

# **The Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) and The World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES): Leadership, Ambiguities and Synergies**

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## **Abstract**

The Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) has, throughout its 50 years of existence, exercised leadership in the field of comparative education. It was one of the five societies that founded the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES) in 1970, an umbrella body that by 2006 brought together 35 national, sub-national, regional and language-based societies. The CIES has continued to play a major role in WCCES affairs. The relationship has had ambiguities, while it has also provided many synergies for the promotion of the field of comparative education on a global basis. This article reviews the relationship between the CIES and the WCCES throughout their intertwined histories.

## **Introduction**

The leadership role of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) has been multifaceted. One dimension of this role concerns the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES), which was established in 1970 in Ottawa, Canada. The WCCES is an umbrella body that has grown over the decades and by 2006 brought together 35 national, sub-national, regional and language-based societies. When established, the WCCES had five member societies, of which the CIES was the oldest and largest. The CIES has continued to play a major role in WCCES affairs. The relationship has had ambiguities, which to some extent reflect broader patterns in academic and international affairs. On the other hand, it has also provided many synergies for the promotion of the field of comparative education on a global basis.

This paper employs a postmodern framework to give a historical account of some major themes in the intertwined histories of the WCCES, the CIES and related bodies during the three and a half decades from 1970. It draws on materials collected for a set of histories of the WCCES and its constituent societies<sup>1</sup>. The paper begins by presenting further information on the period surrounding the establishment of the WCCES in 1970 before turning to issues of functioning and the ways in which the CIES and the WCCES have related to each other in their various roles of promoting the field of comparative education.

## **A postmodern view of comparative education societies**

A postmodern view of knowledge production gives importance to the socio-political context in which knowledge is shaped and to the roles of power relations in creating, legitimizing and circulating knowledge. McGovern (1999) applied this framework in

analyzing academic knowledge production in the field of comparative and international education. This paper adopts a similar approach. It takes Bourdieu's (1966) concept of the intellectual field as

a magnetic field made up of a system of power lines. The constituting agents or systems of agents may be described as so many forces which by their existence, opposition or combination, determine [the field's] specific structure at a given moment in time. In return, each of these is defined by its particular position within this field from which it derives *positional properties*, and its *functional weight*, because its own "mass", that is, its power (or better, its authority) in the field cannot be defined independently of its position within it (p.89).

The metaphor of an intellectual field is a useful way of viewing the domain of comparative education at a world system level. The institutionalization of comparative education as a field of study has diverse roots in different parts of the world. Thus Cowen (1990) referred to the "wide variations in the relations of scholarly networks, governments, professional societies, university centres, the specialist journals, publishing and teaching activities, in producing comparative educations" (pp.332-333). These institutions, which he categorized as comparative education infrastructures, define, create, reorganize and transmit comparative education as a field of knowledge. The infrastructures can be taken as forming a system of agents which, by their existence, opposition or combination, determine the field's specific structure at a given moment in time. These agents occupy particular positions in the field in terms of the way they participate in societies' discourses on themes and problems. They also possess different ages, sizes and functional weights that determine their positions of power in the field □ for example within relationships of borrower and lender, or aid-donor and aid-recipient. These positions of power reflect geopolitical forces that shape the manner in which the agent is able (or unable) to exert political, economic and educational hegemony on others.

Some scholars have viewed the international knowledge system as segmented and hierarchical (e.g. Coser, 1965; Crane, 1972; Altbach, 1994). While scientific communities contribute to scientific growth by facilitating the diffusion of ideas as in a "contagion" effect (Crane, 1972, p.23), there are centers and peripheries among these international social circles:

It appears that communication networks in research areas are effective in linking scientists from different countries, but that scientists in some regions are less involved in these networks, and, consequently, their work is less visible to their colleagues in other countries. Disciplines differ considerably in the degree of participation by different countries in the international scientific community. Opportunities for developing a long-term commitment to an area with concomitant productivity appear to be related to the availability of a "critical mass" of colleagues in the same geographical region. (Crane, 1972, p.65)

Comparative education societies are among these infrastructures and are the unit of analysis in this article. The academic societies of comparative education are specialist organizations of comparativists dedicated to the advocacy and transmission of comparative education as a field of knowledge. These academic networks play an important role in interdisciplinary fields such as comparative education because they “give shape and substance to the links between knowledge forms and knowledge communities” (Becher and Trowler, 2001, p.104; also Cowen, 1990, p.322). Depending on the comparative education society’s position in the global field (at the center, the periphery or somewhere in between), the society could exert a dominant or less-dominant power on the institutional shaping of the field. This paper focuses on the CIES, the oldest comparative education society and a founding member of the WCCES, and reviews the relationship between these two organizations through a postmodern lens.

### **Establishment of the WCCES**

One key figure in the establishment of the WCCES was Joseph Katz, a Canadian who in 1961 had been President of what was then called the Comparative Education Society (CES) - i.e. before the 1968 change of name to the Comparative and International Education Society. In 1967, Katz was the leading actor in the creation of the Comparative and International Education Society of Canada (CIESC); and in 1970 he was the principal organizer of the First World Congress of Comparative Education Societies, held in Ottawa.

At that Congress, five societies came together to form the WCCES. They were:

- the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), which had been founded in 1956;
- the Comparative Education Society in Europe (CESE), which dated from 1961;
- the Japan Comparative Education Society (JCES), which had been established in 1965;
- the Comparative and International Education Society of Canada (CIESC), which had been formed in 1967; and
- the Korean Comparative Education Society (KCES), which had been founded in 1968.

As the oldest and largest society, the CIES played a particularly important role in the field and in the WCCES alongside the regional society in Europe and the national societies of Japan, Canada and (South) Korea. From its beginning, the WCCES was an umbrella body composed of societies which in turn had individual members.

Over the decades, some confusion has arisen from the fact that the CIES, which is primarily a national society for the USA albeit with many international members, has never had the name of a country attached to it. This appellation chiefly reflects the fact that in 1956 the society was the only one of its type, and it did not therefore need to distinguish itself from parallel bodies by a geographic indicator. This lack of a geographic indicator has sometimes caused confusion in the WCCES, since all the other member societies have geographic or linguistic markers of some kind. This is one of the ambiguities to which the title of this paper refers.

Elaborating on the names of the comparative education societies, out of the 35 constituent societies<sup>2</sup>, only six include the word “International” in their name. These are the CIES, Germany’s *Sektion International und Interkulturell Vergleichende Erziehungswissenschaft in der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft* (SIIVEDGE), the British Association for International and Comparative Education (BAICE), the Comparative and International Education Society of Canada (CIESC), the Australian and New Zealand Comparative and International Education Society (ANZCIES), and the Nordic Comparative and International Education Society (NOCIES). The first society with “International” in its name was the Canadian society formed in 1967. The following year, the American CES changed its name to the CIES. The Australian society began as an Australian CES and in 1976 became the Australian CIES before later adding New Zealand to its name (Fox, 2005). The British society, which started as the British Section of the CESE in 1966, became the British Comparative Education Society in 1979, and incorporated the “International” in 1983 when it became the BCIES. A merger with another body in 1997 led to the current name of BAICE (Crossley, 2004). As for the German Society, its incorporation of the “International” in its name dates from 2005 (Waterkamp, 2005). The individual histories of these societies reveal that their changes in nomenclature reflected underlying changes in the characteristics of their members, which in turn mirrored broader patterns in academic and international affairs. One element arose from the fact that the host countries of these societies have all been “aid-donors” and have therefore employed educators and education planners who carried out applied and policy-related studies in low-income countries. The growth of this academic/professional group of international educators was a major force behind the name changes in those societies. Adding the “International” to their names, the comparative education societies signaled their recognition of international education as related but distinct from the comparative education tradition, which connoted the academic, theoretical analyses of education<sup>3</sup>.

It is perhaps surprising that the WCCES, which was formed in 1970 under the leadership of Joseph Katz, who was coming from the “international” tradition in North America and during which there was a strong atmosphere of “internationalism”<sup>4</sup> in the industrialized countries, did not have the “International” in its name. It is also worth underlining that none of the other 29 constituent societies have the word “International” in their titles. This phenomenon demonstrates that international education is not universally paired with comparative education and indeed that it is not universally recognized as a strong field in its own right. Cowen appositely noted that the “social contextualization of comparative education leads to different comparative educations in different parts of the world” (1990, p.333). The tradition of pairing the twin fields in the CIES is not found everywhere.

### **CIES leadership within the WCCES**

The CIES has exercised leadership within the WCCES in several ways, evident in the identities of WCCES Presidents, and leadership and/or active participation in World Council Standing Committees. The CIES has also helped to catalyze the formation of comparative education societies in other places, and has assisted with the WCCES Congresses. Each of these domains is here considered in turn.

During the 35 years from 1970, the WCCES had 10 Presidents of whom three had previously been Presidents of the CIES. They were:

- Erwin H. Epstein, CIES President in 1981 and WCCES President from 1980 to 1982;
- Vandra L. Masemann, CIES President in 1989 and WCCES President from 1987 to 1991; and
- David N. Wilson, CIES President in 1993 and WCCES President from 1996 to 2001.

Two of these three (namely Masemann and Wilson) were residents in and nationals of Canada rather than the USA, again reflecting the broad focus of the CIES. Vandra Masemann also later became Secretary General of the WCCES (1996-2000).

Gerald Read, who played a key role in founding what was then called the CES, was also a major figure in the creation of the WCCES. However, in the years between 1972 and 1987, when the WCCES Secretariat was in Europe, the role of the European societies and to some extent the Japanese society, in the leadership of the WCCES was much stronger than that of the CIES. The chief exception to this statement was the two-year period of Erwin Epstein's presidency.

With respect to the World Council's Standing Committees, considerable leadership over the years has been provided by former CIES Presidents. In 2006, for example, Heidi Ross (CIES President in 2001) chaired the Research Standing Committee, and Karen Biraimah (CIES President in 2002) took over the Special Projects Standing Committee from Robert Arrove (CIES President in 2000).

The histories of the WCCES member societies indicate that many drew inspiration from the CIES or its predecessor entity. For example, the statutes of the Comparative Education Society in Europe (CESE), which were drawn up in 1962, were based on the CES statutes (Cowen, 1980, p.99); and the New York University Conferences (1954-1956) that were part of the prehistory of the CES (Sherman Swing, 2006) were among the elements leading to the formation of the Japan Comparative Education Society in 1959 (Ninomiya, 2006). Other bodies, including the societies in Cuba, Philippines and Hong Kong, were conceived during CIES annual conferences. Over the years, these conferences have become major events which have drawn considerable numbers of participants from outside the USA. The story of the Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong (CESHK) is particularly relevant. As recounted by Wong and Fairbrother (2006, p.1):

In March 1989, several academics from Hong Kong's two major universities (the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong) went separately to Boston, USA to attend the annual conference of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES). Without any prior arrangement for a meeting of any kind, these academics bumped into each other in Boston while attending each other's presentations and were excited about what each other had to say. The fervor for some form of intellectual exchange in a comparative context

gave rise to the birth of the Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong (CESHK) that same year.

These examples of the ways in which the CIES conferences served as focal points of scholarly meeting and interaction illustrate the “contagion” effect described by Crane (1972). They demonstrate how social networking in scientific communities stimulates knowledge growth and institutionalization.

The World Council is likewise mandated “to promote the study of comparative and international education throughout the world and enhance the academic status of this field” (WCCES Statutes, 1996). The most prominent activities through which the WCCES achieves this aim are the organization of World Congresses and the advocacy for the field’s continued development by encouraging the formation of new societies of comparative educationists. This role of the World Council is not easily replaceable by its member societies, including the CIES. Rather, the WCCES has a unique place via its officers and its Congresses for being a catalyst for the formation of academic societies in the field of comparative education. As explained by Erwin H. Epstein (2004a) in an interview during the 12<sup>th</sup> World Congress in Havana, Cuba:

[Y]ou wouldn’t have local organizations without the World Council. This morning, Lydia Turner, as you saw, came up to me and said ‘you are the father of Cuba’s Comparative Education Society’. But why? Because when I was in Cuba for the first time, I was trying to get the Cubans to form together a professional organization and seek admission into the World Council. Without the World Council, there would not have been sufficient motivation for them to come together as a group because what it meant was that when they came together as a group, they came together not simply to talk about comparative education in Cuba, but to project an international identity, to be part of the global picture. You can’t do that by being a local organization. So the World Council is of enormous, enormous importance in the organization of the field.

This view is corroborated by various officers of constituent societies of the World Council. A past president of the *Sociedad Española de Educación Comparada* (SEEC) attested to this fact:

The obvious reason why we [SEEC] joined the WCCES was to initiate and maintain some stable linkages with the existing comparative education societies in the world, for which the WCCES offered an adequate forum. Following SEEC’s incorporation to the WCCES, our relations with the other societies became more frequent and fluid. This is why we also got very involved in the very organization of the WCCES. (García Garrido, 2005)

In terms of knowledge production and epistemological shaping of the field, however, many of the national comparative education societies have had a more decisive role than the WCCES. Key informants described this process as follows:

The World Council does not shape the epistemology of the field because the WCCES, in order to subsist is a diplomatic affair... not a kind of 'intellectual dictatorship'. (Schriewer, 2005)

The World Congresses in those days weren't highly respected as venues or forums for cutting edge intellectual inquiry. I think it was at the national level of comparative education societies, and even more so at educational research meetings, e.g. the American Educational Research Association. ... There's no way the World Council could control the development of epistemology, primarily because we are a federation of comparative education societies. ... Where you are going to see more epistemological turmoil is probably in the local national meetings where people come as individual scholars to share their research ideas and there is some kind of discussion or contestation of epistemological points of view. Phenomenological approaches and Habermasian type of approaches, structuralist Marxist points of view: we debated all these in the 1970s and 1980s at CIES meetings. (Masemann, 2004)

Moreover, epistemological shaping takes place in the journals more than in society conferences. In this respect, the CIES exercises leadership with its journal *Comparative Education Review*. By contrast, the WCCES does not have its own journal, although following World Congresses it has established a tradition of special issues of the *International Review of Education* which are subsequently reprinted as stand-alone books (Ryba, 1993; Masemann and Welch, 1997; Soudien et al., 1999; Bray, 2003; Zajda et al., 2006).

Table 1: World Congresses of Comparative Education Societies

	Year	Place	Theme
1	1970	Ottawa, Canada	(i) The Place of Comparative and International Education in the Education of Teachers. (ii) The Role and Rationale for Educational Aid to Developing Countries
2	1974	Geneva, Switzerland	Efficiencies and Inefficiencies in Secondary Schools
3	1977	London, UK	Unity and Diversity in Education
4	1980	Tokyo, Japan	Tradition and Innovation in Education
5	1984	Paris, France	Dependence and Interdependence in Education: The Role of Comparative Education
6	1987	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	Education, Crisis and Change
7	1989	Montreal, Canada	Development, Communication and Language
8	1992	Prague, Czech Republic	Education, Democracy and Development
9	1996	Sydney, Australia	Tradition, Modernity and Postmodernity in Education
10	1998	Cape Town, South Africa	Education, Equity and Transformation
11	2001	Chungbuk, Korea	New Challenges, New Paradigms: Moving Education into the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century
12	2004	Havana, Cuba	Education and Social Justice
13	2007	Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina	Living Together: Education and Intercultural Dialogue

Source: WCCES

This section has discussed the leadership roles of the CIES within the WCCES, and has noted the different yet complementary missions of these two institutions of comparative education. The relationship between the CIES and the WCCES throughout their intertwined histories has exhibited some ambiguities as explained below.

### **Global-local ambiguities**

This section examines relationships between the WCCES and its constituent societies, and the tensions between the international aims of the former, and the national or local aims of the latter (Cowen, 1990). The case of the CIES is utilized to illustrate this point. Although the CIES has long been an influential member of the World Council, the relationship between the two bodies has had its peculiarities. As one commentator remarked:

It was a little bit like the US and the United Nations. The USA very reluctant, [had a] very ambivalent relationship with the UN: sometimes it feels very close to it and would support it, and other times it withdraws. And in a sense that's the way it was in 1980 with the CIES and the World Council. ... This idea that 'we (CIES) are the organization', we are the established, we're the first, the biggest by far, and we are so open that we allow anybody in our organization, anybody in the world. There were some people who really felt that CIES was like an umbrella group [and asked]: 'so what do we need an umbrella group for if we have CIES?' ... And they see that the World Council would encroach on its sovereignty, so to speak, diminish the sovereignty of the CIES. But that's gone, nobody talks about that anymore. That's over. Now, I'd say that the relationship of the CIES and the World Council, if I'm not mistaken, is stronger than say the US with the UN. (Epstein, 2004a)

Another key informant, Michel Debeauvais (2004) commented that during his presidency of the World Council (1983-1987), it was difficult to involve the CIES:

We cannot ignore the CIES. There is no other comparative education society as organized as the CIES. It is a great organization. I have great admiration [for it], and my main concern had been to involve the CIES in the World Council, but it was not [easy]. ... The CIES thinks that they have all the countries in their own society, so they don't expect anything from the World Council.

The above quote illustrates that while the WCCES is the duly constituted umbrella body for the national (and sub-national), regional and language-based societies of comparative education, some of its member societies may boast of stronger institutional infrastructures than the WCCES. As noted by King (1997, p.81):

In all academic circles there are prima donnas and factions, and in a world society of members from so many traditions and contexts it is often difficult to reconcile the diversity of interests and priorities. There are also diplomatic difficulties in finding acceptable venues which are also convenient for the gathering-in of colleagues from all over the world.



These societies may then view the WCCES as a competitor, or as an unnecessary super-structure for the field's development. Such was the outlook of the CIES towards the WCCES especially in the mid-1970s to the 1980s, an attitude comparable to (and perhaps reflective of) the way the USA might view supranational structures such as the UN. An example to illustrate this point dates back to 1974, when there was concern in CIES circles that ratifying the WCCES Constitution would mean endorsing a "super-society" (*CIES Newsletter*, 34, December 1974). This statement seemed to imply an attitude of superiority on the part of the CIES which wanted to protect its area of sovereignty and not be subordinated to a world council that was institutionally weak and in which the strong American society would be merely one among (un)equals.

Table 2: WCCES Constituent Societies, 2006

Types of Societies			Regional Breakdown		
	No.	%		No.	%
National and sub-national	27	77%	Europe	17	48%
			Asia	9	27%
Regional	6	17%	North America	2	6%
Language-based	2	6%	Latin America	4	11%
			Africa	2	6%
			Australasia	1	3%
<i>Total</i>	35	100%	<i>Total</i>	35	100%

Note: this table shows the situation as of March 2006.

Although the CIES can claim to be a global body, its international membership of about 10% is rather low. Moreover, its annual conferences have rarely been organized far beyond its national boundaries. The first occasion was in Canada in 1976, on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CIES. Other conferences have been held in Jamaica and Mexico, i.e. outside the USA but only in adjacent countries. This pattern can be explained by the practice of electing a new CIES Vice-President every year who is entirely responsible for choosing a conference site and arranging the annual conference at a convenient location for US scholars and their graduate students. By contrast, the WCCES endeavors to be globally inclusive, not only in its membership (Table 2), but also in the venue of its World Congresses.

### Synergies between the CIES and the WCCES

Despite possible elements of "rivalry" between the CIES and the WCCES, both vying for a global body status, there are valuable synergies between the two organizations. In the first place, the WCCES acknowledges the longstanding experience and scholarly contributions of its oldest member society. As the oldest member of the big WCCES family, the CIES has by its experience, energy and example been a catalyst alongside the WCCES in the advocacy of comparative education worldwide. And as noted above, the CIES conferences have been a fruitful seedbed for the formation and cultivation of new scholarly networks of comparativists in other parts of the globe.

Table 3: WCCES Meetings, 1970-2006

Meeting of the Council			Meeting of the WCCES Executive Committee					
1970 - 1984			1984 - 1995			1996 - 2006		
			1 <sup>st</sup> to 21 <sup>st</sup> Formal Meeting			22 <sup>nd</sup> to 35 <sup>th</sup> Formal Meeting		
Year	Place	Conference	Year	Place	Conference	Year	Place	Conference
1970	Ottawa, Canada	1 <sup>st</sup> WC	1984 <sup>d</sup>	Sèvres, France (1 <sup>st</sup> )	5 <sup>th</sup> WC	1996	Williamsburg, USA (22 <sup>nd</sup> )	CIES
1971	Hamburg, Germany		1985	Antwerp, Netherlands (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	CESE		Sydney, Australia (23 <sup>rd</sup> & 24 <sup>th</sup> , & GA)	9 <sup>th</sup> WC
1972	Geneva, Switzerland		1986	Toronto, Canada (3 <sup>rd</sup> )	CIES		Athens, Greece <sup>b</sup>	CESE
1973	Frascati, Italy	CESE		Garda, Italy <sup>b</sup>	CESE	1997	Mexico City, Mexico (25 <sup>th</sup> )	CIES
1974	Geneva, Switzerland	2 <sup>nd</sup> WC, CESE	1987	Washington, D.C., USA (4 <sup>th</sup> )	CIES	1998	Buffalo, NY, USA <sup>b</sup>	CIES
1975	Sèvres, France	CESE		Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (5 <sup>th</sup> )	6 <sup>th</sup> WC		Groningen, Netherlands <sup>b</sup>	CESE
1976	London, UK	CESE		Niteroi, Brazil (6 <sup>th</sup> )			Cape Town, South Africa (26 <sup>th</sup> )	10 <sup>th</sup> WC
1977	London, UK	3 <sup>rd</sup> WC, CESE	1988	Atlanta, USA (7 <sup>th</sup> )	CIES	1999	Toronto, Canada (27 <sup>th</sup> )	CIES
1979 <sup>a</sup>	Valencia, Spain	CESE		Budapest, Hungary (8 <sup>th</sup> )	CESE	2000	Texas, USA <sup>b</sup>	CIES
1980	[Saitama] Tokyo, Japan	4 <sup>th</sup> WC	1989	Harvard, USA (9 <sup>th</sup> )	CIES		Bologna, Italy (28 <sup>th</sup> )	CESE
1981	Geneva, Switzerland	CESE		Montreal, Canada (10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> )	7 <sup>th</sup> WC	2001	Washington DC, USA <sup>b</sup>	CIES
1982	New York, USA	CIES	1990	Madrid, Spain (13 <sup>th</sup> )	CESE		Chungbuk, South Korea (29 <sup>th</sup> & GA)	11 <sup>th</sup> WC
	Sèvres, France <sup>b</sup>	AFEC	1991	Pittsburgh, PA, USA (14 <sup>th</sup> )	CIES	2002	Florida, USA <sup>b</sup>	CIES
1983	Würzburg, F.R. Germany	CESE	1992	Annapolis, MD, USA (15 <sup>th</sup> )	CIES		London, UK (30 <sup>th</sup> )	CESE
1984 <sup>c</sup>	Sèvres, France	5 <sup>th</sup> WC		Prague, Czech & Slovak Republic (16 <sup>th</sup> & 17 <sup>th</sup> )	8 <sup>th</sup> WC	2003	New Orleans, USA (31 <sup>st</sup> )	CIES
			1993	Kingston, Jamaica (18 <sup>th</sup> )	CIES	2004	Salt Lake City, USA (32 <sup>nd</sup> )	CIES
			1994	San Diego, CA, USA (19 <sup>th</sup> )	CIES		Havana, Cuba (33 <sup>rd</sup> & GA)	12 <sup>th</sup> WC
				Copenhagen, Denmark (20 <sup>th</sup> )	CESE	2005	Stanford CA, USA <sup>b</sup>	CIES
			1995	Boston, MA, USA (21 <sup>st</sup> )	CIES		Bangi, Malaysia (34 <sup>th</sup> )	CESA
						2006	Honolulu, Hawai'i (35 <sup>th</sup> )	CIES

Source: WCCES

<sup>a</sup> No meeting was held in 1978.

<sup>b</sup> Informal meeting

<sup>c</sup> July 6, 1984 was the last meeting of the Council.

<sup>d</sup> July 7, 1984 was the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the WCCES Executive Committee.

Legend: WC – World Congress of Comparative Education Societies

AFEC – Association Francophone d'Éducation Comparée

GA – General Assembly of the WCCES

Another notable synergy between the CIES and the World Council comes from having the CIES conferences as strategic venues for meetings of the WCCES Executive Committee. Given the financial constraints of the World Council, attendance at meetings is self-funded by constituent society representatives. This practice has raised questions about how to ensure equitable representation in meetings. One approach has been to hold meetings in conjunction with conferences that representatives of constituent societies would be keen to attend even in the absence of a meeting of the WCCES Executive Committee. Since the CIES organizes the largest annual comparative education society meeting, it has since 1984<sup>5</sup> served as a periodic meeting place for the WCCES Executive Committee, alternating with the CESE biennial conferences (Table 3). During the period 1984-2006, of the 35 formal Executive Committee meetings organized by the WCCES, 15 were held at CIES conferences, nine at CESE conferences and eight at the World Congress venues. Between 1996 and 2006, seven informal meetings (in which decisions were non-binding) were held, among which five took place at CIES conferences and two at CESE conferences.

The convenience of the CIES conferences notwithstanding, attendance at WCCES formal meetings has been rather low, as reflected in the fact that only 23% to 53% of the WCCES members participated in formal meetings that took place during the CIES meetings between 1995 and 2004 (Bray & Manzon, 2005, p.200). In fact, the highest meeting attendances (over 70%) were in the Executive Committee meetings during the World Congresses in Korea (2001) and Cuba (2004).

While noting the value of CIES and CESE meetings, the World Council has been cognizant of the need to maintain other balances. With this in mind, the Executive Committee decided to hold its 2005 meeting in Malaysia in conjunction with the biennial conference of the Comparative Education Society of Asia (CESA). This was the first time that the Asian regional society had been chosen as a venue. In 2006 the Executive Committee decided to repeat the initiative by holding its January 2007 meeting in Hong Kong in conjunction with the combined conference of CESA and the Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong (CESHK)

### **Conclusion**

This paper has reviewed the relationship between the CIES and the WCCES from a postmodern perspective. It has applied the metaphor of the intellectual field (Bourdieu, 1966) to the field of comparative education, taking the comparative education society as the unit of analysis. Comparative education can thus be viewed as a magnetic field with constitutive agents interacting and exercising varying degrees of attraction and power depending on their positions in the field. Among the constitutive agents are the comparative education societies, and this paper discusses the role of the CIES vis-à-vis the WCCES in the institutional shaping of the field.

The CIES has occupied a position of leadership within the WCCES, chiefly because of its seniority in age and its substantial size. This position reflects the vigor of US scholars in the field even prior to the foundation of the WCCES. The CIES was one of the five founding constituent societies that established the WCCES in 1970, and its leaders have occupied executive positions in the World Council either as presidents or as chairs of

standing committees. To some extent, the CIES has worked alongside the WCCES with the common goal of promoting comparative education and catalyzing new scholarly societies of comparativists through its annual conferences at which international scholars gather.

This vigor of the CIES has caused some ambiguities as to the role and stature within the field of the CIES and the WCCES throughout their intertwined histories. Particularly in the 1980s, the CIES considered itself “the super-society” in the field of comparative education and was rather ambivalent towards the role of the WCCES as being another “super-structure.”

Another ambiguity between the CIES and the WCCES is the “International” tradition upheld by the CIES and the other 5 societies having the word “International” in their names, while the WCCES and the rest of its 29 societies do not have this designation. As discussed in the article, the “international education” wing emerged only in several parts of the industrialized world where there was a critical mass of educators engaged in international assistance to lower-income countries. By contrast, the WCCES as a global body embraces diverse cultures and traditions in the field and did not feel the need to add the “international” in its name. Moreover, since so many member societies do not have the “I” word in their titles, it cannot properly be said to be a “WCCIES.” The WCCES also has a “balancing” role to play in taming the potential or existing hegemonies that occur in its forums by being sensitive to the locations of its meetings and the representation of all of its member societies on its committees and in its publications.

The CIES has just turned 50, a mature age of wisdom and experience. Some of the ambiguities discussed here have become less frictional with the passage of the years. The WCCES in its mid-30s will profit from the synergies with its oldest constituent society, the CIES. Both bodies can benefit from the common search in a global era for new and dynamic areas to explore in comparative (and international) education.

## Notes

1. The project was launched in 2004 under the direction of Vandra L. Masemann, Mark Bray and Maria Manzon. In due course it will lead to a book entitled *Common Interests, Uncommon Goals: Histories of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies and its Members*. The book will be co-published by the Comparative Education Research Centre of the University of Hong Kong, and Springer, Dordrecht, Netherlands.
2. For a complete listing of WCCES constituent societies, visit [www.hku.hk/cerc/wcces](http://www.hku.hk/cerc/wcces).
3. For detailed discussion on the distinctions between comparative and international education, see Epstein (1994); Wilson (1994); and Crossley & Watson (2003).
4. Particularly during the post-World War II reconstruction period, leaders and academics in the industrialized countries were concerned about promoting unity among nations and peoples as forming one international community.
5. From 1970 to 1983, the World Council held formal meetings but not as a duly constituted Executive Committee. Only in 1984 was the event first called an

Executive Committee meeting. By March 2006, there had been 35 formal Executive Committee meetings and 7 informal meetings (the first of which was in 1996).

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