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Emerging Countries as Taxon in Comparative and International Education

Países emergentes como taxón en Educación Comparada e Internacional

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Abstract

Scholars of the theoretical and methodological bases of the field of Comparative and International Education have for some time argued for the stronger use of supra-national levels of analysis in the field, and also for the consideration of new supra-national taxa rather than many of the problematic supra-national groupings freely used by scholars in the field. This article argues the case for the emerging countries to be used as taxon in the field. The article reviews the arguments for supra-national level of anlalyses as presented by theoreticians in the field, the present state of supra-national analyses and the taxa that are employed by scholars in the field. The merits of developing a taxon of emerging countries are then argued. The concept "emerging countries" as introduced by World Bank economist Antoine van Agtmael in 1981 is clarified, and since then has been elaborated a few times from different constituencies where the term had founded a favourable reception (See Van Agtmael, 2013). The author then presents a tentative grouping, and outlining the societal contexts and education projects in these countries, and argue that these countries collectively present a particularly poignant education laboratory in the current world, worthy of being employed as taxon in the scholarly field of Comparative and International Education. Recommendations for sub-categories are also made.

Keywords: Adult Literacy; Comparative and International Education; Developing Countries; Emerging Countries; Global South; Taxonomy

Resumen

Estudiosos de las bases teóricas y metodológicas del campo de la Educación Comparada y la Educación internacional lleva algún tiempo abogando por un mayor uso de los niveles de análisis supranacionales y también por la consideración de nuevos taxones supranacionales, en lugar de muchas de las agrupaciones supranacionales problemáticas utilizadas libremente por los académicos en esta disciplina. Este artículo argumenta el caso de hacer uso de los países emergentes como taxón en ella. El artículo revisa los argumentos a favor del nivel supranacional de análisis tal como presentan teóricos especializados, el estado actual de los análisis supranacionales y los taxones que son empleados por académicos en el campo. Después, los méritos de desarrollar un taxón de países emergentes son discutidos. El concepto de «países emergentes» fue introducido por el economista del Banco Mundial Antoine van Agtmael en 1981 y, desde entonces, ha sido elaborado en pocas ocasiones en diferentes circunscripciones donde el término ha tenido una recepción favorable (Ver Van Agtmael, 2013). A continuación, el autor presenta una agrupación tentativa y describe los contextos sociales y los proyectos educativos en estos países, y argumenta que estos países se presentan colectivamente como un laboratorio educativo particularmente dinámico en el mundo actual, digno de ser empleado como taxón en el campo académico de los estudios comparativos e internacionales de la Educación. También se hacen recomendaciones para las subcategorías.

Palabras clave: Alfabetización de adultos; Educación Comparada e Internacional; Países en desarrollo; Países emergentes; Sur Global; Taxonomía

1. Introduction

In considering and reflecting about the potential of Emerging Countries as an education laboratory of the world, the obvious scholarly field to produce a stock of knowledge and to develop a theoretical edifice is that of Comparative and International Education. What makes it difficult for the field of Comparative and International Education to take on this assignment are two contradictory features of the field. On the one hand it is a growing field as measured by volume of publications (Easton, 2015) and protagonists of the field keep on indicating new vistas for the field (for example, see Oleksiyenko *et al.*, 2020), encapsulated in the title of a recently published volume presenting a global survey of the field: *Comparative and International Education: Survey of an infinite field* (Wolhuter & Wiseman, eds, 2019). On the other hand, the research agenda of scholars in the field displays a strong inertia; scholars keeping to deep, well-treaded furrows, despite new horizons beckoning (see Wolhuter, 2008).

The aim of this article is to explore the possibilities of Emerging Countries as a taxon in the field of Comparative and International Education. The article begins with geographical levels as one aspect of comparative investigation in Education. The need for scholars of Comparative and International Education to venture more actively into the level of supra-national units will be argued. Then the scope for Emerging Countries as such a supra-national unit as object of scholarship in Comparative and International Education will be explored. In conclusion the value of Comparative and International Education scholarship focusing on the Emerging Countries as poignant education laboratory of the world will be argued.

2. Geographic levels as universal facet of Comparative and International Education studies

2.1. Comparative and International Education: Conceptual clarification

The scholarly field of Comparative and International Education escapes attempts to encapsulate its essence in a one line or even a one sentence definition (see Manzon, 2011, pp. 153-158). Furthermore, no consensus exists as to a definition of the field. 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, 2020):

-an education system perspective

-a contextual perspective

-a comparative perspective

The United Nationals 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 (a point which will

be returned to later in the article). 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 (Crossley, 2019). The contextual perspective comprises both how societal contextual forces shape education systems, and conversely, how education systems in turn effect 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.

2.2. Levels of Comparison

An education system, together with its societal context, occupies a particular physical space, hence there is always a geographical facet to it. The various possible geographical levels of Comparative Education scholarship was first explicitly mapped in the well-known and much cited Bray and Thomas cube, published in a 1995 issue of the journal *Harvard Educational Review* (Bray & Thomas, 1995). Their scheme, which enumerates the following levels, was entrenched in the volume edited by Bray, Adamson and Mason (first edition 2007, second edition 2014) which became a standard reference work on the methodological and theoretical framework of Comparative and International Education: level 1: world regions/continents; level 2: countries; level 3: states/provinces; level 4: districts; level 5: schools; level 6: classrooms; and level 7: individuals. Wolhuter (2008) has extended that classification to employ the following categories: world; super-continent; continent; supra-country; country; sub-country (i.e. state/province, city or category of population of country); institution; class; and individual. An absence in the Bray and Thomas cube is an explicit category of supra-country.

2.3. The national state as predominant level of Comparative and International Education research

Yet for all the plethora of available geographical levels of analysis outlined in the publications above, the nation state has always been and remains the preferred geographical level of analysis of scholars of Comparative and International Education (see Turner, 2019). Calculating the geographical levels of research reported in all articles published during the first fifty years of existence of the journal *Comparative Education Review*, 1957-2006, Wolhuter (2008:323) found that in five year intervals since the first issue, the percentage of articles focusing on the nation state ranged from 66 percent to 87 percent.

This predilection with the nation state as unit of analysis can be traced back to a number of factors. Much can be said for the nation state as unit of analysis of Comparative Education research. Politically, legally and economically, and less so, but still, socially and demographically the national state remains a powerful force or unit shaping education systems, and *national* education systems remain a strong, undeniable feature on the global education landscape.

The fixation on the nation state can also be explained from the origins and historical evolution of the field of Comparative and International Education. The field of Comparative and International Education chrystallised as an independent field of scholarly research at the time when nation states emerged (at least in Europe and the two Americas) and when national systems of public education were established. In the nineteenth century the pre-scientific phase of the systematic study of foreign education systems for borrowing of best ideas to improve the domestic education system, comparative studies were conducted by mainly government emissaries (even Ministers of Education, as for example in the case of Victor Cousin) conducting a systematic study of national systems abroad, in order to improve the domestic, national education system. The Plan which founding father of Comparative Education, Marc-Antoinne Jullien (1775-1848) had for the development of the field, despite its noble philanthropic objectives superseding national borders, specified that data on national education systems had to be collected, collated and published (Fraser, 1964; Gautherin, 2000). Following the foundation set by the ideas and textbook of Isaac Kandel, with his idea of "national character" shaping education systems, comparativists in the early amd mid-twetieth century "factors and forces" stage in the evolution of the field had no interest beyond the nation state as unit. When modernisation theory became the main theoretical framework in the field in the 1960s, with the imperative to "modernise" nations of the developing countries (as these countries were called in those times, before the term became discredited), the idea was that the national education systems of these countries should serve as main instrument in the development or modernisation of the nations of these countries.

2.4. The need to move beyond the nation state to supra-national levels of analysis

From at least two vantage points the need can be argued for scholars of Comparative and International Education to move beyond their almost exclusive focus on the nation state to embrace also supra-national levels of analysis.

The first is the need for taxonomies. In disciplines or fields of scholarly inquiry the use of taxonomies or classification systems have proved themselves to be a valuable tool. This is because mass data are so unwieldy and contain so much information, that to make such data comprehensible, a classification or categorisation is necessary to reduce data or cases to manageable and to comprehensible proportions. The "factors and forces" stage of the field, with the basis of laid by Michael Sadler and Isaac Kandel, emphasising the unique societal context as shaping force of each national education system, put the field on a track of extreme nominalism which it has not escaped from right to this day. While leading scholars in the field, such as Erwin Epstein, Nicholas Hans, WD Halls and Phillip Jones have identified the lack of taxonomies as a lacunus in the field (Wolhuter, 1997, pp. 161-162) and while Wolhuter (1997) has constructed a classification with the intention to stimulate the development of taxonomies in the field, the yearning for taxonomy to occupy the centre place in the field has never materialised.

The need to proceed from the nation level to particularly the supra-national can also be motivated from another vantage point. In recent decades the international communications and transportation technology revolution, and the resulting and related international economy, globalisation, demographic mobility, and what Thomas Friedman (2006) calls a "flat earth", as well as the ecological crisis and challenges such as global terrorism, have simply denuded the (real of portrayed) imperviousness of national borders and

national sovereignty (Ohmae, 1996) and as a level of analysis in Comparative Education, has lost some of its value (see Kamens, 2017). While global structures have emerged, such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (Heywood, 2002, pp. 125-155), supra-national groupings have also begun to make more sense. The European Union is certainly the most salient of such groupings, but by far not the sole case.

3. Supra national as level in Comparative and International Education scholarship: Ideal and reality

3.1. Reality

Concerning the reality as to how the supra national as level of analysis does figure in Comparative and International Education scholarship, the first observation, as was explained earlier, is that it is a grossly underrepresented level. Zooming in on the supra national categories that do figure, the survey of the *Comparative Education Review* of Wolhuter (2008) refered to earlier, identified the following supra national units and groupings of countries in published research: Developed countries, Developing countries, Africa, North America, Latin America, Asia, Europe, Western Europe, Arab countries, Anglophone countries, Francophone countries, East Bloc, Far East, East Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, East Africa, German Colonial Africa, North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) and Asia-Pacific. Before the merits of these catogories will be assessed, the criteria for the grouping of national jurisdictions in the field of Comparative and International Education will first be discussed.

3.2. Ideal

The general or ideal rules or criteria of classifactory systems in any science is that (i) there should be maximum homogeneity within classes, (ii) all cases in a class should display a set of distinguishing features of that class, (iii) those distinguishing features should only pertain to cases in that class (iv) no case should fall into more than one class, and (v) the range of classes should cover all cases. Given the complexity of the object of study of Comparative and International Education, this neat ideal is not attainable. The criteria for classificatory systems in Comparative and International Education need to be modified.

The object of study of Comparative and International Education, as explained earlier, encompasses two domains, education systems and societal contexts of such systems. Both these are, each in its own right, infinitely complex. While the customary schemes for analysing societal contexts, such as those of Hans, Schneider, Bereday, King, Idenburg, Mallinson, or Moehlman, distinguish between a limited number of components, generally geography, demography, social system, economy, level of technological development, political system, and religion and life and world philosophy, each of these components fall out in a number of sub-components. For example, demography entails population size, distribution, growth rate, age profile, and mobility. Each of these can take on a wide range of values on a ratio scale. The education system displays a no less complex diversity. While the education can be analysed as consisting of four components educational policy, administrative structure, structure for learning and teaching, and support systems, each of these components consists of a number of elements (see Steyn

et al., 2015). Each of these elements can take on an uncountable number of different manifestations. Adding all these up mean a diverse tapestry of education systems and societal contexts, ruling out the delineation of any simple taxonomy of classes with full internal and exclusive homogeneity. The best comparativists can realistically aspire to, is to work with, and construct taxonomies on the basis of the biggest common denominator, and/or with one or a limited set of education system elements and/or contextual elements. What also looms up as an attractive heuristic is Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of 'family resemblances' ('*Familie Ähnlichkeit*') (Wittgenstein, 1953). This notion means that what can be thought of as having by one significant property in common, may in fact be related to a host of overlapping similarities where no single of these related properties is common to all cases.

Returning to the supra-national categories used by scholars of Comparative and International Education, as enumerated earlier, these are clearly based on primacy of political context or geographical or linguistic criteria. These groupings surely all have merits (the fact that these publications survived rigorous peer reviews testifies to this), and it is beyond the scope of this article to assess each one. However, the purposes of this article dictate zooming in on one dichotomy frequently used, namely that of developed-developing countries (although these terms have become somewhat discredited in contemporary times, and the dichotomy Global North – Global South are now often used as more acceptable terms).

The definition of a developing country (on contrast to a developed country) varies from institution to institution. The World Bank, which in 2016 decided to phase out the use of the categories developing and developed countries, classified all countries with an annual per capita Gross National Income of less than US$11 905 as developing countries. The problem with the grouping of developing countries is the vast, unwieldy diversity contained in this class. In terms of the World Bank;s cut-off, 137 of the approximately 211 countries in the world then are developing countries. Economically, for example, this category encompasses, in terms of the World Bank's Classification of countries, the entire range of low income countries, lower middle income countries, and upper middle income countries; i.e. a spectrum of countries from the poorest right up to those on the verge of breaking through to the category of highly developed countries. This wide range among the developing countries can be found with respect to every societal indicator, such as political stability, incidence of poverty or pervasivess of internet and personal computer connectivity. Moreover, in their education systems and development of education these countries differ as much. For example, to use Martin Trow's (1973, 2007) oft cited triptych of the development of national systems of higher education: systems of elite higher education (gross enrolment ratio under 15%), mass higher education (gross enrolment ratios of 15% to 50%) and universal higher education (gross enrolment ratios above 50%); the developing countries include countries with elite as well as mass higher education systems, and even, such as Argentina or Thailand at the stage of universal higher education. This means the list of developing countries spans from countries with adult literacy rates of in the lower twenty percentage points, i.e. battling to g*et al*l adults literate and far from universalising primary education, to countries with universal higher education participation.

Some time ago the World Bank has excised the tail end of the countries, and created a category of "least developed countries", and while UNESCO has also been using such a category in data assemblying and even as a taxon for publications (see UNESCO,

2016), this taxon has never gained significant traction in Comparative and International Education scholarship. This article will now focus on scope for delineating another taxon at the other end of the developing countries spectrum, namely the upper crust, closest to the developed countries class.

4. Exploring Emerging Countries as Possible Taxon for Comparative and International Education

4.1. Emerging Countries: Conceptual clarification

The term "emerging markets" was introduced by World Bank economist Antoine van Agtmael in 1981. Third World" was a term with connotations of extreme poverty, shoddy goods, and hopelessness, but "emerging markets," according to van Agtmael "suggested progress, uplift, and dynamism" (International Financial Cooperation, 2020). While the term has gained currency in the financial world, and less so but also in the public discourse at large and it even appears sparsely in the scholarly discourse, an exact, unanimously accepted definition of term has thus far been elusive. Those who ventured a definition, either mention a number of rather vague criteria or merely tables a list of features of such countries. The first revolve are mostly around the themes of the Emerging Countries constituting a set of countries not yet developed countries, but close to the target, and moving at a positive speed towards the goal; this make these countries attractive for investors (see Scott, 2019).

The lists of Emerging Countries on offer also vary, but there is huge overlap. At the risk of being ciritised for following the captains of the business world, in this article the following 25 countries, derived the MSCI Emerging Countries Index (MSCI is a Finanicial House with its Head Quarters in New York) includes in their list of Emerging Countries, will be considered Emerging Countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Greater China (that is including Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan), Colombia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, (Republic of, or South) Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey and United Arab Emirates (MSCI, 2020)

The group of Emerging Countries will now be explored, as a possible taxon for scholars of Comparative and International Education to use. Therefore the societal contexts and education development of these countries will be investigated; the aim will be to determine internal homogeneity and variance between the Emerging Countries on the one hand and other the non- Emerging Developing Countries at the one side and the Developed Countries on the other.

4.2. Emerging Countries: Economic and Political Context

In terms of economic affluence, taking the World Bank's four category classification of countries, Low Income Countries (these are countries with an annual per capita Gross National Income of lower than US$1 026), Lower Middle Income Countries (countries with an annual per capita Gross National Income of US$1 026 - US$3 995), Upper Middle Income Countries (countries with an annual per capita Gross National Income of US$ 3 996 – US$ 12 375) and High Income Countries (countries with an annual per capita

Gross National Income above US$12 375), fourteen of the 25 Emerging Countries are Upper Middle Income Countries. The outliers are nine High Income Countries (Chile, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Korea, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) and two Lower Middle Income Countries (India and Pakistan). Fourty Seven Upper Middle Income Countries are not Emerging Countries either.

Turning to economic growth rates, according to World Bank Data, average annual growth rates for the five year period 2013-2018 for the Emerging Countries were on the whole quite impressive. Seven of these countries had average growth rates in excess of 5% per year (China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines and Turkey), eight in the range 3-5% per year, six 2.00-2.99%, five 0.00-1.99%, and only one registered an average negative growth rate (Brazil: -0.22%, though for first of the five years had a positive growth in excess of 3%, then slipped into negative terrain, hit a bottom in the middle of the period and commence to grow again, in the last year of the cylce more than 1%). An inspection of these growth rates among the global list revealed that while high average growth rates, even over 5% per annum, is by no means uncommon in other countries, these high rates occur in a very small number of (the total set of) Low Income and Lower Middle Income Economies. The high income countries registered much more subdued, though still positive growth rates. Hence what distinguished the Emerging Countries, is a high growth rate from a rather big base.

Turning of the equality in the distribution of wealth, Gini index values are available for all the Emerging Countries except Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The Emerging Countries appears to be slightly more unequal than the global norm. When ranked according to Gini index values, twelve of the twenty two Emerging Countries lie above the median of 80 (there are values available for 159 countries) (South Africa and Brazil, ranking respectively first and eighth, are extremely unequal) and ten Emerging Countries are below the median (very low in terms of inequality are the Czech Republic, ranked 155, Hungary, ranked 140, Poland, ranked 129, Egypt, ranked 127, and Pakistan, ranked 115) (Indexmundi, 2020).

On political context, all of the Emerging Countries have at least since after the Second World War, if not as recent as post-1990 either became independent (such as India and Pakistan) or came into existence as new political jurisdictions (such as the United Arab Emirates in 1971) and/or made a total transformation to a new political dispensation (such as South Africa in 1994, Colombia in 1991 or Egypt in 2011) typically entailing full democratisation (such as the Czech Republic after 1990) or at least embraced the principles of the free market economy (such as China).

4.3. Emerging Countries: Education development

Wolhuter (2014) constructed a framework for assessing national education projects. This framework distinguishes between three dimensions of a national education effort: the quantitative dimension, the qualitative dimension and the equality or equity dimension. This model can be depicted graphically as in figure 1.

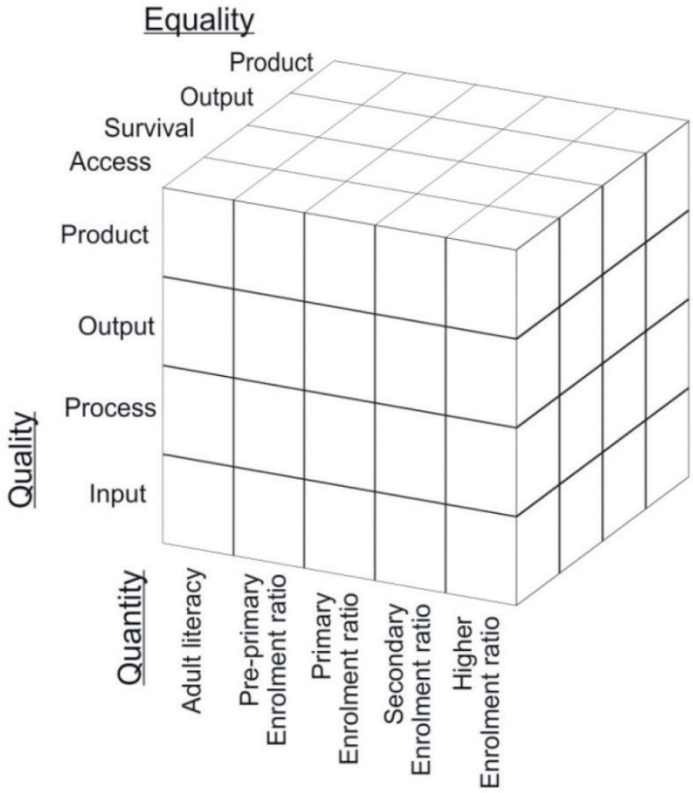

Figure 1: Model for the evaluation of a National Education project. Source: Wolhuter, 2014.

The quantitative dimension concerns participation in education and can be measured by means of data on enrolments and enrolment ratios. Education quality is a difficult concept, and cannot be summarised in a simple, one line definition. A more meaningful exercise is to identify and unpack the components of education quality (see Bergmann, 1996). Wolhuter (2014) distinguish between the following components of education quality: input quality, process quality, output quality, and product quality. Input quality refers to the quality of the financial investment or physical facilities of a school or education system. Process quality comprises the quality of teaching and learning realised in schools and in education systems. Output quality refers to the outcome or end result of the learning process or activity, that is, the achievement levels of learner at the end or at any point in a school or learning programme. Product quality at an individual level includes the income-generating potential that a particular level or programme of education renders, and the intellectual/cognitive skills, the character cultivation and the hierarchy of values brought about by a programme of education. Societal product quality (which is more difficult to measure than individual product quality) includes increased economic productivity, political returns (such as entrenching a culture of democracy) and social returns (e.g. creating respect for all humans, strengthening a culture or the role of education in promoting social mobility)

Defining the concept of equal educational opportunities is challenging. A one line definition is difficult. There is widespread disagreement about what equality of opportunity

in education requires. However, a commonly used model is the model of Joseph Farrell (first published in 1982; republished and reworked in 2013). Farrell (1982) distinguished between four facets of equality:

> • *Equality of access*: The statistical ratios of learners belonging to different social categories in entering the school system.
>
> • *Equality of survival*: The statistical ratios of learners belonging to different social categories progressing to a specific level in the school system (e.g. the last year of secondary school).
>
> • *Equality of output*: The statistical ratios of learners belonging to different social categories attaining similar or the same outcomes (e.g. performance in the matriculation examination).
>
> • *Equality of product*: The statistical ratios of learners belonging to different social categories with the same educational qualifications securing the same jobs, remuneration and life opportunities (Farrell 1982, 2013).

It should also be noted that in contemporary more nuanced and/or progressive scholarly and public discourse on education, equity has supplanted the concept of equality. Whereas equality is customarily used in a narrow and uncomplicated sence of implying the equal distribution of resources, equity centres around fairness, and invokes the principles of social justice of John Rawls (1971) as entailing giving the additional social and economic assistance or preferential treatment to those least privileged (Nyoni *et al,*, 2017, *p.* 45). In a model such as Farrell's, while he used the term "equality", the term can also be replaced by equity. In interpreting education opportunity in terms of socio-economic context, the concept is indispensible. The problem that a study such as this is facing is that the overwhelming percentage of education statistics are available only in the form of equality measurements.

To commence with the quantitative dimension, as indicator of this dimension, the focus will fall on gross tertiary education enrolment ratios. To return to Trow's classification mentioned earlier, all of the Emerging Countries, with the exception of Pakistan (9%) and Qatar (19%), either fall comfortably in the mass higher education systems bracket (although South Africa, and India with respectively 24% and 29% are in the lower part of the mass higher education range) or are in the universal stage, some very high, in fact Greece (143%) and Turkey (113%) are the highest and second highest in the world. The gross higher education ratios of the Emerging Countries are generally much higher than the global aggregate of 39%, and even more markedly above the 34% aggregate for all lower and upper middle income countries (figures from World Bank, 2020). What is also striking of the Emerging Countries, is the unusual rapid expansion of higher education in recent history. While a global higher education revolution has swept the planet the past thirty years, and its key feature has been massification, the growth of higher education was exceptional, and it proceeded often from a very tiny base. The United Arab Emirates got its first higher education institution only in 1976, currently it boasts 180 institutions of higher education (Badry, 2019, pp. 59-60). Higher education enrolments in India have swollen from 3.6 million in 1990, to 9.4 million in 2000, to 20.7 million in 2010, to 35.1 million in 2019 (UNESCO, 2020). China had to built up a higher education system

virtually de novo in 1978, after the ravages of the Cultural Revolution of the preceding ten years. The largest university in the world, the Indira Ghandi Open University, established in 1985 and now with over four million students, is in India. Having overtaken the United States of America some years ago, India (which now has twice the number of higher education students than the United States of America) has now become, in terms of enrolment, the second largest higher education system in the world after China, which itself dethroned the United States of America in 2009/10 to become (in terms of enrolments) the largest higher education system in the world. In 2016/17 China overtook the United States of America in doctoral production too, when it awarded 71 000 doctoral degrees.

On the other end of the spectrum of the quantitative dimension, several of the Emerging Countries are still engage in a battle to attain universal adult literacy. India is the country in the world with the largest number of illiterate adults, namely 256 million, while China, the country in the world with the third largest number of illiterate adults, has 41.57 million illiterate adults (Wolhuter & Barbieri, 2017, p. 31). Eleven of the 58 countries in the world with more than one million illiterate adults, are Emerging Countries: apart from India and China, also Egypt, Indonesia, Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Colombia, Malaysia and Mexico (Wolhuter & Barbieri, 2017, pp. 31-32). Moreover, Five of the 31 countries in the world where the absolute number of illiterate adults are increasing, are Emerging Countries: Egypt, Pakistan, Qatar, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates (Wolhuter & Barbieri, 2017, p. 31).

On the quality dimension, the international test series of this day and age provide valuable comparable data on output quality. While these tests are much in the vogue today, those administered by IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement) and PISA (International Programme of Student Assessment) in particular, the tests do not cover all countries, those in the Global South especially are underrepresented. PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) (one of the core studies of IEA) is directed by the TIMSS and PIRLS International Study Center at Boston College and has been conducted every five years since 2001 (i.e. 2001, 2006, 2011, and most recently 2016, with another round planned for 2021). PIRLS is taken as the global standard for assessing trends in reading achievement at the fourth grade. PIRLS provides internationally comparative data on how well children read and offers policy-relevant information for improving learning and teaching. In this study the results of the 2016 PIRLS study, summarised in Table 1, will be taken as indicator of output quality.

Table 1.

Average achievement levels of learners in the various countries which participated in 2016 PIRLS

Rank Order	Country	Score
1.	Russia*	581
2.	Singapore	576
3.	Hong Kong (in this article taken as part of Greater China)	569
4.	Ireland	567
5.	Finland	566
6.	Poland	565
7.	Northern Ireland	565
8.	Norway	559
9.	Taipei, (in this article considered part of Greater China)*	559
10.	England	559
11.	Latvia	558
12.	Sweden	555
13.	Hungary*	554
14.	Bulgaria	552
15.	United States of America	549
16.	Lithuania	548
17.	Italy	548
18.	Denmark	547
19.	Macao (in this article taken as part of Greater China)	546
20.	Netherlands	545
21.	Australia	544
22.	Czech Republic*	543
23.	Canada	543
24.	Slovenia	542
25.	Austria	541
26.	Germany	537
27.	Kazakhstan	536
28.	Slovak Republic	535
29.	Israel	530
30.	Portugal	528
31.	Spain	528
32.	Belgium, Flemish speaking	525
33.	New Zealand	523
34.	France	511
35.	Belgium, French speaking	497
36.	Chile*	494
37.	Georgia	488
38.	Trinidad and Tobago	479
39.	Azerbaijan	472
40.	Malta	452
41.	United Arab Emirates*	450
42.	Bahrain	446
43.	Qatar*	442
44.	Saudi Arabia*	430
45.	Iran	428
46.	Oman	418
47.	Kuwait	393
48.	Morocco	358
49.	Egypt*	330
50.	South Africa*	328

Source of data: Mullis *et al.* 2017, p. 20

The Emerging Countries' (indicated with an asterisk next to the country's name in table 1) straddles the quality spectrum, literally from the top to the bottom. The significance of this will be returned to later in the conclusion. However the proviso should be added that the low income and upper middle income countries are underrepresented among the test participants. As it appears in table 1 that there is a general (albeit imperfect) relation between quality and level of development, it could be hypothesised that if there were results of the entire spectrum of nations, most Emerging Countries would be concentrated just below the set of Developed Countries.

Turning to the equality dimension, here data, detailed comparative data on all countries in the world, are even harder to get than in the case of quality measures. As explained above, this statement pertains to data on crude equality measurements, on the more nuanced equity measure, data are even more scarce, and universally accepted and used indeces non-existent. The universal fault lines of educational ineuality are socio-economic descent, gender and race/ethnic status (the so-called trinity of inequality in education), and further to these also ableism, geography (notably the core-periphery gradient, but also rural/urban) and age. These inequalities appear on all four levels of educational inequality delineated in the Farrell model, explained earlier. These universals are present in the Emerging Countries too, although diffult to fathom if and how much more than in other categories of countries. As an indication of their presence in the Emerging Countries, the PIRLS study cited earlier, distinghuished between families many resources (to assist the school work of children), families with some resources and families with few resources, and the PIRLS report has published the PIRLS average results of the reading test for each particpating country as per resource state of family. The results for three Emerging Countries, Chile, Taiwan and the United Arab Emirates, are presented in table 2.

Table 2.

Average Learner Achievement in 2016 PIRLS Test as Per Family Background

Resource Level Country	**Many Resources in Family**	**Some Resources in Family**	**Few Resources in Family**
Chile	557	497	461
Taiwan	593	553	513
United Arab Emirates	539	450	368

Source of data: Mullis *et al.*, 2017, p. 143

5. Conclusion

From the consideration of societal context the Emerging Countries has merit being employed as a category in Comparative and International Education. This set of countries display what Wittgenstein calls a "family of resemblances". The set of features typifying the Emerging Countries are that they are middle income countries with a record of high growth rates in the recent past. Furthermore they have recently been through major

political change, involving the setting up of a new political dispensation, and embracing the principles of a free market economy. Typically of a "family of resemblances" with respect to each of these features there are outliers, but none of the Emerging Countries is an outlier on each of these counts, or even in a majority of them. As the vanguard of the extra-Developed World, the Emerging Countries represents a notable, significant grouping of countries in the world, also for their role for the other countries in the Global South (which are not Emerging Countries) to emulate or to learn from when charting their own development course.

As a taxon of education development, the matter is more complicated. On the evidence presented in this chapter, the Emergenging Countries decidedly does not offer a homogeneous category. Quantitively the range stretches from countries by far not even out of the stage of elite higher education and with universal adult literacy still far, and ever further, in the future, such as Pakistan, to countries already at the stage of universal higher education. On the quality dimension the Emerging Countries seems to stretch right over the global spectrum as well. Inequalities are present too, as in the rest of the world. On the face of the evidence contained in (and possible in the space of) this article it seems there is a co-variance within the set of Emerging Countries between level of quantitative development of the education, quality of education, and equality; but this needs to be teased out by further research, as well as how education quantity, quality and equality co-varies with societal features and with education policy interventions and strategies.

This brings to the next point, as to the significance of all this for Comparative and International Education. Robert Ulich (1961) introduced the term *tertium comparationis* into the field of Comparative Education by Ulich (1961) and Bereday (1964) popularised itto become part of scholars' research in the field's key vocabulary by. The term *tertium comparationis*, literary meaning in Latin 'the third comparison', refers to the attribute that two objects or phenomena that are being compared have in common. In comparative education, this term has taken on the meaning of securing societal contextual or education system similarities between two countries the researcher is comparing. In view of the potential contaminating role of contextual factors in affecting educational outcomes, this is a valid, even a laudable premise. B ut there is also a point in searching for, identifying and exploring contextual and education system divergences, as these may well point to contextual forces having a powerful bearing on education too or to the merits or demerits of particular education strategies in specific settings. Thus Comparative Education scholarship should always search for this fine, ideal balance between similarity and difference in study object. As explained in this article the Emerging Countries offer a fine intra-societal-contextual variety of similarity and difference. Education wise, it presents a rich spectrum. For the scholar, an well nigh infinite number of contextual-education system permutations are on offer in this set of Emerging Countries. And as the vanguard of the nations of the Global South this kaleidoscope of education trajectories of the Emerging Countries presents a poignant education laboratory, for scholars of Comparative and International Education to tease out the track record of various trajectories in various contexts, bringing together the historical and comparative method of research as was argued for a number of recent articles in this journal (Casalini & Madella, 2019; Schriewer, 2019), and thus fulfiling their mission as scholars of Comparative and International Education in guiding the education development of the nations of the Global South.

Finally, as it transpired repeatedly above, the 25 emerging countries still represents a large number and a wide range of countries, and this, together with the complexity which

comparing education systems within their contextual settings, mean it is imperative to search for finer calibrations and for sub-categories in the taxon, in order to be of maximum value for Comparative Education scholarship. This will require much detailed follow-up research, but one next level of taxonomy that can be suggested is to use size and quality of education effort as one criterion and strength of economy as another. Distinguishing between high and low level of education development, and between low and high economic development, will yield a quadrant with categories. On the basis of the evidence presented in this article, the twenty five Emerging Countries could be placed in these four categories, as presented in table 2. Highly developed on the education aixs then means universal higher education enrolment or at least in the upper part of the mass higher education enrolment range, no large numbers of illiterate adults, and quality wise above the global median (in as far as data are available). Lower developed on the education axis signify large numbers of illiterate adults, elite or lower levels of mass higher education enrolment, and quality wise lower than the global mean (measured on the range of available data). Higher developed on the economic axis indicate high income countries, while lower developed are upper middle income and lower middle income countries.

Table 3.
Categories of Emerging Countries, based on education effort and economic strength

Economic Development: **Education Development:**	**Low**	**High**
High	Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Philippines, Russia, Thailand	Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Korea, Poland
Low	Colombia, Malaysia, Mexico, China, Egypt, India Indonesia, Pakistan South Africa, Turkey	Chile, Qatar, Saudi-Arabia, United Arab Emirates.

Besides ever searching for finer classifcations of the assortment of Emerging Countries, research utilising the above (or a like-minded) grid for doing comparative education research within and between the various sub-categories of emerging countries, can be recommended. For example, comparing the education and economic lowly developed countries with the economically lowly but educationally highly developed countries can give some indication as to how countries can develop their education systems in the absence of a particularly strong economic base.

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