

## REGARDS SUR L'HISTOIRE DE L'ÉDUCATION, UNE PERSPECTIVE INTERNATIONALE

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Mapping, and discovering a particular terrain of interest is a frequent metaphor to describe a self-reflection in a discipline. A unique volume of the *Histoire de l'éducation* (entitled *Views on the History of Education: An International Perspective* in English) shows an excellent example of such an inquiry. History of Education (shortly HoE or HE – I will use the first version, whilst it is more widespread than the latter one) is an old and new field of study at the same time: it has a temporal dimension, as a traditional element of teacher training with specific moral motives in nation-building in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe; furthermore, an already disappeared subject in nowadays presentism, waiting to invent again. On the other hand, there have been crucial questions related to its classification and terminology, because of the somehow vague position of the HoE between history and education sciences. Thus, the selected papers of this volume set up a relevant and actual framing of this topic, focusing on knowledge-producing and recruitment of the discipline, using doctoral theses in HoE as sources in the investigation.

The dossier consisted of seven studies, written in English and French, starting with a paper in the collaboration of Rita Hofstetter and Solenn Huitric (leaders of this research), *La carte et le miroir. Ancrages, enjeux et horizons de l'histoire de l'éducation* (pp. 9-48). An outline of the area and a mirror to it: In this frame, the article emphasizes the controversies between the intensity of HoE research and the academic uncertainties and unclear structures into which these studies are embedded. This was the starting point of a five-year work (from 2014 to 2019) of the SWG (Standing Working Group) *Mapping the Discipline History of Education* at ISCHE (International Standing Conference for the History of

Education). They characterized the various nature of the actors and networks interested in the field, who are mostly (cca. 70-80 % of the all «population») associated with educational (pedagogical, psychological) institutions, and only in a few cases (20-30 %) affiliated with other academic departments, like history, philosophy, arts, social sciences, culture studies, and so on (France is a special example, where the majority of historians of education come from history).

Overviewing the development of HoE one can see a rising phase during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when professionalization processes made arts and humanities as basics of teacher training and HoE became part of it, as an auxiliary science (in Germany), an ideological field (France), or give schooling a historical dimension (USA). The later evolution of the discipline suggests an obvious decline, due to the conflict of interests inside education sciences and the hierarchy of knowledge fields. After 1990, a new challenge arose to contextualize the diverse HoE trends and make a 'big picture' about it – all these initiatives concluded in two big volumes, the *Oxford Handbook of the History of Education* (2019), and *Handbook of Historical Studies in Education* (2020). The *Mapping SWG* followed similar goals in defining the historical approach, by establishing dialogues with other disciplines in humanities, exceeding nationalist perspectives («possible ethnocentrisme méthodologique», p. 39), and connecting the past to present questions. Several case studies present how to do this in the reviewed volume of *Histoire de l'éducation*, related to Spain, France, UK and the Baltic States.

Analyzing the *Twenty-five years of History of Education Doctoral Dissertations in Spain (1990-2015)* (pp. 49-74), by Carmen Sanchidrián Blanco, Andrés Payà Rico and Tatiane de Freitas Ermel, undoubtedly presents the ambiguity of our subject of interest. The main question is the following here: How to find theses in HoE amongst doctoral dissertations? As a «hybrid» discipline (p. 59) it belongs to History and Education as well, which is the main strength (interdisciplinarity) and weak point of HoE (in terms of positions, and academic influence) at the same time. The authors used TESEO (Tesis Doctorales), the Spanish Ministry of Education database to detect such doctoral dissertations, and the first conclusion is that the interest has been growing towards this kind of knowledge in the last three decades, which fact has been motivated by changes in the administrative and legal background, the expansion of

higher education, evaluation standards in the higher education, international tendencies, etc. There are three main aspects of the analysis, namely thesis descriptors, subject areas (both raise questions about discipline taxonomies, classifications, and hierarchies), and institutional backgrounds. The latter one demonstrates the flagship universities of HoE in Spain: UNED (National Distance Education) and Complutense in Madrid, Salamanca, Barcelona, or Valencia – and ten more universities, which produced at least five theses in the examined period. This is another impressive representation of knowledge-producing geography; the reader may be curious about the same one in Europe and globally.

The Iberian Peninsula is surely an influential actor in nowadays HoE, as scientific societies, numerous journals, and conferences prove that. The commitment of scholarly communities (including mostly volunteer and not well-acknowledged work), and creating spaces to exchange ideas have been always significant factors in the mechanisms of disciplinarization. This is the theme of the paper, *History of Education in the Iberian Peninsula (2014-2019). Societies, Journals and Conferences in Spain and Portugal* (pp. 117-206), authored by José Luis Hernández Huerta, Sara González Gómez and Iván Pérez Miranda. One can see a positive movement in connecting societies on different levels: cooperation amongst HISTEDUP (Portugal) and SEDHE (Spain), or the Ibero-American and Luso-Brazilian initiatives are part of this relatedness. There are eight existing journals in the field, mainly with multi-lingual publishing policies, which is perhaps one of their biggest values: published papers are written in (Castilian) Spanish, Portuguese, English, French, Italian, German, Catalan, Basque, and Galician. This diversity is fascinating and also represented at the introduced conferences. Summarizing the study in a nutshell: «Spain represents a very special, given that [...] it accounts for 16,3 % of known specialist academic journals and 9.7 % of academic societies focusing on History of Education, surviving in the world today» (p. 205).

There are different phases of a developing discipline; the previous Iberian example points out a flourishing and mature field; on the contrary, we find countries that took the first steps after they gained independence. Iveta Kestere from Latvia and Irena Stonkuvienė from Lithuania tell us a story about how to get from national to global, a *Research on the History of Education in the Baltic States (1990-2015)* (pp. 75-91). After a

long era of Sovietization and the hegemony of the official Marxist-Leninist ideology, the regime changed and the new states had to restructure and rebuild their scientific systems. Firstly, they started to discover (and it is an ongoing project) their own histories, and have to narrate them for internal and global audiences as well. That is why there are national histories of education here (and this is a common feature in the post-communist/socialist Eastern and Central Europe), as the authors cited Sorin Antohin, the Romanian historian: «we try to explain [our differences and peculiarities] to ourselves while explaining them to everybody else» (p. 89). Taking a look at the key ideas of nation, nationalism, and national history seem to be very different views in this region if we compare them with the Western or Southern part of Europe. To exceed the possible misunderstandings and false interpretations, dialogues are key – as it is set up in this compiled volume.

Returning to a more established model, France provides a perfect terrain. Solenn Huitric chose dissertation theses from 1990 to describe continuities and changes in HoE in her paper, *Les thèses françaises en histoire de l'éducation depuis 1990: un miroir de la discipline?* (pp. 93-117), using the metaphor of a mirror with a question mark. Making a database with 571 items is enough as a ground point to contextualize the status and positions of the discipline, composing the architecture with three main elements: institutional logic, time and space, and finally thematic nets. History dominates the field: 264 theses distributed in this science and 139 theses in education sciences. This is clearly a unique characteristic of the French HoE, like the closer nature to social sciences: 33 theses in sociology, 19 in political science (see the table on p. 102). The methodological aspect makes a substantial contribution: Solenn Huitric processed the text analysis using ALCESTE software, which visualizes the results in different formats. Similarly to Spain, a map of the leading universities in HoE was also outlined: Paris I, IV, V, and Lyon.

The following study covered a broader dimension, *History of education in Britain since 1960* (pp. 119-141) by Gary McCulloch. According to Professor McCulloch, there are three fundamental phases in the UK development from 1960 to 2020. Brian Simon was the prominent figure of the «quiet revolution» between 1960 and 1975, characterized by a growing scene, with a new journal, association, topics, and approaches. The last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century displayed a reverse tendency, as HoE lost

its former positions, was excluded from curricula, and declined. On the other hand, new directions emerged (like urban education, education of girls and women, ideals and practices in the Empire, and so on), and the organizational and conference work was constant, so the HoE got through these hard times. The final section is called *2000-2020: specialisation and internationalisation*. «A new generation of educational historians came to the fore» (p. 135) – Gary McCulloch, Joyce Goodman, Stephanie Spencer and Ian Grosvenor got professorships in the early 2000s. These names are very familiar to everyone who just enters the field and searches pieces of literature for the theoretical establishment of research. The goals and targeted audiences changed fundamentally; publishing in specialized journals means achieving a narrower readership, than in the 1960s.

This ambivalent development is echoed in our last reviewed study, *Orientations et lieux de la recherche en histoire contemporaine de l'éducation en France depuis 2000* (pp. 143-176), authored by Renaud d'Enfert and Rebecca Rogers. The flagship journal *Histoire de l'éducation* deals with new topics in the time period: women in education, gender issues, school building, outside learning, and transnational viewpoints (special volumes about Eastern-European and postcolonial countries). The webpage <https://www.cairn.info/> collects other important publishing venues, where HoE appears, a diversified territory of scientific knowledge. Specialization and internationalization have been going hand in hand since the requirements for scholars arose from the government: excellence as a new keyword resulted in new ways of understanding education, special fields, working groups, and preferring rather articles than monographs.

It is hard to encapsulate such rich content in one paragraph, but some considerations are worth to write it down. Connections between disciplines, fields, and actors have been strengthening; transdisciplinarity, and diversity in geographical, cultural, linguistic, or methodological terms are crucial points in research nowadays. Publishing practices and career patterns accommodated the changing nature of the scientific environment: co-authors, working groups, and co-supervisors became natural components in making a successful study (this volume and the review about it both illustrate the fact). Questioning the transitions from local to regional, national and international (and vice versa) is unavoidable, which

(re)forms the substance of HoE and scholarly communities. This kind of self-reflective work is going on, just see one of the latest *Paedagogica Historica* volume *Histories of the Past and Histories of the Future: Pandemics and Historians of Education* (2022), and *Histories of education in the past, present and future: trends and intersections* issued by *History of Education* journal (2022). At the ISCHE new Standing Working Groups continued the goals of *Mapping the Discipline...*, like *History of Knowledge in the History of Education*, and *Observatory for the History of Education* (the first author of this review is a member of the latter one). All of these projects may find answers to the question: «L'histoire de l'éducation a-t-elle un avenir? [Does the history of education have a future?]" (cited from a conference in 2014, p. 12).

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