

Afterword

Vandra L. Masemann

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto

The events leading up to the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Comparative and International Education Society have led to some reflection on the history of the Society and on the role of Comparative Education as a field of study in those last fifty years. The papers in this issue of *Current Issues in Comparative Education* form part of this process of reflection.

Personal reflection

I have had a long interest in the questions raised in this particular issue of CICE. When I attended my first CIES meeting in San Francisco in 1975, it was my first conference in the United States. I gave an invited paper on "Comparative Studies of Education in the Anthropological Mode" (Masemann, 1976), which owed a lot to my experience of having done fieldwork in West Africa at a girls' boarding school, as an anthropologist *qua* anthropologist without a single course in comparative education, or even education for that matter. I remember what I said after I returned to Toronto: "The strange thing about the Americans is that they all seem to think that the whole world is a field site for their students." They did not seem to think of other countries as being held in parity of esteem by the United States. The novelty of that feeling has never left me.

In 1975, I had no idea what entrenched paradigms existed in the field and what my role would be in the field of comparative education. Now that I look back, I think that I fought for recognition of the marginal and the voiceless and the invisible during the ensuing 30 years. I saw Africa receding in the public and political consciousness over the decades, I saw women and girls as lacking voices, or when they acquired a voice, lacking listeners. I saw indigenous cultures become invisible under the juggernaut of industrialization and now globalization. In regard to my misgivings about quantitative methodology, I always remembered a visit by social critic Paul Goodman (author of "Growing up Absurd") to the University of Toronto in the late 1960's in which he said that one should always mistrust numbers with zeros. The more zeros, the more one should mistrust them. Nelly Stromquist (2005) notes in a recent review of comparative and international education:

...the influence of CIE is determined not only by its intellectual value but also by the proximity, of its practitioners to the circles of power. Those wielding influence are not academics but rather the staff members of international organizations and their transnational counterparts who subscribe to dominant, market-oriented development models that are not substantiated by empirical research (p. 107).

He went on to equate zeros and money and power, and counting with all of them. As for my theoretical leanings, they owe much to my parents and grandparents who ranged from social democratic on the right end to Fabian Socialists on the left end of the political continuum.

The process of reflecting on the field

One aspect of this exercise of reflection about the past has been the process of gathering together information about the historical development of both the formally-constituted comparative (and international) education societies, and about the less administrative and more theoretical processes of the development of the “field” itself. The second task in this process of reflection is to ask questions about the development of the field, and to subject its development to the same kind of analytical processes of comparison as one does in the first level of data-gathering.

For example, one can even pose theoretical questions about the foci and lacunae in the study of comparative education. In other words, what have we focused on, and what have we omitted to study? What theoretical approaches have gained in popularity or gone out of favor? What approaches have been purposely avoided? What have we not even noticed that we weren’t focused on? And what has it meant that we didn’t even notice the gaps or the systematic exclusion of certain phenomena or approaches? What if “we” are taking it upon ourselves to make massive over-generalizations about the development of the field because there are other ways of thinking about it, or because people with very divergent approaches do not have access to the travel grants, technology, institutions of higher education, or forums for speaking that we do? And what if there is not one field at all?

The papers in this issue consider all of these questions, and that is their richness. My remarks in this commentary will examine any number of questions that they raise in relation to the development of the field and our attempts to understand its history, in my case, from a critical approach. I will also try to identify alternative accounts of the historical facts presented. I will attempt, in this commentary to abide by the injunction of the noted French historian of science on the distortions of history: “Before we join end to end the journeys along a road, we should first make sure it is the same road.” (Canguilhem, 1975:21)

The call for papers

The first task, however, is to examine the Call for Papers for this issue of CICE to see what the assumptions were about this task we have ahead of us. I will examine this piece of writing as “text” and draw out what assumptions are made about the importance of the 50th anniversary of CIES and its relationship to the development of comparative education as a field. The first two sentences are as follows:

Fifty years ago, the Comparative and International Education Society was founded, signaling the emergence of comparative and international education (CIE) as a distinct academic field. Since then, the field has experienced significant growth within the academy and has directly affected the formation and implementation of educational policies around the world.

The first sentence attributes to the CIES the honor of being the cornerstone of the founding of comparative education, and conflates the establishment of the Society with the founding of the field. In fact, the field had existed long before that date. The so-called “father” of comparative education is usually considered to be the renowned French educationist, Marc-Antoine Jullien, who had the idea of developing a “science” of

education, since he saw education has having played a crucial role in forming a revolutionary consciousness in students before the French Revolution.. He published his famous work in comparative education, *Esquisse et vues preliminaries d'un ouvrage sur l'éducation comparée` entrepris d`bord pour les vingt-deux cantons de la Suisse at pour quelques parties de l'Allemagne at de l'Italie...*(Outline and preliminary views for a work on comparative education undertaken for the twenty-two cantons of Switzerland and for some parts of Germany and Italy, that can be subsequently carried out in the same way for all European states...) in 1817, in which he proposed a project for studying education in all the countries of Europe, eventually using a standardized questionnaire with 266 items. It was "the first attempt to separate an empirical field of observation into its constituent parts, to devise techniques of inquiry and to use formal models of analysis" (Gautherin, 1993, p. 757).

While his work was somewhat neglected during the nineteenth century, the first course on the science of education was officially introduced at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1883. Between 1883 and 1956, comparative education was developing in the countries of Europe and North America, and in other countries such as China. Ruth Hayhoe is fond of saying that there was a textbook in comparative education in China two years before Kandel's work was published (personal communication, April 5, 2006).

The next section of the Call for Papers is as follows and forms the foundation of this collection and the core of the main argument that one is pursuing as one reads the papers:

As CIE developed as a field and came to play an increasing role in shaping educational strategies and policies, it came under attack as being largely an adjunct of western imperialism and as having been insensitive toward the cultural and political realities of the developing and post-colonial world. Since these powerful critiques of CIE were first articulated in the 1960s, how has the discipline reacted? How have the lessons from this experience affected our research and practice? What is our sense of justice toward the people whose development we are supposed to support?

When I first read this section, I assumed that one or some of the papers submitted would be from "the South", as I had heard from Harold Herman from the Southern African Comparative and History of Education Society last year that he felt comparative education had been dominated by countries of the North and that it had not (specifically in the body of the WCCES) been able to spread to other countries of the South since it was in the contradictory position of supporting the dominance of the North.

So, it is noteworthy that we have not heard from the South in this collection. We are, instead, talking about the South or the East. And we are, of course, in the North. However, there are many questions to attend to each paper, and I must carry on with my task.

The papers

Elizabeth's Swing's paper is the result of three years' intensive work in the CIES Archives of Kent State University in Ohio. It is, in a sense, an administrative history. It

gives details about the development of the CIES as an academic society, and the changes that it underwent as it grew in size, held its own independent conferences, changed its original name to include the word "International," hosted many diverse theoretical approaches and substantive interests, and diversified its internal structure to a greater level of complexity. Her paper can only give a brief hint of how important the CIES is in the lives of its members, and she gives a fitting salute to it from a student at the end of her paper. In closing, I might comment that the paper that she wrote was never intended to be one on the state of the field in the last fifty years. That is a paper that needs yet to be written, summarizing all the papers that have been given at the fifty conferences, and outlining the main interests and approaches of the participants. Nelly Stromquist has written a general overview of comparative and international education for the 75th anniversary of the Harvard Educational Review (Stromquist, 2005).

What is noteworthy about the CIES in the context of this issue of CICE is the assumption that the CIES is *the* comparative and international education society. As is remarked upon in the Manzon and Bray paper, it does not contain the initials US in front of its name, in the way, for example, that USAID does. It has also been the practice of CIES to admit members from any country in the world, although these members used to be listed separately in the CIES directory. Lastly, it has been the practice in CIES to have at least one Board spot reserved for an overseas member. All of these practices have been carried out in the name of fostering international relations, but they have had the effect of stratifying the societies hierarchically and lessening, in some cases, the participation of country nationals in their own local societies, if and when they can get funding to attend the CIES meetings.

This has certainly been the case in Canada. For those starting out in the field, it is often confusing for Canadians who learn about both societies and who wonder if CIESC is the Canadian "branch" of CIES. It is also sometimes confusing for Canadians at the meetings who find themselves identified as belonging to one of the regional committees of the CIES, depending on where they live in Canada, as a northern extension of the USA, or else who are assigned a room for a Canadian "regional" meeting. It has often been remarked--only half in jest--that one can more often find a quorum for the CIESC meetings at CIES meetings than at the meetings in Canada.

These underlying currents are also present in the relationship between the CIES and the WCCES (World Council of Comparative and International Education Societies), termed by Manzon and Bray as "synergies and ambiguities". In short, the CIES sees itself as the premier society of comparative and international education, international in scope and welcoming to individual members from all countries. The World Council, on the other hand, is a federation of member societies, with the President of each being a member of the Executive Committee. It holds a World Congress every three years, to which individuals from any country are welcome to submit proposals to present. Which organization, then, is truly the "world" society?

The answer is complex. Mark Bray, Maria Manzon, and I are at present editing the collected histories of the World Council and its member societies (Masemann, Bray and Manzon, forthcoming). We have learned a great deal about the in-country development of comparative education from the 22 chapters submitted by member societies. The

World Council has as one of its tasks the fostering of the development of comparative education around the world, so these authors report that its Congresses seemed to spark the growth of interest in the host country, for example, in Brazil (1987), the then Czech and Slovak Republic (1991), and Cuba (2004). In addition, the history of comparative education at the country level is played out in the context of the local regulations for institutions of teacher education, the place of the foundations of education within the teacher education and general education program, the development of graduate education in educational research, and the role of the central government or private institutions in promoting educational research and international development more generally. Each country has its own story to tell.

Comparative education has not just spread like a vine over the whole world with the CIES as its root. There is great deal more diversity in approaches, in the local history of its development, in the contested terrains in each country than we hear about at CIES conferences. It is ironic that because of our interest in internationalism, we seem to have over-generalized the history of the development of comparative education and have lost sight of its development on the national scene, including within the United States. Even CIES conferences sometimes have references to uniquely American programs, such as multiculturalism, minority group education, urban education, bilingual education, and "No Child Left Behind", which members of the international audience do not understand because it is assumed by the presenters that these terms either are known by everyone or that their meaning is transferable.

One final comment about the Manzon and Bray paper is that while it claims to have a post-modern viewpoint, I find the discussion to be firmly functionalist. The synergies and ambiguities resonate to me as the disfunctionalities of a Parsons or a Merton.

As for the papers by Gita Steiner-Khamsi and William deJong Lambert and by Frances Vavrus and Lesley Bartlett, they present discussions of empirical problems within the field of comparative studies that could require another entire article to discuss. I can just comment here on some of the very interesting points they raise.

I note the somewhat over-generalized history of the field of comparative education at the beginning of the Steiner-Khamsi and deJong Lambert paper:

Until the 1960s, comparative education in North American was firmly based in the discipline of history, enamored with one-country studies, and fixated on educational systems in Europe. By the end of the decade, the field was transformed into comparative and international education, with a composition of researchers and practitioners who were multi-disciplinary, cross-national and international in orientation. (p. 84)

I disagree that studies had been mainly historical. Moreover, I think it is too condensed and elliptical a view. There is wealth of information on the development of comparative education before the 1960s, which is simply not remembered or taught. (I realize that the present ahistorical tendency to put recently published references on one's course outlines so as to appear current in one's thinking has led to a certain loss of institutional memory.) Many researchers had described the structure of educational administration,

in Europe particularly. Sociological approaches started in the early part of the twentieth century, with the focus on social problems in cities, with the rise of left-wing, social issue-oriented political parties in the UK and Sweden. Even in anthropology, the field of national character studies had been in vogue before World War Two. Moreover, in referring to the seeming transformation of the field in the 1960s as they point out themselves, people such as Sir Michael Sadler and Isaac Kandel had done work in technical assistance long before the 1960s.

Up to the third page, this account ignores developments in parts of the world other than the USA; for example, the development of the *Deutsches Institut für Pädagogische Forschung* in Frankfurt and the flight of Eastern Europeans to study there, the relationships between other countries and Russia, and the long history of comparative education in China.

I agree completely with the sentence “One of the fallacies perpetuated in historical accounts of comparative and international education is that the development branch of the field emerged as a response to the post-colonial context of the 1960s.” (p. 85, this issue) Indeed many countries were doing it as part of their colonial mission. There is ample literature about French, British, and German attempts to educate their colonial subjects. Moreover, efforts by missionaries and the military to either convert, assimilate, or eradicate indigenous peoples had also been part of the sad history of colonialism. The proliferation of Peace Corps volunteers and other volunteer agencies led to the entry of many graduate students into higher education in the late 60s and 70s who may have thought that international development only started when they first learned about it!

I thought that the paper needed to have further discussion about the role of the non-aligned nations. There was a real attempt by countries such as India and Tanzania to tread the middle path. UNESCO also was caught up in this struggle, as its attempts to introduce a “new information order” eventually led to the withdrawal of the United States from UNESCO. There was also almost no discussion of the other countries in the world and how they dealt with the Cold War. For example, Canada certainly gave a great deal of foreign aid to Tanzania, and I can remember that Julius Nyerere was welcomed at the highest levels when he visited the University of Toronto in the 1960s.

The most surprising part of this article to me was the reference to the Russian criticism of US comparative and international education, and the need “to refute the generalized defamation of U.S. comparative and international education as a field that advanced the ‘imperialist-neocolonialist cultural foreign policy’ of the U.S. government (Kienitz, 1967, p. 103), and replace it with more nuanced analyses.” (p. 92, this issue) I assume this was the origin of the comment in the Call for Papers that comparative and international education had been under attack in the 1960s. I had assumed that this criticism was a much more profound one of the long term effects of not reaching out to countries from the South, and of continuing to construct a dichotomy of aid-donor and aid-recipient nations in the international development enterprise. If it is any comfort at this point, I think the Russians and Eastern Europeans who are now grappling with calls for educational reforms in the context of globalization, and regulations for entry into the European Union under neo-liberal economic agendas, are no longer blaming comparative education for their woes!

My last comments focus on the paper by Vavrus and Bartlett. I agree that it is essential to have vertical case studies in comparative education for all the reasons the authors have laid out here. I can only agree with my earlier words, quoted here:

...our conceptions of ways of knowing have limited and restricted the very definition of comparative education that we have taught to students and used in our own research and, indeed, have promulgated to practitioners (p. 96, this issue).

I agree that it is essential for the reason that they state: "in a vertical case study, understanding of the micro-level is viewed as part and parcel of larger structures, forces, and policies about which the researcher must also develop a full and thorough knowledge" (pp. 96-97, this issue)

In fact, I agree with practically every word in the article. It is what is *not* in the article that I wanted to read more about. I found it difficult to accept that "vertical case study research has the potential to place local knowledge on a more equal footing with official, authoritative knowledge," (p. 98, this issue) and I began to ask myself why this was. I think that the kind of research studies outlined here need to take more explicit account of relations of power and ideology. I realize that the authors have themselves cautioned against reproducing "dominant power/knowledge relations by producing reports lacking in theory and in substance" (p. 98, this issue). But this discussion too needs to address some of these issues head on. I want to hear more about critical approaches, pressures toward the pat answer in doing local ethnographic fieldwork, the implicitly functionalist beliefs of educational administrators, the ameliorist mindset of teachers, and some of the mythologizing and reifying of child development in special education. If ethnographic fieldwork is to have lasting value, we need to hear about some of the great myths of education, in vertical case study form, from the top to the bottom.

Conclusion

While I have finished up here on my favorite topic of doing ethnography, the main message I have to deliver is that comparative education is a very complex thing, with a very complex history. We need to be more mindful of generalizing about that history and to make a more concerted attempt to recover it and use it for improving our understanding of where we have been and where we want to go. We need to search for the accounts that have not yet been told. We need to search for the pluralistic account, rather than the monolithic account. There are many stories that remain to be heard.

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