Comparative and International Education and Peace Education

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INTRODUCTION

Comparative and international education constitutes two linked fields of educational research and theorizing. While the distinction is not a rigid one, comparative education includes the more "academic, analytic, and scientific aspects of the field", while international education "is related to cooperation, understanding, and exchange elements" (Rust, 2002, p. iii).

Comparative education

The field has not been rigidly defined. However, implicit in the notion of "comparative" is the study of more than one unit, and since comparative education arose at a time when national systems of education were being formed, the nation-state has been the primary unit of study. An early comparative education scholar, I.L. Kandel, suggested that "The problems and purposes of education have in general become somewhat similar in most countries; the solutions are influenced by differences of tradition, and culture peculiar to each" so that the task of a comparative scholar is to "discuss the meaning of general education, elementary and secondary, in the light of the forces – political, social, and cultural – which determine the character of national systems of education" (1933, p. xi). The field now includes all levels of education, formal and non-formal. Kandel did not specify the role of actual comparison of systems, the nature and purpose of which has not only proved controversial methodologically (Rust, 2001), but has in recent decades also been criticized on the grounds of resulting in inappropriate educational transfers especially from 'center' to 'periphery' nations (Ball, 1998; Crossley & Jarvis, 2001; Jones, 1998; Tikly, 2001; Zachariah, 1979). Multi-system studies constitute less than 33% of the reported research within comparative education journals (Rust et al, 1999). Though still controversial, intra-system comparisons are also undertaken (Crossley & Jarvis, 2000; Kelly & Altbach, 1986; Ross, 2002; Welch, 1991; Welch & Masemann, 1997).

International education

Internationalism is an underlying motif in the formation and development of comparative studies in education. Altbach and Kelly (1986) note that:

> The improvement of international understanding in general and education in particular is a long-standing tradition in the field. There has always been and, we hope, will continue to be a humanitarian and ameliorative element that has impelled many comparative educators to become involved in international programs to improve aspects of education and to encourage increased international understanding, particularly in the schools, as a contribution to world peace and development. (p. 4)

The "ameliorative" element, which forms the basis on which peace education comes within the domain of comparative education, is found mostly in the alliance between academic educational researchers and educational policy-makers and planners. This aspect has been present in the field since the 1820s when the founding father, Jullien de Paris, was concerned with the induction of principles of policy from the collection, classification and analysis of foreign data (Holmes, 1985). Comparative educators have been involved subsequently in two international data collection agencies since their inception: the International Bureau of Education (IBE) and UNESCO. With the inclusion of education in the economic development formulae of

modernization theories in the 1960s and 1970s, the comparative tools for comparing educational outcomes cross-nationally were sought by agencies seeking 'human capital' development outcomes.

Whether or not such 'applied' research is 'international' rather than 'comparative' has been controversial (Wilson, 1994). 'International' includes the study of international educational institutions and incorporates concerns by educators with "the development of multicultural and global efficacy" for a just society (Arnove, 2001, p. 501). Certainly comparativists operate trans-nationally as researchers and in their professional associations, especially the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES) and regional comparative education associations.

Debates continue on the extent of the field, appropriate subject-matter, and methodology. They are highlighted in presidential addresses to national societies and in the editorials of the major journals. Altbach's depiction of a "multidisciplinary field that looks at education…in a cross-cultural context" (1991, p. 491) broadly summarizes the situation.

A CHANGING FIELD

The debate about comparative *and* international education indicates the development of the field of study and the changes over time that have facilitated or inhibited the inclusion of peace education as a legitimate topic for study. Three major periods in the recent development of comparative and international education can be distinguished. The first, from the early post-World War II years to the 1970s, was characterized by concern with methodology and with applying an analytical, inductive scientific approach to the study of educational systems. In the second, from the late 1970s onwards critiques of positivism and structural-functional theorizing began to affect the social sciences and humanities, the base disciplines for many comparativists. Alternative methodologies such as hermeneutics and critical theory came to the fore in comparative education, and with them, a critique of the state as the principal unit of analysis (e.g. Altbach, 1991; Kelly & Altbach, 1986; Crossley & Broadfoot, 1992; Open File, 1989; Welch, 1985; Welch, 1992; Welch & Burns, 1992). This debate continues today (Cook et al, 2004; Cowen, 1996; Dale & Robertson, 2005; Marginson & Mollis, 2001; Rust, et al, 1999; Schriewer, 2006; Tikly & Crossley, 2001; Torres, 2001).

Exploration of the educational implications of globalization serves as an umbrella for comparative and international education in its third and current phase (in addition to works in the previous paragraph, see Arnove, 2001; Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002a & b; Crossley & Jarvis, 2000; Crossley & Jarvis, 2001; Crossley, M. & Watson, 2003; Dale & Robertson, 2005; Mehta & Ninnes, 2003). This phase is characterized by increasing diversification of theories, subjects, methodologies, and methods as comparativists address the question: "what is the comparative advantage of comparative education in understanding the changing social context of education and some of the secular dilemmas of equity, equality, and quality of education throughout the world?" (Torres, 2001, p. viii). Studies of educational planning, development and reform, ethnicity, race and class, and gender and sexual orientation showed the greatest increase in published comparative and international educational research between 1997-2004 (Raby, 2005).

Today, comparative and international education is a complex field characterized by multiple methodological approaches and topics of study. The ameliorative element has been applied to the 'improvement' of educational planning and systems. More recently, critique of the focus on the nation-state, and of the ways in which educational knowledge reinforces existing power and status structures within and between societies, and the acknowledgment of the impact of globalization on equity and justice, has opened new topics for research and teaching. International understanding, cooperation, human rights, peace, and related issues such as the environment are considered, if at all, as issues for teaching within comparative education.

PEACE EDUCATION WITHIN COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Reflections on the origins of comparative and international education, especially in the post-World War II period, suggest that one thread is the response by educators to the realities and consequences of war. Peace education does not have a strong position in academic educational institutions and there has been only one chair of peace education, held by Lennart Vriens at the University of Utrecht, the Netherlands. It is barely visible in comparative and international education, at least in the international journals in the field, *Comparative Education*, *Compare*, *Comparative Education Review, Canadian and International Education,* and the *International Review of Education (IRE)*. The first two are edited in the UK, the third in the US, the fourth in Canada and the last by the UNESCO Institute at Hamburg.

Given the work undertaken by UNESCO within the framework of its *Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education Relating to Human Rights and Fundamental freedoms*, adopted by the General Conference in 1974, it is not surprising that most of the articles on peace or related education published in comparative and international journals are found in the *IRE*, including a special edition in 1983 edited by Norwegians Magnus Haavelsrud and Johan Galtung, neither a comparative educator. All the contributors were members of the Peace Education Commission (PEC) of the International Peace Research Association and one means for a comparative perspective on peace education is the existence of PEC and its *Journal of Peace Education*, launched in 2004.

Writers frequently link "international understanding" with "peace," as in the 1979 special, 25th anniversary edition of the *IRE*: "It is increasingly important to take international action for the avoidance of war and for the safeguarding of the human environment" (Elvin, 1979, p. 461; see also Brock-Utne, 1988; Vriens, 1990). The issues of global security (Williams, 2000), culture and diversity (Simkin, 1998), and class (Welch, 1993) have been taken up by some comparative and international educators and are relevant to the debate about the formation and transmission of a "culture of peace", which is essentially internationalist (see e.g. Adams, 2000; Page, 2004; Vriens, 1993; for a relational approach which can have an international dimension, Ross, 2002). Bjerstedt (1993), Brock-Utne (1995, 2000), Burns and Aspeslagh (1996a and b), Halperin (1997), Heater (1984), Iram (2003), Ray (1988) and Reardon (1987, 1988) are among the peace educators who point out the complex relationships between peace education, education for international understanding, and related fields such as human rights education. Harber (1997) and Davies (2005), both writing in *Compare*, and Zajda et al (2006) turn the issues on their head by problematizing education itself as a potential source of conflict as well as for social justice.

However, articles on peace education, education for human rights and civic education appear only rarely even in the *IRE*. Nothing has appeared on peace education in *Comparative Education* or the *Comparative Education Review*, though there have been articles on civic education, internationalized education, moral education, political education, political socialization, education for democracy, and human rights education. *Compare* has had several relevant articles in the past 25 years, most recently the British Association for International and Comparative Education (BAICE) 2004 presidential address (Davies, 2005). Since 1996, within the comparative education societies, "peace and justice" is one stream in the WCCES congresses, and the CIES now has a peace education special interest group, some of whose members have published monographs on the subject, but have not yet published in the comparative education journals.

Burns and Aspeslagh (1996b) consider that comparative education provides "a way to understand the development of educational ideas and their practice, in concrete settings" (p. 9), arguing that this is an appropriate way to study peace education. However, peace educators are still largely concerned with issues such as children's attitudes, descriptions of particular peace education

initiatives, and polemics related to the introduction of peace education in formal education systems. While the latter is clearly suitable for comparative research, the ongoing preoccupation of comparative education with systems of education and the fact that peace education rarely becomes incorporated as such within a system is another factor keeping the fields apart.

CONCLUSION

New developments in comparative and international education, especially critiques of globalization and its impact on education, employment, human relations and culture, presage new possibilities to bring the fields closer. A clear challenge is found in Davies (2005) contention that "the relationship between education and conflict includes the more obvious effect of war and violence on education itself...but there is the perhaps less obvious reverse impact of education on conflict...through the reproduction or amplification of inequality, exclusion and social polarization; through the hardening of ethnic or religious identifications and divisions; and through its acceptance of dominant macho, aggressive, militaristic, and homophobic masculinities" (p. 359).

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