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Covid-19: A ray of lightning for Comparative and International Education?

Abstract: This article is a position paper, arguing that the present, unforeseen outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic represents both a wake-up call to the scholarly field of Comparative and International Education to get out of its present stasis and an opportunity to prove its value to the world of praxis (that is praxis at the levels of education in education institutions and at the level of planning and reform of education at education system level). The concept of Comparative and International Education is clarified and the significance of the field explained. Its long winding history is portrayed, and the promise emanating from its definition, stated purposes and its historical development contrasted with the present stagnation in the field. Key facets of this stagnation are a fixation on paradigms, a neglect of attention to praxis and a reluctance to move beyond its historically pursued research agenda. The global education project is likewise beset by at least three serious problems: the discrepancy between ideal and reality, inertia, and Education as field of scholarship not providing guidance to education praxis. It is argued that the Covid-19 Pandemic has instantaneously highlighted these problems, and provide a window of opportunity for scholars of Comparative and International Education both to get its own house in order and to prove their mettle to education praxis in the world.

Keywords: Comparative and International Education; Covid-19 Pandemic; Education for All; Education Scholarship; Human Rights; Incheon Declaration

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Introduction

This article is a position paper, arguing that the present, unforeseen outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic represents both a wake-up call to the scholarly field of Comparative and International Education to get out of its present stasis and an opportunity to prove its value to the world of praxis (that is praxis at the levels of education in education institutions and at the level of planning and reform of education at education system level). In a Special Issue on the Covid-19 pandemic and education the article also attempts to demonstrate to education system planners the indispensable value of the field of Comparative and International Education in guiding education reform necessitated and precipitated by this pandemic. The graphic metaphor of »lightning« in the title is drawn from eminent Comparative and International Education scholar at the Institute of Education, University of London, Robert Cowen (2000, p. 339), in his description of transitiologies, that is, places and times of radical socio-political reconstruction. According to Cowen the value of studying education reconstruction in such contexts lies in that transitiologies make visible like lightning in the dark, what remains obscure under normal conditions. This article is written out of the contention that the current Covid-19 pandemic brought about a situation analogous to a transitiology.

The article commences with a conceptual clarification of Comparative and International Education, and the professed aims and purposes of the field. The historical evolution of the field, and how it ended up in its present doldrums, are then reconstructed. The focus then shifts to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, and its impact on the education sector. The implications thereof for the field of Comparative and International Education are then spelled out, culminating in the conclusion that this pandemic and the changes it precipitated in education presents an opportunity and with a need for resetting the field and for education planners and reformers to benefit from what the field has to offer.

Comparative and International Education: Conceptual clarification and stated aims or purposes

The scholarly field of Comparative and International Education escapes attempts to encapsulate its essence in a one line or even a one sentence definition. Furthermore, no consensus exists as to a definition of the field (for the kaleidoscope of definitions of Comparative Education, see Manzon 2011, p. 153–183; Manzon 2016, p. 133–150). As a working definition, for the purposes of this article, Comparative Education will be defined as taking a – three in one perspective on education as its focus or object of study (Wolhuter et al. 2018, pp. 258–260);

- an education *system* perspective
- a contextual perspective
- comparative perspective

This can schematically be presented as in figure 1.

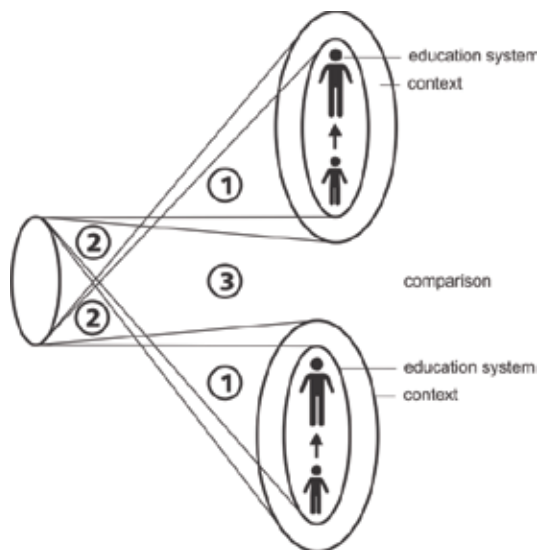


Figure 1: The Three-in-One Perspective of Comparative Education: 1. Education System Perspective, 2. Contextual Perspective, 3. Comparative Perspective (Wolhuter et al. 2018, p. 259).

The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) defines education as »deliberate activities involving some form of communication intended to bring about learning« (UNESCO 2011, p. 1). In society such activities are organized or supplied by means of systems, i.e. education systems; systems at various levels, of which the national level, i.e. *national* education systems are the most salient. The first line of interest of Comparative Education scholarship is education systems in society: explicating, describing, explaining, understanding and evaluating such systems.

A fundamental theorem of the field of Comparative and International Education is that (national) education systems are called into existence by society to serve specific societal needs, and that education systems are shaped by their societal contexts. Therefore education systems can be understood only by studying these systems within their contextual-interrelations. These interrelations comprise both how societal contextual forces shape education systems, and conversely, how education systems in turn affect their societal contexts. This is the contextual perspective.

Thirdly education systems are not studied in isolation, but are being compared in their societal interrelations. This is done in order to reveal particular education system-societal context interrelations, and also to attempt to derive at generalizations regarding education system-societal context interrelations.

Theoreticians of the field have listed the following as the value, purposes or significance of the scholarly field of Comparative and International Education: description; understanding/interpretation/explanation; evaluation; application to educational planning; application to teaching practice, application to other fields of Educational Study, and application of the comparative method as research method in Education; motivating and teaching students to conduct research; and pursuing the philanthropic ideal (see Wolhuter et al. 2018, p. 261).

At a most fundamental level scholars of Comparative Education describe education systems, thus satisfying the human need for knowledge. At a next level Comparative Education explains or assists in understanding education systems, by explaining education systems from the societal shaping forces which gave rise to these education systems. Conversely, research on the societal outcomes of education, assists in understanding different societies. In a study of why students in nine countries do study Comparative Education, Wolhuter et al. (2011) found that students in Cuba's main motivation for studying Comparative Education is to understand foreign societies and cultures, i.e. they study the education system of the United States of America, in an attempt to understand American society. In this regard, in a classic essay on the value of Comparative Education, doyen Harold Noah (1984) refers to education as the »touch stone of society«.

Thirdly, Comparative Education serves to assess education systems. In a time of rising knowledge economies in what Thomas Friedman (2005) calls a »flat world« (that is where globalization, the information, communications and transport revolution in particular, has wiped out whatever advantages geography has bestowed upon a country), national power increasingly depends on quality of human resources, with the result that education has been hauled to the front line of throat-cutting competition amongst nations in a globalized world. The interest in global testing regimes, such as the International Programme of Student Assessment (PISA) is visible evidence of this. Comparative Education does not only assess national education projects, but also occupies itself with assessing the societal elevating power of education *per se*. This is very pertinent in an age when education is looked up to accomplish an ever wider range of societal objectives, such as to effect economic growth, to eradicate unemployment, to entrench a culture of respect for Human Rights, to effect everlasting peace, and the like.

The expertise of Comparative Education scholars is also proclaimed to be useful in terms of application in a number of ways. In the first place knowledge of education systems abroad can be tapped for best ideas, policies and practices taken over to improve the domestic education project. Indeed, this cross-national transfer of education policies have become very topical in the present era of fierce competition in the area of education between nations, as Forestier and Crossley (2014) for example relate in their research of the United Kingdom turning to Hong Kong, after Hong Kong's very good performance in the PISA tests. In this regard can also be mentioned the only two Comparative Education publications which made it into the mass market, namely Trace's (1961) book comparing the education system of the erstwhile Soviet Union with the education system of the United States, and Sahlberg's (2010) volume on education in Finland. The former appeared after the shock launching of Sputnik in 1957, catapulting the Soviet Union's into taking the lead in the Space Exploration race. This lead was attributed to the Soviet Union's alleged superior education system (see Noah 1984). The latter appeared after Finland came out, unexpectedly, tops in the first round of PISA tests.

In the second place, the expertise of comparativists and the corpus of knowledge of the field can be applied on a micro-scale, that is to improve teaching-learning practice in classrooms and in educational institutions. It was Cambridge comparativists Robin Alexander who first elaborated this value of the field in his hefty 2001 book (Alexander 2001). This theme is has been taken on by researchers since then, and in a recent publication Schweisfurth et al. (2020) survey 51 journal papers published on the topic since 2000 (although this theme is still much underresearched by scholars in the field — a point which will be returned to later).

In the third place, Comparative Education is of significance to other fields of Educational scholarship and even to adjacent fields of social sciences too, by studying objects of study pertaining to those fields, in societal and in education system context, thus enriching knowledge of those objects. For example, Oplatka and El-Kuran's (2020) recently published research on the emotional regulation of teachers of Bedouin schools in Israel, yielded valuable knowledge to the field of Educational Administration and Leadership.

Then Comparative Education is also of use to other cognate fields of Education scholarship, in professing the comparative method as research method in Education research. Comparison is a research method, with notable merits and with widespread possibilities for application (*cf.* Neuman 2003, pp. 402–404; Azarian 2011, p. 113). Related to this is the value of Comparative Education in teaching students to conduct research. In an age when it is increasingly required from even undergraduate Education students to develop and to demonstrate research proficiency, Crossley (2016, p. 44), in a recently published book on the teaching of Comparative and International Education, highlights training in the comparative method as research method, as a particular value that Comparative and International Education can add to teacher education programmes.

Finally, the philanthropic mission as put forth by founding father of the field Jullien, is still the most imposing assignment of Comparative and International

Education: making better or improving the state of humanity and the living conditions of humanity (*cf.* Wolhuter 2017).

However impressive the above array of missions, the problem is that the field has not lived up to these ideals, as will be revealed by a reconstruction its meandering course over its history, which will now follow.

The Historical Evolution of Comparative and International Education: A long and winding road

In the historical evolution of the field of Comparative and International Education, it is customary among scholars to distinguish between seven phases (see Epstein 2008; Paulston 1997). These phases represent a progressive broadening of the field, rather than a sequence of mutually exclusionary phases, one replacing the other; i.e. all seven phases are still continuing at this point in time.

A first phase was a time of travellers' tales, existing since times immemorial, when those travelling to other societies brought with them tales as to how such societies raise and educate children. In the form of reports in the social media and articles in mass media, these tales still exist today, though this represents a pre-scientific stage of the field (Noah and Eckstein 1969).

A second phase dawned at the beginning of the nineteenth century, around the formation of modern nation states in Europe and the Americas, and the creation of national public education systems as instruments to create a national identity and loyalty towards the nation state. Governments sent emissaries to foreign countries believed to have exemplary education systems, to study those education systems with the intention to borrow best practices to improve the domestic education project. Hence this stage is called the »systematic study of foreign education systems for borrowing« (Noah and Eckstein 1969). This stage is also continuing to this day — indeed in the twenty-first century context, as explained above, it acquired added significance (for example see Forestier and Crossley 2014; or the recently published volume by Nickl et al. 2020, on how German education has shaped education in other countries by cross-national influences). However, this practice, as practiced by governments, almost invariably does not comply with the rigour of scholarship and furthermore, is heavily laden with political-ideological motives (to these deficiencies will be returned to later), and therefore this phase too can be regarded as a pre-scientific phase in the development of Comparative Education.

A third phase is a phase of international cooperation (that is international cooperation in education development). The motivation for Comparative Education now rose from the narrow objective to improve the domestic education project, to improving the global education project, in order to improve the living conditions of humanity. While the groundlayer of this phase was Marc-Antoine Jullien (1775-1848) in a publication dating from 1816/7, in which he coined the term »Comparative Education« and which is usually taken as year one of a *science* of Comparative Education, his ideas only came into fruition after the Second World

War, with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) being a key institution.

A fourth phase is called a »factors and forces« stage, so because the emphasis was on how contextual forces shaped education systems, giving rise to *sui generis* national education systems. This made for extreme nominalism in the field. This phase became dominant in the field in the decades between the two world wars, and resonated with nationalism as the ruling ideology of the age. These decades also saw Comparative Education securing a foothold at especially North American, and to a lesser extent at European universities (see Wolhuter et al. 2013).

Then during the decades following the Second World War, Comparative Education entered a social science phase, so because the field wholesale appropriated the theoretical frameworks and methodologies of the social sciences. The interest was in testing hypotheses of the relation between education development as independent variable societal indicators (such as economic growth) as dependent variables. Some leading protagonists of the field, such as Harold Noah, Max Eckstein and even Brian Holmes, even believed that absolute laws (in the natural science meaning of the word) regarding such relations could be found. The polar opposite of the nominalism of the preceding »factors and forces« stage, when the idea was that Comparative Education should be an idiographic science, this new orientation meant a striving towards a nomothetic science. The search for co-variance between education development and societal indicators chimed in with the new belief in education as panacea for the all societal problems or challenges. This belief is evident in for example the founding of UNESCO at the time, and at the popularity of modernisation theory and human capital theory. It paved the way for an unprecedented education expansion worldwide. All these bode well for Comparative Education, and the 1960s was an exceptionally propitious decade for the development of the field at universities in Western countries and in the Global South (in the countries of the East Bloc in the time, the field was suppressed in the post-Second World War decades as all interest in foreign education was looked at with suspicion by the authorities of the time) (see Wolhuter et al. 2013).

The tide turned in the 1970s when, brought to a head by the world wide economic slump which followed the 1973 oil crisis, the education expansion did not yield the expected societal dividends such as social mobility, economic growth and the eradication of unemployment. A disillusionment with the societal ameliorative potential of education set in, visible in the appearance of rival paradigms (opposing modernisation theory and structural-functionalism, in the vogue in the 1960s) such as socio-economic reproduction theory, and dependency theory. Thus in the 1970s a sixth phase, that of heterodoxy (or paradigm wars) set in. The economic downturn and the disillusionment with education spelled doom for Comparative and International Education, as the position of the field at universities dwindled. Remarkable exceptions did occur, such as in Greece and Spain where, after democratisation, the field made a forceful appearance at universities and in teacher education programmes (see Wolhuter et al. 2013).

In the 1990s the field of Comparative and International Education has entered a seventh and final phase, a phase which Rolland Paulston (1997) gave the name

of the phase of heterogeneity. This phase has been characterised by a tolerance, even appreciation of paradigm diversity and an incessant multiplication of the number and variety of paradigms extant in the field. After its failing fortunes at universities in much of the preceding two decades, Comparative and International Education made a return in university courses, not in stand-alone courses under the name of Comparative Education, but subsumed in courses such as »Education and Development«, »Globalisation and Education«, »Postcolonial Education«, »Democracy and Education«, and »Human Rights and Education«. On the other hand, in many of the countries of the erstwhile East Bloc (from the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, right to China), the post-1990 context has proved to be conducive to spawn a return of Comparative Education courses in pre-service university teacher education programmes.

The question is now where has this historical evolutionary trajectory brought the field of Comparative and International Education at the present point in time? This will now be turned to in the next section.

Comparative and International Education: Present doldrums

In this part it will be argued that at present, in the context of the beginning twenty-first century, the field is seriously wanting, and the desiderata can be grouped under three rubrics: inertia: that is being tenaciously stuck into historical traditions despite new vistas beckoning; a theory-practice schizophrenia: that is a pre-occupation with theory, and a deficient engagement with practice; and a failure to rise to the occasion to the needs of the family of fields of Education scholarship.

The global education expansion as well as the seismic societal trends of the twenty-first century opens new vistas, unimaginable till very recently, for the field of Comparative and International Education — encapsulated in the title of recently published volume surveying the field: *Comparative and International Education: Survey of an infinite field* (Wolhuter and Wiseman 2019), yet, as a survey of all articles published in the first fifty years of the field's flagship journal *Comparative Education Review*, has shown, scholars remain trapped in their historically tread narrow furrows (Wolhuter 2008). The nation state remains the principal geographical level of analysis, despite the century being one of globalization on the one hand, and on the other, of decentralization and localization. The emphasis still falls on the societal forces shaping education systems, rather than broadening the scope to give due coverage of the dynamics of education systems and the societal outcomes of education. The field is also heavily tilted by persistent Northern hegemony in the world.

The second problem besetting the field is the theory-practice severance, that refers to practice of policy formulation, planning and implementation, as well as practice in classrooms and in educational institutions. First of all there is amongst scholars in the field of Comparative and International Education a preoccupation with issues of theory and methodology (see Wolhuter 2008), and furthermore — as is clear from the phaseology earlier, paradigm proliferation is the defining of

the present stage of the field. Then, secondly, as explained in the previous section, the intra-educational institutional and systemic dynamics and societal outcomes of education are taking the back-seat in the research agenda extant in the field — a second force working against practice relevance. Thirdly, in global education expansion projects and visions (to be elaborated upon in the next section), such as the *Education for All Movement* or the *INCHEON Declaration*, comparativists, either as individuals or as a collective scholarly community, are conspicuous by their absence. Finally, while governments are feverishly pursuing education borrowing from abroad, this is an extremely complex undertaking, as Steiner-Khamsi's (2004) monumental collective volume on the subject demonstrates — the basic problem is that governments do not factor in contextual differences between education exporting and importing country; neither do comparativists here move in to fill the void.

Thirdly, earlier in this paper the value of the conceptual and methodological toolkit and focus of study of Comparative and International Education for the family of fields of Education scholarship was alluded to. Serious problems besetting Education as field of scholarly research revolve around the lack of structure and coherence, the lack of theory, autochthonous theory in particular, the lack of relevance, and the lack of rigour (see Whitty and Furlong 2017). It has been argued that the central conceptual tool of the field, the education system, as the most extensive societal or cultural product in organizing education, offers a scaffold for building up an extensive, coherent, autochthonous theory into which scholars of the entire kaleidoscope of fields of Education research can build knowledge derived from their research (Wolhuter 2000).

The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Education

In order to appreciate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on education in the world, three aspects on education, and education in the contemporary world in particular, should be highlighted. These are firstly the hyperbolic expectations regarding education and the discrepancy with reality, secondly the inherent inertia of the education sector, and thirdly the cleavage between science (of Education) and education practice. It is only in view of these that the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on education can be fully appreciated. Therefore these three aspects of education in the contemporary world will now be discussed in turn.

The education expectations-reality gap

A massive education expansion project was launched since the mid-twentieth century. This expansion has by no means lost momentum, in fact, by the end of this second decade of the twenty-first century it is gaining momentum. This meteoric rise of the international education expansion project is unprecedented in history. Since seventy-five years ago, education has expanded worldwide more than the entire preceding human history. This education expansion by societies and governments

worldwide, has been fuelled by two interrelated motivations. The first is the belief of education as a basic human right. This appeared for the first time in Article 26 of the *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), and since followed in numerous manifestoes of human rights promulgated by national governments as well as by supra-national and non-governmental organisations. The second motivation has been the belief that took hold, that education is the panacea, or wonder cure, for any societal ill or challenge, from the eradication of unemployment, to the promotion of economic growth, the accomplishment of modernisation, the entrenchment of a culture of democracy, and the promotion of international peace. These motivations gave rise to a raft of global initiatives towards education expansion. These include the *Education for All* initiative (the Jomtien Declaration of 1990, renewed at the Dakar Meeting in 2000), the *Millennium Development Goals* (set for 2015), and the most recent, the *Incheon Declaration* of 2015, setting out the global community's vision for education by the year 2030.

Yet there is a huge gap between the above spelled out lofty ideals and reality. For example, pre-Covid 2019 there were in the world 258 million children of school going age, 17 percent of the total, not attending school (UNESCO 2020 b, p. 6).

The characteristic inertia of education

Of all societal sectors (whether the economy, politics, social systems, or whatever), education is the one most resistant to change. While this unfortunate feature of education has first been best portrayed by Harold Benjamin (1939) in his book *The Sabre Tooth Curriculum*, this inertia of education can be illustrated by the lecture method at institutions of higher education. The name lecture is derived from the Latin word »lektio« meaning to read. In times of the medieval university, the only way to get textbooks to students was for the professor to read the book in front of the lecture hall and for students, sitting in front of the professor to copy. Even the invention of printing in the fifteenth century, and the mass production of books, made this method of teaching-learning redundant; much more so other, more sophisticated technology which saw the light of day in ensuing centuries. Yet the lecture method, to this day, remains the mainstay of university education world-wide.

The Theory-practice caesura in Education

Despite trends such as the neo-liberal economic revolution taking the principles of this revolution into education, the rise of international test series — especially the PISA tests as explained above, there persists an impression, backed up by reports appearing with regular publications in the scholarly literature, that education research lacks relevance, is trapped in an ivory tower, and removed from the everyday reality of schools and classroom (see Wolhuter 2020 a; 2020 c). For example, Pollard (2007, p.125) writes that in the United Kingdom Education research » [...] being

small scale, irrelevant, inaccessible and low quality«. David Blunkett (2000, p. 1), at the time head of the Department of Education and Employment in the United Kingdom, stated: »[...] we need social scientists to help to determine what works and why, and what types of policy initiatives are likely to be most effective.«

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

The sudden, unexpected onset of the Covid-19 pandemic during the first months of 2020 has instantaneously highlighted the huge gap between education rhetoric and reality, the anachronistic nature of contemporary education, and the lack of a body of scholarly knowledge to guide humanity through these times. The outbreak of the pandemic saw multiple announcements of the suspension of school, college and university attendance in all parts of the world. Statistically, this has affected about 91 percent of the global student population (UNESCO 2020 a; 2020 c). Worldwide education institutions, especially but by no means limited to universities, almost overnight went into some distance or on-line education or blended university modes, via various learning management systems (LMS). Urgently education planners and practitioners looked for guidance from the Education research community, but this was not there.

Implications for Comparative and International Education

It is in this situation, of the spectre of the Covid-19 pandemic dominating societal context, that at the same time an appeal is directed at, and an opportunity for Comparative and International Education exist. The field should make a threefold metamorphosis to rise to the occasion and at the same time makes a quantum leap.

Firstly scholars in the field should conceptualise studies and embrace themes focusing on the intra-education institutions and system dynamics, and the societal outcomes of education, rather than staying fixated on the societal shaping forces of education. The geographic levels of comparison and for explicating education-society interrelations should move from the fixation on the national level to supra-national and global levels and especially to lower order levels, these are the provincial/state, and local levels, and the level of individual institutions and classrooms.

Within staking such a claim to its rightful field of study, in its full extent, scholars should then map out the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the supply of and participation in education (the quantitative dimension of education), as well as on the quality and the equality dimensions of education (see Wolhuter 2014). The derived inventory of challenges should then be collated with the (technological, economic, human and other) resources at offer in the societal context of the present era.

Then thirdly scholars in the field should research attempts to meet these education challenges (on the quantitative, quality and equality dimensions) in various contextual settings. Comparativists should also — and this is a promising

avenue never having been ventured into by scholars in the field — enter into proactive research, i.e. in planning education interventions and reforms in various contextual settings (for all the methodological and theoretical positions suggested by scholars in the field, the experimental is not present). The outcome of such interventions should in turn be subjected to research, and the findings, interpreted within the parameters of the contextual ecologies in which it took place, and then the research-praxis cycle should commence anew.

Finally, the derived knowledge should be built into a general theory of education, Comparative Education should play its potential role with respect to the integration or synthesizing of knowledge of education. Education as a field or as fields of science is characterized by the very disparate structure of knowledge produced by research (see Wolhuter 2020 c). The »education system« is society's most extensive edifice or creation for the taking place of education, and together with the societal interrelationships of education systems (also a key concept of the field) seem to offer the scaffold for building a unified, comprehensive theory of education. Then as all sciences, social sciences in particular, Comparative and International Education finds itself in a field of tension or dilemma. On the one hand the ideal is to arrive at universal statements (in the case of Comparative Education, on education systems and their societal interrelationships). On the other hand, science is engaged in ever more fine grained analysis, on the particular, unique instance; ruling out any general statements. Without in any way claiming to have a complete answer to this dilemma, the concept of context-contingent statements on education system-societal context interrelationships, plied by scholars in the field of Comparative and International Education, offer perhaps the best available vehicle to navigate between these two opposite, mutually exclusive goals, when formulating statements on education, and in particular statements on education interventions or reforms in praxis.

Conclusion

Over the past two hundred years, the scholarly field of Comparative and International Education has taken on form all over the world, uneven as its presence may have been over time and space. Yet it never rose remotely to its full potential. Three most salient aspects of the gap between potential and reality of the field are historical inertia, a theory-practice gap, and a failure to fulfill its role in the family of fields of Education scholarship. On the other hand, education in the world of today is also beset by its share of problems or challenges. These can be summarized by a discordance between expectations harboured from education, and reality, also a historical inertia, and the absence of a body of knowledge emanating from the Education scholarly community, to guide the global education project. These challenges were instantaneously highlighted by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic during the first months of 2020. This presents the field of Comparative and International Education an unprecedented opportunity to get itself in shape and at the same time to prove its unique value to a desperate world.

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COVID-19: BLISK STRELE ZA PRIMERJALNO IN MEDNARODNO PEDAGOGIKO?

Povzetek: Prispevek zagovarja stališče, da je sedanji, nepredvideni izbruh pandemije covida-19 poziv raziskovalcem na področju primerjalne in mednarodne pedagogike, naj se zganejo iz obdobja stagnacije. Obenem predstavlja priložnost, da utemeljijo pomen, ki ga ima primerjalna in mednarodna pedagogika za prakso (tj. prakso na ravni vzgoje in izobraževanja v izobraževalnih zavodih in na ravni načrtovanja in reformiranja vzgoje in izobraževanja kot izobraževalnega sistema). Članek pojasni koncept primerjalne in mednarodne pedagogike in njen namen. Prikaže njeno dolgo in vijugasto zgodovino ter obete, ki izhajajo iz njene opredelitve, zastavljenih ciljev in zgodovinskega razvoja, vse to v primerjavi s sedanjo stagnacijo na tem področju. Ključni vidiki te stagnacije so fiksacija na paradigme, zanemarjanje prakse in nenaklonjenost preseganju zgodovinsko utrjene raziskovalne agende. Globalni izobraževalni projekt se prav tako sooča z vsaj tremi resnimi težavami: z neskladjem med idealom in resničnostjo, z inertnostjo in s pedagogiko kot znanstvenim področjem, ki ne daje smernic za vzgojno-izobraževalno prakso. Članek poudarja, da je pandemija covida-19 v trenutku razgalila te težave in raziskovalcem s področja primerjalne in mednarodne pedagogike ponudila priložnost, da se organizirajo in svetovni izobraževalni praksi pokažejo, iz kakšnega testa so.

Ključne besede: primerjalna in mednarodna pedagogika, pandemija covida-19, izobraževanje za vse, raziskave na področju izobraževanja, človekove pravice, Deklaracija iz Incheona

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