



*CESE XXV Conference
Salamanca, 18-21 June, 2012*

***Empires, Post-coloniality and Interculturality:
Comparative Education between Past, Post, and Present***

The World in Europe – Europe in the World

It is interesting – if fairly obvious – why there is a branch of comparative and international education which deals with small islands but there is no comparative education of big continents. Thus we are ill-prepared for example to offer (to anyone who wants it, including ourselves) a way of understanding Brazil, Russia, India and China from within the perspective of academic comparative education.

However that is an odd side effect of the international politics of ‘comparative education’. Add a few more countries (such as Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan and the United States) and we are suddenly looking at the education of a very large number of people indeed – and it would certainly be possible to imagine a comparative education based around persons. That is, it would be exciting to think through the ‘agenda of attention’ and intellectual configuration of a different kind of comparative education if the human being (real ones, and many of them) was – on some broad principle of the greatest educational happiness of the greatest number – suddenly inserted as the focal point of comparative education.

We have not quite gone that far here, but perhaps the theme can be kept visible in the work of some scholars at the Conference. In the end, however, in thinking about this Conference we took a simpler approach.

Partly, we were wondering what comparative education had missed thinking about in the last few decades or had thought about but perhaps under-emphasised. Partly, we wondered what some of the major historical events of our epoch had been and what names we had given to the social processes which had affected so many lives – and what we knew about those lives, educationally. Thus in thinking about this Conference we began by naming ‘our times’ through labels for a number of massive social processes with obvious implications for education. In taking some of our final decisions, we inverted the principle and asked if there were any educational events and processes (in addition to the obvious ones such as being able to attend school at all) which looked, in our times, likely to have later a major impact on many human lives. We then asked if we could make a pattern of such thinking – a pattern which would lead to major possibilities for a wide range of colleagues to join in the Conference and give papers. Finally, at the beginning and at the end of our thinking – and for quite a bit in the middle – we were wondering about the condition of comparative education itself – hence the subtitle of the Conference: past, post and present.

It was in this way that we came up with the themes of the Working Groups, all of which we hope will stimulate and encourage comparative interpretations of

educational patterns and how they change:

- Empires
- Post-coloniality
- Post-socialism
- Interculturality
- International Cooperation
- New Empires

In their different ways, all directly address international events and transnational flows of power, people, ideas and educational patterns. All these 'events' are also political processes which are still very much with us. All the processes are global – and have local forms and consequences.

We hope that academic colleagues and CESE Members will join us in Salamanca to explore, through the Plenary Lectures and within the Working Groups and in conversations, these themes which can of course be cross-linked in any given paper.

WORKING GROUP 1: *Empires and Education*

CHAIR: Eleftherios Klerides (European University of Cyprus & American University of Beirut)

What kind of comparative thinking is needed today to understand 'old' and 'new' empires, and education systems? Is theorising empires and education, comparatively, an impossible task?

The range of territorial Empires that could be analysed is considerable – e.g., American, Aztec, Belgian, British, Chinese, French, German, Inca, Japanese, Ottoman, Persian, Portuguese, Roman, Russian, Spanish, Arab, Soviet. The range of possible themes is wide. They include the relationship between empire, universities and ruling-elites; subaltern voices and educational patterns of disaffection; the deliberate use of school curricula and textbooks and rituals in both metropolises and colonies for sociopolitical ends. The questions are many. How were imperial discourses (including the idioms of 'civilisation', 'progress', 'democracy', 'peace', 'modernisation', 'socialism') decoded, for example, in the Maghreb, in Latin America, in India, in Central and Eastern Europe, in Australasia, in North America, etc.? What were the imaginings and practices and sites of gender, nation, ethnicity, race, religion, tribe in their educational forms, both within and in opposition to imperial identities?

Papers are also welcome on 'new empires', including empires of the mind, and empires-in-the-making. Sociologically, politically and comparatively can, for instance, the EU, the Council of Europe, OECD, World Bank, UNESCO, be understood as 'empires' in relation to education? There is a flurry of theoretical questions to be asked about their styles of 'invasion' (e.g., 'recommendations', 'reports', 'expert meetings', 'coordination committees'), their rhetorics of 'legitimation' (e.g., 'quality', 'development', 'reconciliation'), and their patterns and regimes of 'governance' (e.g., 'rankings', 'benchmarking', 'world-class'). How far may the analogy of 'invasion', 'legitimation' and 'governance' be pushed for such international patterns of educational influence? Similarly, how far may a metaphor such as 'empires of the mind, ideology and belief' be pushed as ways of

understanding educational forms? Where do such metaphors break down as ways of understanding educational change and stability?

WORKING GROUP 2: *Post-socialism and Education*

CHAIR: Vlatka Domovic (University of Zagreb)

Possible themes for papers include stabilising the topic by reflecting on what came before: the world-system and the rise of state-socialism and state-socialist educational systems and their patterns of curriculum, universities, teacher education and moral orders. A powerful theme is available on ‘socialist borrowing’, not least in education. What are the socialist and post-socialist contrasts? Equally papers could be offered on Cuba and North Korea and African socialist societies and their educational patterns. What narratively were the dramas of non-change and change? Who wrote the scripts, to which ideologies? Exactly who acted – who were the *dramatis personae*?

There are also the new post-socialist societies: Russia and Central and Eastern Europe and the legacies, memories of education, and the new educational (and societal) narratives. What are the disruptions and continuities within Chinese socialism and Chinese education? How may we understand the roles of, for example, the World Bank, the OECD, the EU and aid and advice and Foundations and organized religions in the shaping of new educational patterns and new governance systems for education in post-socialist societies?

Theorising post-socialist societies and education is clearly difficult. How may theoretical sense be made of post-socialist ‘transfer and borrowing’, not least in education and how may the new nationalisms and old socialisms, new language mixtures and old religions, and newly assertive minorities and educational patterns be understood? What, in such contexts, do concepts of ‘globalisation’ explain – and fail to explain? And what of the future and its relation to the past? What is the evidence that our historical interpretations of education and state-socialism and post-socialism have been parochial? What may be said, analytically, about visions of the educational future of post-socialist societies – not least in terms of the question ‘whose visions are they’?

WORKING GROUP 3: *Education and Interculturality*

CHAIR: Jagdish Gundara (Institute of Education, University of London)

I ntercultural education is both a way of seeing educational systems and societies and, in intention, a way of acting on them both. Papers can discuss intercultural education as a field of study; as a field of study in relation to ‘comparative education’ for example or anthropology, or political science, etc.; and papers can discuss intercultural education as a field of action – by the State, by agencies, by schools, and by teachers and families. No doubt other papers will concentrate on the ways in which the labels and the academic definitions of the field of study of ‘intercultural education’ (in a range of languages) has changed over time – and the politics of those labels in terms of theories of ‘the other’, ‘the majority’ and ‘minorities’.

To frame ‘interculturality,’ papers are welcome to start their analyses on the

basis of narratives about any region (e.g., East Asia or the Indian sub-continent) as well as any country (e.g., Argentina, Brazil, China, Denmark, England, France, and so on – including the USA and the UK where the interculturality motif reflects a different history when compared with that of England). Papers from a range of intellectual perspectives are encouraged, e.g., anthropological and historical; and from a range of interpretative positions, e.g., post-feminist, post-modern, post-colonial.

It would be perfectly proper if some of the papers in the Working Group stressed gaps between policy and practice; the formation of policies of interculturality and intercultural education; the influence of international, regional and national agencies; and the flows of migration which have shaped 'issues of interculturality' – as well as issues of interculturality which have not been shaped by recent migrations. Persons presenting papers are encouraged to use an explicit interpretative device (e.g., border; mobility; neo-liberal state) or a theory of their own choosing.

WORKING GROUP 4: *Post-coloniality and Education*

CHAIR: Lennart Wikander (Uppsala University)

With the collapse of the nineteenth and twentieth century Empires of the Great Powers, a large number of humankind passed into a political condition loosely known as 'independence'. This was and is clearly a major event in recent history and – with variations – it can be identified in a wider range of situations than the relatively recent collapse of empires such as those of the British or the Portuguese. In what senses may South Korea for example – or even Japan or China – be construed as containing elements of a 'post-coloniality'? How far does the theory of 'post-coloniality' stretch? Also, how did the situation of people after the collapse of Empires become labelled 'post-colonial' and where does this discourse come from and how has it penetrated educational studies? What were the educational consequences of decolonization processes?

Given this core problematique, the theme of this Working Group will include: new nation formations and varieties of modernisation; intercultural issues – along with their regional, national and hemispheric contexts; the themes of international political relations and international economic and consultancy input, labour markets, social models and ideologies, and neo-imperialist educational models – as well as the themes of gender, new political identity, cultural identity, inclusion and exclusion, otherness, subaltern voices, religion, language, reconciliation and revenge, ethnicity, race. How has 'post-colonial' education been shaped by some of the old factors of language, tribal identity, race and ethnicity, and new assumptions about national and international politics?

Finally what are the roles of 'education and international development' in the construction and destruction of 'post-coloniality' and what is the relationship of 'comparative education' to 'education and international development'? In other words, what does the expression 'comparative and international education' mean these days, compared with what it used to mean?

WORKING GROUP 5: *New Empires of Knowledge*

CHAIR: Hans-Georg Kotthoff (Freiburg University of Education)

In comparative education there has always been a preference for ‘getting the facts’ and for seeing the role of comparative investigation as being linked to the improvement of educational policy. This motif has taken different shapes at different times (e.g., Jullien, Pedro Rossello). Recently we have seen a considerable growth in international studies of achievement – e.g., TIMSS, PISA and PIRLS, accompanied by an increasingly international discourse about economic competition, quality enhancement and accountability in education, and notions of effective and efficient schooling.

These phenomena – in their density and frequency and in their political acceptance – are relatively new to us and are open to comparative analysis. There are ways to think about such research. One way is technical: how good is it and what does it tell us? In what sense does it count as ‘robust and relevant research’ – robust in what senses and relevant to whom, in what ways?

However, the research is also (e.g., PISA) a form of international ranking which sometimes has dramatic political repercussions ‘at home’. What are these new ‘politics of ranking’ and their implications for educational reform and indeed the concept of education itself? As the model extends – for example in the work of OECD or in the Shanghai and Times Higher Education rankings of higher educational systems – should we try to make sense of these rankings as modes of educational (and societal) forms of competition, as a mode of ‘governance by numbers’ and as ‘compasses’ for educational decision?

The broadest question of the WG is whether we are seeing the development of a ‘sociology and politics’ of international numbers and rankings and whether this is a new form of ‘comparative education’ and – if it is – how we might understand it and relate it to our traditional forms of ‘comparative education’.

WORKING GROUP 6: *International Cooperation and Education*

CHAIR: Elisabeth Buk-Berge (Institute of Education, University of London)

International cooperation in the production of relevant research, the brokerage of knowledge, and the growing interest in international evidence and the overlappings of the work of international and regional agencies are relatively new forms of educational action currently in Europe and worldwide. These new forms of international cooperation – which are also new in their legitimations and in their worldviews – are open to comparative analysis.

What world do these new forms of educational action, this form of international cooperation, call into being? The public justifications for the work of ‘international cooperation’ include phrases such as ‘evidence-informed’ policy and practice in education. This is one of the immediate priorities in Europe both at international level and within many individual countries. There are questions to be asked about what is the meaning of the term ‘evidence’ as it is actually used in our times, and what currently counts as ‘rigour’ and ‘relevance’ in educational research across different contexts.

Such developments lead to a flurry of questions. What groups of users and other stakeholders are involved in shaping knowledge-informed policy and practice

in education? What kind of infrastructure, mechanisms and processes enable mutual learning and the exchange of good practices across borders? What are the criteria of defining what is 'good practice' and what kind of research is used in the framing of educational policy proposals in the EU, OECD, World Bank, UNESCO and other organisations? What is the impact of international coordination and priorities of educational research in Europe on research policies at national and institutional level, and choices of individual researchers as well?

Finally – and it is a question of some importance – are there distinctions to be drawn between 'applied comparative education' and 'comparative education' as a university subject? Can everything be covered by speaking of 'international and comparative education'? If so, why?

NEW SCHOLARS' WORKING GROUP

CHAIRS: Leoncio Vega (University of Salamanca) & Javier Valle (Autonomous University of Madrid)

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Iveta Silova (Lehigh University, USA)
Sabine Hornberg (University of Bayreuth, Germany)
Juan Manuel Moreno (World Bank, USA)

LAUWERYS LECTURE

Thomas Popkewitz (University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA)

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