign systems of education and at most interpreting foreign systems of education from their societal contexts. Noah and Eckstein proposed a new method of teaching, namely that of hypothesis testing. This entailed the testing of propositions about the relation between education and society. In their view this equips students for fieldwork after completion of their studies, when they can put Comparative Education into use (for example when they are engaged in foreign aid projects). In their articles they also discussed the textbook which they used and enumerated the topics they included in their course.

After another four years Eckstein (1970) once again published an article "On teaching Comparative Education". In this article he pleads for the teaching of Comparative Education and the research methodology of Comparative Education not to be treated as two separate entities, but to become a functional whole. He distinguished between the teaching of Comparative Education at beginner or pre-

graduate level, where there is merit for the teaching of foreign education systems, in a descriptive manner, and advanced, post-graduate courses, where, linking up with his thesis in his 1966 article (explained above) and to the theme of his then recently published book, *Toward a Science of Comparative Education* (1969) (in which he and co-author Harold Noah propagated the wholesale use of the natural science research method for Comparative Education research) he advocated teaching students to do Comparative Education research in a positivistic manner, by hypothesis testing.

Another five years down the line Merle L. Borrowman (1975) published her paper entitled “Comparative Education in teacher education programs”. In this article she attempts to answer the question as to if the inclusion of Comparative Education makes for a better teacher. Since no research had been done on this, according to Borrowman, she could only express a considered and motivated opinion. She argues that a thoughtful exploration in depth of the way different human communities socialize and educate could provide not only a substantial core for General Education but could also at least significantly sensitize potential teachers to the most important pedagogical issues. However, given the many competing demands of various scholarly fields of Education for a place in teacher training programs in the United States of America (as the first two articles, Borrowdale’s article limits its periscope to the United States of America) it is unlikely that Comparative Education will secure a firm place and large space in teacher education programs at most universities. Yet she also expresses severe doubt that student teachers who get a one semester exposure to Comparative Education (in the optimistic scenario that their program will include a semester course on Comparative Education) will profit significantly from such a course. The pessimistic tone of the article is continued when she draws attention to the – at that stage just beginning of – the performance or competency-based model of teacher education and how ominous that boded for the future of Comparative Education in teacher education programs in the United States of America. She concludes with the suggestion that comparativists should look wider than teacher education programs to find a niche for Comparative Education in university programs.

A full twenty-one years lapsed before the next – and the last, before the articles on this topic dried up completely. In contrast to the previous articles, which exclusively focused on the United States of America, Leon Tickly and Michael Crossley (2001), in their article “Teaching Comparative and International Education: A framework for analysis” took mainly the United Kingdom, and to a lesser extent South Africa, Tanzania, Australia and Papua New Guinea as their framework of analysis. According to them, at that stage the debate on the teaching of Comparative Education centred around the question as to whether Comparative and International Education should be taught integrated in other courses of Education, or in separate courses/programs. They argued that rather than portray the future of comparative and international education in terms of a simple dichotomy – continued specialization or integration – it is more helpful to open the debate further and locate it within a broader analysis of the changing nature and context of university teaching and, in particular, of courses offered at the advanced studies level of continuing professional development. In so doing, they propose a third approach, which they call the transformative approach.

They criticize the historical way of teaching Comparative Education in British universities as a study of national systems of education and contend that the contemporary challenge to the national focus of educational systems brought about by globalization that may now require a fundamental reappraisal of the nature and role of both mainstream educational studies and comparative and international education – and of Comparative and International education teaching itself. They draw attention to the changing context of teaching of Comparative and International Education at British universities. This changing context include the phenomenon of globalization, and the resultant convergence of education policies and practices worldwide, students seeking continuing professional development rather than initial professional education (and therefore Comparative and International Education courses need to be made relevant to the needs of these students seeking continuing professional development) making an ever larger percentage of the student body of universities, the internationalization of universities and the rise of transnational campuses and programs, meaning students who need a new and different curriculum (than the traditional one). The integration and specialization models Tikly and Crossley see as complementary rather than as mutually excluding each other and being in a state of competition with each other; but the debate about the teaching of Comparative Education should rather centre around the issues raised above – the transformative model of teaching Comparative and International Education.

Three editions of a book on Comparative Education at universities worldwide

From the activities of the annual international conference on Comparative Education and Teacher Education, organised by the Bulgarian Comparative Education Society since 2002, emanated the book *Comparative Education as Discipline at Universities Worldwide*, edited by Wolhuter and Popov (2007) in 2007. This volume contains chapters on the evolution and current outlook of Comparative Education at universities in thirteen countries/regions worldwide. Each of the chapters was written by a professor of Comparative Education in that particular country/region. This volume was followed by a second edition a year later, entitled *Comparative Education at Universities Worldwide*, edited by Wolhuter, Popov, Manzon and Leutwyler (2008), and this time published jointly by the World Council of Comparative Education Societies and the Bureau of Educational Services, Sofia, Bulgaria. A much expanded edition, this volume contains chapters on the position of Comparative Education at universities in 36 countries/regions. An even more expanded edition, this time with chapters on Comparative Education at universities in 42 countries/regions, appeared in 2013, this time edited by Wolhuter, Popov, Leutwyler and Ermenc (2013). These 42 countries/regions are: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands and Flanders, Norway, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Ireland, Canada, the United States of America, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay, Greater China (including Hong Kong and Taiwan), Japan, Kazakhstan, (South) Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, Egypt, Iran, Oman, Burundi, Central Africa, Ruanda, Benin, Southern Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. In a concluding chapter to this volume, Wolhuter, Popov, Ermenc, Manzon and Leutwyler (2013) synthesised the contents of the book. The objectives of Comparative Education courses appear to

be fivefold: the description of education systems, understanding education systems, evaluating education systems, application to improve practice, and furthering of the philanthropic ideal. A total of eleven countries reported the existence of specialist programs of Comparative Education at Masters level. The chapters in the volume indicated that a course “Comparative Education” is taught at Bachelors of Education level in almost 50 countries and at Masters level in 34 countries. Ten countries (twenty per cent) reported a compulsory module/course for the subject at Bachelors level. However, in most of the countries that exclude Comparative Education as an explicit course in Bachelors of Education programmes, Comparative Education is subsumes in courses such as: Intercultural and Comparative Education, Intercultural Pedagogy, International Understanding, Polycultural Education, Globalisation and Education, Global Education, Education Systems in the European Union, Education Systems Worldwide, Education Systems and Administration, Education and Development, and Post-Colonial Education.

Research on students’ expectations from and experience of Comparative Education

The international conference on Comparative Education and Teacher Training also gave impetus to research on students’ expectations from and experience of Comparative Education courses. This research culminated in a nine country study (*cf. Wolhuter et al., 2011*), surveying what students in these countries expect from a Comparative Education course. The results showed startling differences regarding students’ perceptions of and motivations for studying Comparative Education. Their diverse motivations, the study concluded, are linked to contextual factors. In the case of the United States of America, the dominant motives for enrolling in Comparative Education courses are related to international understanding within the context of education as part of international aid. The hierarchy of expectations of the American students might be understood against the background of these students’ experience and career plans in international aid. American student expectations may also result from the amount of foreign aid (and education as part thereof) that the United States of America has been engaged in the past half century, ever since the advent of independence of large parts of the Third World, The Cold War, and the Truman Doctrine. In the case of Ireland the most important motivation was to help students to find a job to teach abroad. The Irish student teachers were mainly in there early twenties and intended to teach abroad at some stage of their career. They also indicated that they hoped it would develop their capacities to teach in the newly developing multi-cultural classrooms in Ireland and to also develop their general teaching strategies. The Greek and South African students looked to Comparative Education to illuminate and to guide the domestic education reform project. Both Greece and South Africa has recently become the scene of fundamental societal reconstruction, of which education is not only an integral part, but in which education had been assigned a pivotal instrumental role to bring about. Bulgarian students’ expectations, on the other hand, seem to resolve around gaining of fuller knowledge and insight of their own education system. While undergoing societal and educational transformation as South Africa, Bulgaria as a fully fledged member of the erstwhile Eastern Block, never suffered from academic isolation as South Africa did during the years of the international academic boycott. But the existence of an intransparent government and political-bureaucratic machinery up to 1990

might have created a yearning to know and to understand their education system better. In contrast to South Africa, Tanzania has long since passed through the post-independence educational and societal reconstruction of the 1960s – a project that bore limited success, and whatever educational reform is currently taking place, takes place within the prescribed fixed parameters of the World Bank Structural Adjustment Programme (which Tanzania had little option but to sign) and the neo-liberal global economic revolution. Tanzanian students therefore have a somewhat more detached (from everyday practice), purely intellectual expectation from Comparative Education courses. Oman has recently commenced to develop a mass education system, therefore Omani students, as their South African and Greek counterparts are interested in the value of Comparative Education to illuminate and to guide domestic educational reform. A unique expectation which transpired among the responses of the Omani students, is that, in a country with one public university, and 5097 students studying abroad (total tertiary enrolment 68154), Comparative Education will be seen as a means to obtain knowledge of foreign education systems, which will facilitate students to proceed to further (post-graduate) studies abroad. Similarly, among the Thai post-graduate cohort, an interesting expectation was what would assist them in finding an appropriate research design for their theses. Cuban students viewed Comparative Education as a way to gain a fuller understanding of various countries' societies and cultures. Cuban students' expectations could have been shaped by their country's history of using education to create a new society and culture since 1961. They view Comparative Education as revealing how their own as well as other societies and cultures were shaped by education, and how education contributes to the accomplishment of societal goals, such as societal justice. This study was followed up by another study of the author (Wolhuter, 2012) when discovering, as a visiting professor at Brock University, Canada, teaching Comparative Education to a class of international students, yet another rationale for studying Comparative Education, namely to prepare international students for the exigencies of studying at university level in the host country.

Conclusion

To put all of the above together, the teaching of Comparative Education is pivotal to the field's future; yet it is an aspect increasingly marginalised in the research agenda, as reflected in the top journal(s) of the field. While substantial work has been done as part of the extended activities of the international conference of Comparative Education and Teacher Training, a lacunas is a book on the various issues involved in the teaching of Comparative Education, guiding teachers and further research in that area. Delegates are invited to give comment and to participate in such a project.

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