

ANNUAL REVIEW OF
COMPARATIVE AND
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION 2021

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

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INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION
AND SOCIETY VOLUME 42B

**ANNUAL REVIEW OF
COMPARATIVE AND
INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION 2021**

EDITED BY

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Texas Tech University, USA



United Kingdom – North America – Japan
India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2022
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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80382-618-9 (Print)
ISBN: 978-1-80382-617-2 (Online)
ISBN: 978-1-80382-619-6 (Epub)

ISSN: 1479-3679 (Series)



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CONTENTS

<i>About the Volume Editor</i>	vii
<i>About the Authors</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	xix

CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The COVID-19 Pandemic as Potential Catalyst for Comparative and International Education <i>C. C. Wolhuter and L. Jacobs</i>	3
Reimagining a Broader Framework for Education in Emergencies within Comparative and International Education <i>Andrew Swindell, Kathlyn Elliott, and Brian McCommons</i>	25
Critical Realism in Comparative and International Education <i>Liyun Wendy Choo</i>	43
White Diaspora, Anti-Blackness, and Universities in the Global South <i>Christopher B. Newman, Alexander Jun, and Christopher S. Collins</i>	59
Learning in a Time of Corona: A Comparative Perspective on Mumbai & Houston <i>Laurel Bingman and Gauravi Lobo</i>	79
Postcolonial Perspectives of International Educational Development Interventions in Countries of the Global South <i>Daniel Henry Smith and Tanja Carmel Sargent</i>	99
Forging Queer Solidarities in Trinidad and Tobago and New Brunswick, Canada through Cellphilm Method <i>Alicia F. Noreiga and Casey Burkholder</i>	119

RESEARCH-TO-PRACTICE

SEVIS, Surveillance, and International Students: New Avenues for International Education Surveillance Studies
Max Crumley-Effinger 141

Pedagogical Practices in the Context of the Global COVID-19 Pandemic: Implications for Inclusive Quality Education for All
Edith Mukudi Omwami, Andrea Gambino, and Joseph Wright 163

Educational Leadership and Supporting Refugee and Forced Immigrant Youth: A Review of Policy in Canada and the United States
Erica L. Galegher, Petrina M. Davidson, Joseph Elefante, Guadalupe Bright, and Lisa Damaschke-Deitrick 181

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Community College Career and Technical Education Internationalization: Diversifying Comparative and International Education
Dawn Wood and Rosalind Latiner Raby 205

Beyond the Hue and Cry: Exploring the Challenges and Benefits of Educator Acculturation in Overseas International Schools
Rebecca Stroud Stasel 225

Index 247

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Lynette Jacobs is a Comparative and International Education scholar at the University of the Free State. Her own research, which evolved from being post-positivist to post-qualitative, focuses on marginality and inclusivity at an individual and systemic level, and on ways to overcome barriers within education systems. She is one of the workgroup leaders in the iKudu project (co-funded by European Commission Erasmus+ Programme) that seeks to develop capacity for curriculum transformation through internationalisation and development of COIL. She has successfully supervised 30 Doctoral and Master's students from diverse countries, including from the USA, China, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Ethiopia. She has inter alia taught research methodology and Comparative and International Education at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and has been involved in mentoring young researchers for more than a decade.

Alexander Jun, Ph.D., conducts research on equity and justice in higher education around the world. A TEDx speaker in 2012, he was also a Global Fellow with the Center for Khmer Studies in Cambodia in 2010, an International Research Fellow at Curtin University in Perth, Australia, in 2016, and a 2018 Scholar in Residence at Belmont University in Tennessee. He is the Associate Editor of the *Journal of Behavioral and Social Sciences*, and author of *From Here to University: Access, Mobility, and Resilience among Urban Latino Youth* (RoutledgeFalmer, 2001). He also co-authored two books recently: *White Out: Understanding White Privilege and Dominance in the Modern Age* (Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2017), and *White Jesus: The Architecture of Racism in Religion and Education* (Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2018). Another book, *White Evolution: The Constant Struggle for Racial Consciousness*, was published in 2020. A ruling elder at New Life

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C. C. Wolhuter, Ph.D., studied at the University of Johannesburg, the University of Pretoria, the University of South Africa and the University of Stellenbosch. His doctorate was awarded in Comparative Education at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. He is a former junior lecturer of History of Education and Comparative Education at the University of Pretoria and a former senior lecturer of History of Education and Comparative Education at the University of Zululand. Currently he is Comparative and International Education professor at the Potchefstroom Campus of North-West University, South Africa. In the winter semester of 2012, he taught Comparative and International Education as visiting professor at Brock University, Canada. He is the author of several books and articles in the fields of Comparative and International Education and History of Education, and has served as President of SACHES, the Southern African Comparative and History of Education Society.

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PREFACE

The *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education 2021* examines the intersection of several important and transformational phenomena in education worldwide. These phenomena are a combination of both unique and recurring events, systems, behaviors, and attitudes about education filtered through social, political, and economic contexts. Specifically, the confluence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the embedded and resurgent issues of racial, ethnic, and gender inequality during 2021 created a situation where there was much educational change worldwide, but also where the field of comparative and international education needed to change and adapt both to new needs and concerns, but also to create new opportunities and options. As such, the 2021 volume of the *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education* requires an expanded table of contents to fully discuss the issues and activities that converged following the pandemic and other events shaping new conceptualizations and challenges related to racial and gender equality in 2021.

As a result, and for the first time in its history, the *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education* is divided into two volumes in 2021. Volume A presents key research and discussion essays related to trends and directions in the field of comparative and international education related to the pandemic, race, and gender, and then moves into deeper examinations of area studies and regional developments in the field of comparative and international education. Volume B more closely examines the heart of the field by addressing conceptual and methodological developments in comparative and international education research, investigating the research-to-practice relationship in field-based applications of comparative and international education research, and finally provides a space for reflection on the newer developments in the field of comparative and international education.

This volume, Volume B, begins with a close examination of conceptual and methodological developments in comparative and international education. C. C. Wolhuter and L. Jacobs set the foundation for understanding how the field shifted conceptually and methodologically in 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and discuss ways that the pandemic can be a catalyst for change and growth in the field of comparative and international education more broadly. Laurel Bingman and Gauravi Lobo introduced a comparative approach to understanding how learning shifted and adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, school closures, and altered approaches to mass schooling by comparing experiences in Mumbai and Houston. Building on the idea that the landscape of education is fundamentally changing as a result of the specific crises converging in 2021, Andrew Swindell, Kathlyn Elliott, and Brian McCommons introduce a broader framework for education in emergencies worldwide. Liyun Wendy Choo

conceptualizes how critical realism is a workable and appropriate framework for understanding comparative and international education phenomena in this 2021 moment. Christopher B. Newman, Alexander Jun, and Christopher S. Collins take a more focused approach to the problems of inequality related to race and ethnicity in their examination of white diaspora, anti-blackness, and universities in the Global South. Daniel Henry Smith and Tanja Carmel Sargent examine related issues from post-colonial perspectives in their chapter on international educational development interventions in the Global South. And, Alicia F. Noreiga and Casey Burkholder focus attention and evidence on a fresh methodological approach (i.e., the cellphilm method) and challenges to forging queer solidarities in Trinidad and Tobago and New Brunswick, Canada.

The next section of Volume B addresses the research-to-practice relationship as seen in 2021 through comparative and international education research and field-based implementation. Max Crumley-Effinger begins this section with a close examination of SEVIS, surveillance, and international students in higher education contexts. Edith Mukudi Omwami, Andrea Gambino, and Joseph Wright create a deeper understanding of pedagogical practices in the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic by framing it within the context of inclusive quality education for all. Ericka L. Galegher, Petrina M. Davidson, Joseph Elefante, Guadalupe Bright, and Lisa Damaschke-Deitrick comparatively examine the role of educational leaders in school campus contexts and the ways that they meet the needs of refugee and immigrant students, especially given the challenges of doing so during the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, Volume B of the *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education 2021* investigates new developments in the field. Dawn Wood and Rosalind Latiner Raby shift the spotlight to the internationalization of community college career and technical education, while Rebecca Stroud Stasel explores the challenges and benefits of educator acculturation in the context of overseas international schools.

The complementary intersection of conceptual and methodological developments, research-to-practice, and new developments in the field of comparative and international education provide a bevy of information, perspectives, evidence, and direction for both scholars creating new research and practitioners implementing or influencing the practice of education to reflect productively and meaningfully on comparative and international education and their role in it. The *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education* was established both as a review and as a fundamental tool for reflective practice among comparative and international education scholars and practitioners worldwide. The content from both Volumes A and B of the *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education 2021* provides those working in comparative education, international education, and the broader “conjoined” to reflect on the changes and their relevance and application in both field of comparative and international education the opportunity to learn about the most significant events and updates in the field while also providing the opportunity research and practice.

Alexander W. Wiseman
Series Editor

CONCEPTUAL AND
METHODOLOGICAL
DEVELOPMENTS

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THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AS POTENTIAL CATALYST FOR COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

C. C. Wolhuter and L. Jacobs

ABSTRACT

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the potential of the disruption brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic to break the stagnation in the field of comparative and international education, detected on many fronts of the field by various scholars in the field. The chapter commences with a survey of the historical evolution of the field of comparative and international education, showing how the field has historically come to be defined by contextually induced discourse. At the same time, the historically trodden furrows have resulted in the field becoming trapped by historical forces, resulting in some stagnation in the field. It is argued that impediments to progress in the field of comparative and international education are the severance from practice, the “black box” syndrome of paying more attention to the societal context than to education, the tenacious attachment to the nation-state as the sole geographic level of analysis, the lack of an autochthonous theory, persistent Northern hegemony, and the regression of space and infrastructure at universities. Thereafter, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact thereof on education are discussed. In conclusion, the potential of the disruption brought about by the pandemic for the revisitation of comparative and international education is assessed.

Keywords: Comparative and international education; COVID-19 pandemic; equality in education; Global South; Northern hegemony; quality education

INTRODUCTION

The thesis argued here, namely that the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic offers an opportunity to catalyze the field of comparative and international education, has been spurred by three sources. The first is David Turner's (2019) chapter in the volume of this series (*Annual Review of Comparative and International Education*) 2 years ago, which has pointed out that it is futile to search for a definition of the field of comparative and international education and that the field of comparative and international education gets defined by the discourse taking place (among scholars) in the field. The second is the fundamental theorem in the field of comparative and international education that education (systems) is the outcome of societal contextual forces shaping such education (systems) (as was reiterated recently by Michael Crossley, 2019, in his presidential address to the British Association of International and comparative education). To complete the syllogism then, the scholarly field of comparative and international education being, in the broadest possible meaning of the term part of education (systems), and the discourses waged within that field will also be shaped by contextual forces. The third source that spurred this chapter has been the COVID-19 pandemic, which, in 2020, brought about a major societal ravage affecting all sectors of society, including education. The aim of this chapter is to investigate the potential of the disruption brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic to break the documented stagnation in the field of comparative and international education.

The chapter commences with a survey of the historical evolution of the field of comparative and international education, showing how the field has historically come to be defined by contextually induced discourse. At the same time, the historically trodden furrows have resulted in the field becoming trapped by historical forces and have made for stagnation in the field. This feature of the field is described in the second part of the chapter. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact thereof on education are the focus of the subsequent section. In conclusion, the potential of the disruption brought about by the pandemic for the revisitation of comparative and international education is assessed.

THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SHAPED BY CONTEXTUALLY INDUCED DISCOURSE

This section reconstructs the historical evolution of the field of comparative and international education, investigating how contextual contours and the (public and scholarly) discourse on education it gave rise to have shaped the field.

In the historical trajectory of comparative education, the following seven stages can be detected (see Wolhuter, 2014a, pp. 2–3):

- Phase 1: A phase of travelers' tales, since time immemorial
- Phase 2: A phase of the systematic study of foreign education systems for borrowing; since 1830
- Phase 3: A phase of international cooperation, since 1925

Phase 4: A “factors and forces” phase, since about 1930

Phase 5: A social science phase, since 1960

Phase 6: A phase of heterodoxy, since 1970

Phase 7: A phase of heterogeneity, since 1990

These seven stages should not be seen as seven sequential and mutually exclusive phases, each following the previous one. They should rather be seen as an ongoing broadening and expansion of comparative education, specifically the aims of comparative education, and of the relevance of comparative education, the content of comparative education, the themes under study, and the methods of comparative education.

Phase 1: Travelers’ Tales since Time Immemorial

Comparison is a characteristically human activity. It can, therefore, confidently be hypothesized that the earliest human beings, upon contacting communities, societies, and cultures other than their own, started to compare their own societies, communities, and cultures, including their ways of raising children, to those of others. The oldest *written* account of such comparison is in the biography of the Persian king Cyrus written by the Greek author Xenophon (c. 430–355 BC). In this biography, he compared the Greek and the Persian ways of raising children. Such written comparisons of educational practices have been found in the literature ever since, and continue to occur today in, for example, newspapers and the popular media. These kinds of tales have also moved with the times. While at a time of great rulers and insignificant subjects, the education of a king, as in the case of Xenophon’s book, might have been apt, in current times of democratization, individualization, and travel eased by globalization, a book such as *An Italian Education* by Tim Parks (1995) has appeared, where the author, an expatriate from England living in Italy, records his observation as to how Italians raise their children.

Likewise, in times of easy access to publishing, a wide reading public, individualization and the Creed of Human Rights, and the rise of autobiography as an accepted research method in social sciences, the telling of own life stories regarding education, tied to critical issues in society, can be seen as a twenty-first-century variation of travelers’ tales. A prominent example is the book *I am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* by Nobel prize winner Malala Yousafzei (2013), about her life as an activist for education. Another example is the book *Educated: A Memoir* of Tara Westover (2018). As these travelers’ tales are mostly incidental, haphazard, and not at all scientifically told, this phase can be described as a prescientific phase of comparative education.

Phase 2: A Phase of the Systematic Study of Foreign Education Systems for Borrowing since 1830

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, a new kind of educational traveler emerged. Then, mainly government officials studied education systems and educational development in foreign countries, with the goal to borrow best ideas, methods, insights, and practices for the purpose of importing them to improve their

own education systems back home. These developments can be understood within the context of the rise of national states in the countries of Western Europe and Northern America at that time, and the establishment of national education systems of primary education in the states, as part of the national project of state and nation formation. This studying of foreign education systems with a view of borrowing best practices is an activity that governments worldwide still engage in today. One example is, as discussed by [Ryan \(2018, pp. 186–201\)](#), the case of China. For decades since the beginning of China's forceful modernization drive since 1979, China feverishly learnt and imported ideas concerning education from the West. In recent years, with the rise of China as a superpower, and with the good impression made by China in international test series, this trend is now being reversed, with the rest of the world wanting to learn lessons from Chinese education.

A word of caution regarding education borrowing is apt though. While comprehensive, these studies of foreign education systems generally do not comply with the rigors of scientific scholarship. Often, based on pre-conceived ideas, beliefs, and prejudices, rather than on the basis of evidence, some systems and practices are declared better than others. Comparative education was still in a pre-scientific stage. Another major problem is the summarily borrowing of educational practices, without considering the contextual differences between the two countries (the exporting and the importing country) (see [Tatto, 2011, p. 512](#)).

Phase 3: A Phase of International Cooperation since 1925

This phase saw the rationale for comparative education ascending from borrowing to improve the education system of one country to a more altruistic, universally ameliorative motive: comparative education to serve the interest of humanity, to improve the fate of humanity, and to better the quality of life of all humans. The founder of this phase was the French scholar Marc-Antoine Jullien (1775–1848). Jullien was the first to use the term “comparative education,” and therefore, he is called the “father of comparative education.” While he had little influence in his day and age in the nineteenth century, his ideas have been realized in the contemporary world in a variety of ways, such as commencing the founding of the International Bureau of Education in 1925. This bureau was part of the effort of the international community after the experience of the First World War to create a new world order, with the League of Nations being a central pillar of this new envisioned order. Since then, international cooperation in education has proceeded, always reflecting the spirit and discourse of the time.

After the Second World War, the United Nations was set up to steer humanity toward a better future, and UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) was set up as the education arm of the United Nations. Global education drives became visible as part of humanity's collective effort to create a more humane world: the *Education for All* initiative in 1990, the *Millennium Development Goals*, and, in the wake of the ecological crisis, the *Sustainable Development Goals*, the global community's vision for the world of 2030. One of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals specifically deals with education (Goal 4) and was unpacked in the *INCHEON Declaration and Framework for Action* of 2015 ([UNESCO, 2015](#)).

Phase 4: A “Factors and Forces” Phase since 1930

This phase got its name from the signature feature of the scholars of this phase to portray (national) education systems as the outcome of societal contextual forces. While the precursor of this phase was Michael Sadler, with his 1900 Guildford lecture, “how far can we learn anything of practical value from the study of foreign systems of education,” this phase gained traction in the 1930s and in the inter-war years, no doubt stimulated by the nationalism in the vogue in world politics at the stage and also stimulated by the track-laying work of the triumvirate, or big three, in comparative education—Isaac Kandel (1881–1965), Nicholas Hans (1888–1969), and Friedrich Schneider (1881–1969). These scholars and later exponents of the phase, such as Arthur Moehlman, Vernon Mallinson, and Phil Idenburg, each designed his own schema for analyzing societal forces shaping national education systems. These schemas typically included geography, demography, socio-cultural situation, economy, politics, religion, and life and world philosophy.

In recent decades, the compelling force of globalization and the prominence this force has gained in scholarly literature and public discourse have resulted in schools of thought such as the world culture theory and neo-institutionalism, which posit a movement toward isomorphism in world education systems, with global forces shaping this nascent world education system. While in comparative education, the most prominent of these scholars have been the Stanford comparativists John W. Meyer, Francisco O. Ramirez, and John Boli, this view is also found among others, such as Susan Robertson, Anatoli Verger, and Bob Lingard.

On the other hand, there are comparativists who, without denying the force of globalization, maintain that national context constitutes a prime force in shaping education systems. Examples of this view are the chapter of [Turner \(2019\)](#), the publications of Columbian comparativist Gita Steiner-Khamsi, and the recent British Association for International and Comparative Education presidential address by Michael [Crossley \(2019\)](#). Other comparativists, using the term “glocal,” have attempted to bring into one scheme both the global and the local in shaping education systems, while [Marginson and Rhoades \(2002\)](#), introducing the concept of “glonacal,” have designed a finer calibrated analytical device, allowing space for the global, the national, and the local.

Phase 5: A Social Science Phase since the 1960s

The decades following the Second World War saw the rapid economic recovery of Europe, the decolonization of large parts of the Third World, and, finally, the worldwide economic boom of the 1960s. The post-Second World War recovery of Europe was widely attributed to education, that is, the level of education and training of the European workforce. In these times, an unbounded belief in the power of education to execute any kind of desired social change reigned, such as education to stimulate economic growth, education to modernize the nations of the Third World (before this term became discredited), education to eradicate poverty, education to reduce the number of road accidents, or education to combat drug abuse.

The drive to find a correlation between effort or investment in education and societal outcomes gave rise to a movement to turn comparative education into a fully-fledged social science. This turn was characterized by the wholesale

appropriation of theoretical frameworks from social sciences, such as politics and economics, and by a quantitative revolution, as quantitative methods were employed to search for co-variations between education and societal outcomes such as economic growth or social mobility. Leading comparativists, such as C. Arnold Anderson, Brian Holmes, Harold Noah, and Max Eckstein, steered this social science movement. All these developments were propitious for the development of comparative education (infrastructure, chairs, faculty, and research institutions) at universities. For example, the Comparative Education Center at the University of Chicago and the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education were founded in 1958 and 1964, respectively.

Research based on the belief in the societally elevating power of education continues, and—at least on an aggregate level—correlations between education development and a host of social indicators continue to be found, although (as will be shown) developments during the subsequent decades in the field and beyond made for more cautious and nuanced statements regarding the social impact of education, and even for negative statements among some scholars. Furthermore, the research agenda also moved with the times, as, for example, education for human rights and education for social justice also appeared on the research agenda.

Phase 6: Heterodoxy since the 1970s

The education expansion drive that had gained traction since the 1960s did not yield the predicted societal benefits, such as modernization. For example, instead of eradicating unemployment, the spectre of schooled unemployment raised its head, especially after the worldwide economic slowdown that set in after the first oil crisis in 1973. The 1970s was a decade of increasing pessimism among comparativists as to the societal dividends of education. Rival paradigms to the modernization theory and structural-functionalism set in, in particular theories of world-system analysis and reproduction theories, such as the socio-economic reproduction theory and the cultural reproduction theory. These theories saw education as a forceful tool in the hands of the powerful in society to reinforce existing inequalities, suppression, and injustices.

The scholars in the heterodoxy camp have also changed with the times. From portraying education as resistless and incapable in the grip of the powerful, some leading scholars in the field, such as Karen [Biraimah \(2003\)](#), later president of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), and more recently Regina [Cortina \(2019\)](#), have pleaded for scholars in the field to take a more activist stand to force education change so as to claim agency. An extreme position is taken by scholars such as Michael Apple, who argues in his book *Can Education Change Society?* ([Apple, 2013](#)) that education is impotent in changing society for the better, as society first has to change for education to have any beneficial effect. Furthermore, the heterodoxy lobby also changed to stay attuned to the broader societal context, as, for example, the impact of neo-liberalism on education was critiqued (e.g. Pasi [Sahlberg's, 2016](#), GERM movement critique) or as world-system analysis made space for post-colonial critique on education (e.g. the earlier cited CIES presidential address of Regina [Cortina, 2019](#)).