

Introduction

Comparative education as a field of study emerged after World War II. Unlike other fields which delineated themselves by specific discipline-based methodologies and theories, comparative education arose with neither. It was and remains a loosely bounded field which is held together by a fundamental belief that education can be improved and can serve to bring about change for the better in all nations. Scholars in the field consistently have focused on the relationship between school and society. Inquiry often has sought to discover how changes in educational provision, form, and content would contribute to the eradication of poverty or the end of gender, class, and ethnic based inequalities.

While cohesion is found in an underlying belief in the transforming power of education, there is a wide diversity in the approaches comparative educators have taken in their work. A range of theories as disparate as structural functionalism and Marxism guide research. A large number of case studies, historical studies and ethnographies along side of statistical scholarship form the research base of comparative education. Some studies are truly comparative, consisting of research conducted in or on several different nations. A majority, however, are case studies of education in a single country. Comparative education, in short, is a diverse field which most commonly addresses questions about schooling and school/society relations.

This book reflects the field as it has emerged in the 1990s. The essays we include focus on a broad range of issues, many of which have been debated since the field's inception, and some of which have surfaced recently. Many of the long standing issues focus on the importance of education to the state, and whether differences in political systems foster differences in educational prac-

tices, contents, and outcomes. The text also reflects the debates over theory that have remained unresolved since they emerged in the 1960s. The debates have centered on whether or not theory should guide research and, if so, which theories would be appropriate to the field. Like events on the world stage, theory undergoes change as scholars and researchers reformulate their concepts and intellectual frameworks to explain more accurately social phenomena and arrive at general propositions about school/society relations.

Beginning in the 1960s, comparative education underwent a major transformation. It moved from a field which by and large described education within the context of a specific country to a discipline which examined the outcomes of education without necessarily taking into account national cultural, political, social, or economic factors. In the 1960s, comparative education endeavored to build a set of "scientific" laws. By 1990, after decades of unsuccessful transference of practices from one national context to another, based on these "scientific laws," many began to reassess the role of culture and national histories in shaping school practices and outcomes. Such developments are covered in this volume.

Between the 1960s and 1990s, there have been other shifts in focus. In the 1960s and 1970s, the field concentrated almost exclusively on assessing the *outcomes* of education. These outcomes, however, seldom were cognitive or pedagogical in nature. Instead, scholars sought to link political attitudes, adult social status, and incomes of individuals to number of years of schooling. In similar fashion, the stability of a political system or the wealth of a country were linked to percentages of students enrolled in different levels of an education system or the average amount of schooling found in the workforce and population at large. By the mid-1980s, research in comparative education recognized that such linkages were difficult, if not impossible, to establish. Research increasingly turned to analyzing schools as educational institutions and focused on assessing how reforms in school practices might change cognitive as well as other outcomes. Recently, studies have emerged on issues like school finance, teacher education, testing practices, curriculum, and textbooks. The input-output studies which hitherto had dominated comparative education were muted. This volume emphasizes these new trends by including chapters on testing, teaching as a profession, school management, finance, and effective schools.

In the ten years since the publication of our first jointly edited text, *Comparative Education*, the issues of the day have changed. At the beginning of the 1980s, for example, the field still assumed that resources for school expansion were abundant. Many researchers in the field also tended to ignore educational questions pertaining to teaching-learning processes. In the 1980s, world-wide recession made issues of educational efficiency and effectiveness central.

Other events on the world stage introduced unexpected situations and new issues. In addition to the economic downturns experienced by major regions of the developing world, there are the remarkable changes that have occurred in recent years in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and other one-party states pursuing a socialist path to development. As these countries move toward market economies and parliamentary forms of democracy, what transformations will occur in their education systems and will proposed changes facilitate or hinder reform efforts in the political and economic arenas?

This volume illustrates the dynamism and increasing diversity of comparative education and, as such, can be considered a state of the art volume on the field of comparative education. It reflects the theoretical and pragmatic currents—the concerns of educational scholars as well as policy makers. It further reflects the changing research foci and the increasing desire on the part of comparative educators to contribute to the wider education community—to improving educational practices both nationally and internationally.

ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT

Even more so than our previous text, this volume is comparative in nature. Only two of the chapters involve in-depth analysis of single countries—appropriately China and India, which because of their size, complexity, and significance provide interesting cases for examining propositions concerning the universality of modernization processes and the possibility of altering current patterns of financing schooling. Two of the studies involve the comparison of the United States and the United Kingdom. The remaining studies draw upon data from many countries to examine different issues and reforms.

Following a chapter by Gail Kelly on trends in the field of comparative education, the text is organized into four principal sections: (1) world trends in education, (2) theoretical frameworks, (3) contemporary reform movements and emergent issues, (4) assessing the outcomes of educational movements and reforms.

Trends in Comparative Education

Kelly defines comparative education as a field still in search of a distinct identity. After reviewing four decades of debates in the field over methodology, theory, and specific substantive issues, she concludes that for the foreseeable future comparative education will be characterized by a diversity of theoretical frameworks and a broad range of topics studied from a multiplicity of disciplinary perspectives. As reflected in the content of this text, debates will shift as educational practices and needs change and trust placed in particular theories,

social systems, or reforms prove themselves valid or not. For Kelly, the continuous search for an identity is a source of strength rather than weakness.

World Trends in Education

The various chapters in this section provide frameworks for analyzing the worldwide expansion and institutionalization of education from primary through higher education. The chapters indicate that there is increasing convergence across countries with regard to notions of education's contributions to national development; and despite significant divergence in chosen routes to modernization, the organizational form schooling takes, particularly at the higher education level, is remarkably similar. The emergence of a global education system raises concerns about the possibility of increasing stratification within it—just as there is in the global economy, with different countries playing different roles in the creation and dissemination of scientific and technological knowledge.

Boli and Ramirez, in chapter 2, examine the dynamics underlying the establishment of compulsory schooling. They point out that most sociological explanations of schooling as a source of social solidarity and preparation for adult roles, as a mechanism of social control, or as an outcome of status group competition are limited in viewing educational development as the result of internal social processes. Instead, they argue that mass schooling is best understood as the prominent consequence of the development and diffusion of the cultural framework of the West. The rise of compulsory schooling in the nineteenth century is explained as the coalescence of a new model of social organization based on notions of the enhanced individual and the expanded state working jointly to pursue national programs. The authors attempt to track empirically the spread and institutionalization of education in relation to the characteristics of national societies that may hinder or slow down the passage of compulsory schooling.

Boli and Ramirez focus on the lower levels of schooling. Altbach examines the universal expansion of higher education. Like Boli and Ramirez he documents the increasing convergence in the basic organization, patterns of governance, and ethos of universities. He explains the movement toward a common Western academic pattern as a manifestation of the continuing influence of metropolitan centers on their former colonies, a dominance that is buttressed by the centers advanced levels of science and research. Issues underscored by Altbach include the ability of higher education institutions to keep pace with the demand for increased access, the economic difficulties these institutions face, and the need for their curricula to be more closely related to employment prospects and national development plans. In the face of these pressures, there are increasing efforts for higher education institutions to rely on user fees and

private sector support, to establish closer ties between universities and industries, to reduce the traditional autonomy of these institutions and make teachers more accountable. These trends are reflected in subsequent chapters of the book that examine various levels of schooling.

Berman builds on and expands Altbach's discussion of convergence in higher education institutions and academic research while also providing a critique of Boli and Ramirez' assumptions concerning the universalistic/integrative nature of educational expansion. He agrees with Boli and Ramirez that an understanding of the global expansion would be incomplete if it failed to assess the impact of outside organizations on national educational development, but he believes they ignore the phenomenon that nation-states in the late twentieth century are part of an interdependent world system in which the actions of the stronger determine to a considerable degree the ability of the weaker to act unilaterally. His chapter documents the role that networks of international and national aid agencies play in influencing the reconceptualization, expansion, and reform of Third World education systems.

Hayhoe's chapter, using the case of China, examines these questions: "Are there a variety of ways of being modern or only one? Are the differences between capitalist and socialist modernity fundamental ones or are they simply two branches of Western modernity?" She examines what kind of theoretical framework might make possible comparison of China's experience with that of other nations and at the same time take into account its unique cultural dynamics. These frameworks are the "problems approach" of Holmes, the structural theory of imperialism and World Order Models Approach of Galtung, the world systems theory of Wallerstein, and the critical theory of Habermas. She points out the strengths and limitations of each approach and concludes that studies of Chinese modernity await forms of thought and analysis that are cognizant of, without being subservient to, those of Western socialism or Western capitalism. As she suggests, perhaps the most exciting discoveries may escape the logic of either Western orthodoxies and open up new possibilities for genuine cultural diversity.

Kozma views events in Eastern Europe and the transition from totalitarianism to democracy in light of the past histories of these societies and the various tensions that lay beneath the surface of Soviet domination of the region. As with the case of China, the efforts of these societies to become more closely integrated into the world system demand an understanding of the contending political forces and ideological debates that have occurred over the path of development to be followed. His thesis is that the transition has gone hand in hand with the revival of conservatism, involving "a shift in paradigms" with regard to what issues are to be debated and in what terms. The new conservative paradigm is manifested most clearly in attempts to reform curricula by engaging in an "ideological housecleaning" of Soviet and Marxist-Leninist content

and decreasing emphasis on science education and internationalism, reviving traditional elite secondary education institutes such as the grammar schools while downplaying comprehensive secondary schools, and privatizing the education system. As with the Chinese reform movements of the past, an emphasis on traditional institutions and national values may have the unintended consequences of contributing to separation from rather than integration with Europe and the rest of the world and may impede economic growth and the transition to democracy.

Theoretical Frameworks

The chapters in this section provide ways of conceptualizing equality of educational opportunity, reconceptualizing thinking on the role of education in the economy, and bringing into sharper focus theories of the state. As such, they represent some of the more promising developments in theory building and the formulation of comparative perspectives on educational phenomena derived from the disciplines of sociology, economics, and political economy.

Farrell uses a model to summarize what much of recent comparative data tells us about education's contribution to equalizing the life chances of children in different societies. His model examines equality with regard to access to schooling, participation in different levels of an education system, academic achievement, and the outcomes of education (e.g., occupational attainment, income, power, and status). His analysis also includes ways of interpreting educational and social equality/inequality over time in societies at differing stages of development.

Easton and Klees contend that at present there are no adequate conceptualizations of the role of education in the economy that illuminate such issues as the educational-labor mismatch or fairness in allocation of jobs, income, and other social roles. According to the authors, human capital theory and neo-classical economics offer little useful guidance to policy. Their brief examination of other schools of economic thought, however, foreshadows possible new directions for "reconceptualizing" the multiple relationships between education and the economy. Easton and Klees believe that useful insights must come from other fields—among them, anthropology, literature, religion, and even education.

The chapter by Carnoy contributes to new perspectives on education's role in the economy and society. Whereas Easton and Klees discuss the necessity of looking at the role of government in shaping the nature of schooling and its economic outcomes, Carnoy places that discussion within a broader theoretical framework. As Carnoy notes almost all analyses of educational problems—even if they be only studies of educational costs and benefits—have implicit in them theories of the state. Education's inexorable linkages to politics

require a discussion of what the state is and how it relates to the economy and social relations. In his essay, Carnoy provides a typology to facilitate analysis of how different notions of the state influence educational policy and practice. The different ideal types are the Peripheral State, the Instrumental State, the Contested State, the Institutional State, the State in Transition, and the Redemocratized State (the case of Eastern Europe today).

Contemporary Reform Movements and Emergent Issues

The chapters in this section discuss educational governance and finance, the use of secondary school leaving examinations, the status of teachers as professionals, and effective school reforms. The issues that are reiterated and elaborated upon in these chapters include those of centralization v. decentralization, public v. private education, autonomy v. accountability, equality v. quality.

McGinn examines decentralization as a possible solution for low levels of participation by communities, teachers, and parents in decision-making that helps to resolve problems of insufficient finances and inefficiencies in management. His historical review of reforms in governance in Europe, the United States, and Latin America indicates there is no simple correspondence between degree of popular participation in State power and the forms of governance or control of a State's education system. He suggests that proposals for reform of governance be evaluated not in terms of labels such as centralization or decentralization but with regard to their impact on the means by which people can participate in decision-making and their commitment to democratic participation.

Using data from India, Tilak questions the validity of prevalent assumptions concerning the possibility of greater contributions of the private sector to the financing and running of schools. These assumptions posit that (a) the opportunity costs of education in underdeveloped countries are insignificant due to large-scale unemployment and (b) the ability of families to pay for education has not been sufficiently tapped. The evidence he has marshalled does not substantiate such claims. Moreover, as Tilak points out, those who advocate privatization often overlook the costs a society has to pay in the long run in the form of increasing socioeconomic inequities that result from the creation of dual structures of education.

In addition to the issues related to the governance and financing of education, a number of countries are attempting to bring about educational change by raising the level of school achievement. Noah and Eckstein examine the various uses of secondary school examinations to effect educational reform. Their study of eight national systems reveals that examinations may prove to be obstacles to change in some countries but levers of change in others.

As the various chapters in this text underscore, the success of reform measures depends upon contextual factors. Judge, in his cross-national study of teachers, follows the tradition of researchers who use the insights furnished by comparative education to identify precisely that which is specific to a particular society. He contrasts this tradition to those who would seek supranational rules or underlying general principles. He selects the United Kingdom and the United States to study how societal perceptions of the status and role of teachers are influenced by the unique context of each society. The specific dimensions of professionalism that he analyzes involve the scope of legislation, collective bargaining, and degree of centralized control over teachers (what he calls “nationality”), the hierarchical differentiation of teachers (“stratification”), syndicalism, autonomy, and unity of teachers.

In a complementary chapter, David provides a contextual framework for viewing educational reforms in the two countries as subsets of the political changes that occurred in the 1980s. With the advent of conservative administrations in the United States and United Kingdom there was, as she notes, a remarkable similarity in the way educational issues were addressed—schools were scapegoated for the economic problems of the societies and emphasis was placed on raising academic standards. However, the process of educational reform in the United States took a different tack from that in Britain: in the United States the approach was to reduce the federal role, rather than to use the central government, as in Britain, to command an increasing role for local communities in educational change while strengthening national control over curricular matters.

In contrast to previous chapters which concentrated on the limitations of proposed reforms, Levin’s chapter documents those cases where reforms have brought about more effective schools in both industrialized and industrializing countries. Although the concerns of those involved in establishing effective schools are similar, a variety of strategies work. At base, however, those who wish to create effective schools have a vision or a “central philosophy” concerning what a more ideal education should be. This ideal involves a profound transformation of schools. The set of conditions that facilitates the achievement of this vision includes decentralized approaches and solutions; empowerment of teachers, students, and parents; and a heavy emphasis on community participation, much in line with McGinn’s thesis.

Assessing the Outcomes of Reforms

The concern of various authors in this text with the effects of reforms on schools and society and especially on the life chances of minority children and women (see, for example, Farrell and David) is addressed in greater depth in the final section of the text.

Husén examines the effects of the most comprehensive international effort to study school achievement and the factors associated with it. The history of the International Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), the various stages it passed through and its outcomes at two levels—those of national policy and classroom practice—are reviewed with regard to what lessons might be learned for future comparative assessment efforts. He analyzes policy outcomes at three levels: (1) the overall quality and/or performance of a national system of education, including its role in achieving social and economic objectives, such as greater equality of opportunity; (2) the structure of the formal system and its influence on student achievement; and (3) the influence of school resources and methods of instruction on learning.

Kelly studies the extent to which women's gains in access to education have been matched by favorable economic outcomes. Kelly's extensive review of data from a broad range of countries leads her to conclude that economic outcomes have not been the same for women as men. She attributes these differences to the lack of change in the sex role division of labor in the family and the lack of social legislation recognizing family organization and women's role in it. Under these circumstances, women have few options but to enter low-wage "female" occupations. As she argues, achieving gender-based quality in the workforce and in society will take more than opening schools to women.

Arnove and Graff examine the legacies and lessons from four hundred years of literacy campaigns in more than a dozen societies. Among the lessons to be learned are these: there are many paths to literacy; literacy's relation to political, economic, and social development is complex; the quantity and quality of literacy (and the acquisition and use of literacy) are not linearly related; the consequences of literacy are neither direct nor simple; and literacy is never politically neutral. Literacy is potential empowerment, but the extent to which literacy is used for emancipatory purposes depends on the context in which literacy campaigns and activities take place. Their chapter underscores the value of comparative and historical perspectives for an understanding of an educational movement as fundamental as a literacy campaign, a priority on the educational agendas of many countries today.

CONCLUSION

This volume discusses some of the most important themes in comparative education at the beginning of the 1990s—the themes of educational expansion and reform, of equality and quality, of private resources and public responsibility, of autonomy and accountability, of centralization and decentralization in governance, of convergence and divergence in approaches to national

development and educational reform. We have attempted to provide not only an overview of a vital and constantly changing field of study but also an introduction to many of the key substantive and methodological debates as well as intellectual currents in comparative education. Although, as editors, we have asked our authors to consider specific themes, we have not imposed any uniformity of viewpoints. In some cases, the authors disagree in their conclusions and interpretations of ways in which educational systems function in society. This diversity of perspectives and analyses, in our judgment, is an accurate representation of the state of the field.

Not unlike other cultural and social foundations of education (the history, philosophy, sociology, and anthropology of education), the field of comparative education contributes to the professional training of educators, to informed policy and practice, and to the creation of knowledge by providing an expanded set of analytical categories and modes for examining the realities of education and society. It is our hope that the content of this book will offer both theory builders and practitioners a variety of concepts, theoretical frameworks, and methodological approaches that will enable them to examine in more realistic, comprehensive, and sophisticated ways the nature of education systems around the world in the decade of the 1990s and beyond.