

**ANNUAL REVIEW OF
COMPARATIVE AND
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION 2017**

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

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CONTENTS

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS	<i>ix</i>
ABOUT THE VOLUME EDITOR	<i>xi</i>
PREFACE	<i>xiii</i>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	<i>xvi</i>
INTRODUCTION: REFLECTING ON TRENDS IN COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION: A THREE-YEAR EXAMINATION OF RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS	
<i>Petrina M. Davidson, Calley Stevens Taylor, Maureen Park, Nino Dzotsenidze and Alexander W. Wiseman</i>	<i>1</i>

PART I COMPARATIVE EDUCATION TRENDS AND DIRECTIONS

CHAPTER 1 UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING AMID GLOBALISING UNIVERSITIES	
<i>Yusuke Sakurai and Kirsi Pyhältö</i>	<i>31</i>
CHAPTER 2 RETHINKING HIGHER EDUCATION INVESTMENT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES	
<i>Chavanne Percy and Nanette Svenson</i>	<i>39</i>
CHAPTER 3 REFLECTING ON THE RESEARCH INTO CHINA'S SOFT POWER IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WITH COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: THE CASE OF CONFUCIUS INSTITUTES	
<i>Joe Tin-yau Lo and Suyan Pan</i>	<i>49</i>

CHAPTER 4 AID TO EDUCATION: FRAMING ACCOUNTABILITY RESEARCH AND ITS PROSPECTS <i>Abby Riddell</i>	59
CHAPTER 5 BRIDGING THE POLICY/PRACTICE DIVIDE: A FOCUS ON POLICY LEARNING, PEDAGOGY, AND EQUALITY <i>Karen Ashton</i>	67
CHAPTER 6 IMPERATIVES OF COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION: SOME REFLECTIONS FROM THE SOUTH <i>Poonam Batra</i>	75
CHAPTER 7 ADULT EDUCATION UNDER A COMPARATIVE LENS: AREAS OF INFLUENCE <i>John Holford, Marcella Milana and Palle Rasmussen</i>	85
CHAPTER 8 COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH IN CHINA IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE <i>JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE EDUCATION RESEARCH</i> <i>Wang Yingjie and Su Yang</i>	95
CHAPTER 9 THREE MODELS OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: TIME, SPACE, AND EDUCATION <i>Luis Enrique Aguilar</i>	105
PART II CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS	
CHAPTER 10 NEGOTIATING, SHIFTING, AND BALANCING: RESEARCH IDENTITIES IN TRANSNATIONAL RESEARCH <i>Stacey J. Lee, Shuning Liu and Sejung Ham</i>	119

**CHAPTER 11 EDUCATIONAL REGIME COMPLEXITY:
NESTED GOVERNANCE AND MULTISTAKEHOLDERISM
IN THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION**

Tavis D. Jules

139

**PART III
RESEARCH-TO-PRACTICE**

**CHAPTER 12 SCHOOLING INEQUALITY IN SOUTH
AFRICA: PRODUCTIVE CAPACITIES AND THE
EPISTEMOLOGICAL DIVIDE**

Patricia K. Kubow

161

**CHAPTER 13 USING OR MISUSING THE EARLY GRADE
READING ASSESSMENT? EXAMINING A MEASURE OF
PAYMENT BY RESULTS IN THE GIRLS' EDUCATION
CHALLENGE**

Shirley J. Miske and Alison B. Joglekar

187

**PART IV
AREA STUDIES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS**

**CHAPTER 14 SHIFTING BOUNDARIES AND EDUCATION
DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSES: IMPLICATIONS FOR
COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
IN OCEANIA**

Juliana Mohok McLaughlin

205

**CHAPTER 15 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
RECRUITMENT EFFORTS OF TURKISH UNIVERSITIES:
RATIONALES AND STRATEGIES**

Enes Gök and Sedat Gümüş

231

**CHAPTER 16 COMPARATIVE EDUCATION IN
ROMANIA: SEEDS OF COMPARATIVE APPROACHES IN
DEBATING RESULTS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
ASSESSMENTS**

Roxana Maria Ghiațău and Nicoleta Laura Popa

257

CHAPTER 17 CONTEXT IN COMPARATIVE AND
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION STUDIES

Teklu Abate Bekele

275

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

301

INDEX

311

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PREFACE

The publication of the 2017 volume of the *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education* is a milestone event! This year, the *Annual Review* celebrates its fifth year of continuous publication. The *Annual Review* has been published every year starting in 2013, which suggests that there is an ongoing interest in the importance of reflective practice and the professionalization of comparative and international education (CIE). While CIE may not yet – or ever (see Davidson et al., this volume) – be formally designated as a unique or independent academic field, it continues to gain recognition as a field of study at universities worldwide. The continuous development of new academic programs, often at the graduate or postbaccalaureate level, suggests that more and more scholars as well as practitioners involved in comparative education, international education, and education for development are finding that expert knowledge, skills, and the sustainable development of educational systems and assessments is of the utmost importance to maintaining equality and opportunity for all in education.

Happy 5th anniversary to the *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education*, and thank you to not only the editorial team but also to the inspiration of David P. Baker and the creative diligence of Emily Anderson who both contributed greatly to the *Annual Review* during its initial development and first few years of publication. Of course, a sincere and hearty thank you also goes to Emerald Publishing and the editors and associates at Emerald who have supported the *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education* and the volume series, *International Perspectives on Education and Society*, over the years as well. Without their support and guidance, the *Annual Review* could never have achieved the level of recognition or readership that it has.

This year's volume surveys the field of CIE from several globally representative perspectives. There are discussion essays and chapters contributed by experts on CIE trends and issues unique to Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, and South America. This diversity of expertise and perspective highlights the many geographic and culturally unique perspectives represented in the 2017 *Annual Review*. These experts range from academic scholars to classroom educators to policymakers and development consultants. A major goal for the *Annual Review* every year is to provide a balanced

and globally representative combination of voices to each volume and section within it. In short, the *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education 2017* is representative of a wide range of recent trends and important concerns in the CIE community worldwide and within particular regions or specific communities. And, it is important to remember that the *Annual Review's* editorial team is dedicated to maintaining this level of global cultural, social, and professional diversity in the years to follow.

CIE TRENDS AND ISSUES

As usual, the 2017 *Annual Review* is divided into several distinct sections, which are preceded by an introductory chapter. In the introductory chapter, Davidson et al. examine trends in CIE research across three years of summary data. Davidson and her coauthors conclude that even though diversity of method, perspective, and approach have been repeatedly touted as strengths of CIE, the data suggests that over time CIE increasingly lacks research focus and continues to be unable to distinguish research and practice related to CIE from other education-affiliated fields and disciplines.

The first section focuses on comparative education trends and directions. This section is comprised of shorter discussion essays where experts in education and comparative studies discuss the relevant trends in CIE that are active in their communities of research, scholarship, policy, and practice. In Part 1: Comparative Education Trends and Directions, contributors examine the different approaches to CIE issues and practices around the world. There is an obvious increase in the focus on higher education and international student mobility in the 2017 *Annual Review*, but the diversity in trends and issues more broadly across these discussion essays seems to confirm the warning of Davidson et al. in the introductory chapter about the possible stagnation and dissolution of CIE as a scholarly or practitioner field.

The second section, Part 2: Conceptual and Methodological Developments, reviews the most impactful or innovative theoretical and conceptual framework development trends as well as vanguard methodological approaches for comparing, investigating, understanding, and reforming education worldwide. Much of the focus of contributions to the 2017 *Annual Review* is on identity-making and identity-seeking in transnational research as well as the ways that educational governance can be conceptualized through regime theory and multistakeholderism. Both chapters in this section, however, emphasize the complexity of conceptual and methodological approaches that are relevant to

CIE in 2017, and both suggest that part of the complexity is that researchers, policymakers, and educators working in CIE or related areas are pulled in many different directions in terms of their own sense of identity as well as the expectations from others. This poses a unique dilemma for CIE moving forward, but gives good reason for more CIE professionals to engage in reflective practice.

In Part 3: Research-to-Practice, the focus is – in part – on using knowledge and understanding about capacities to develop epistemological connections. There is also a continued emphasis on early grade reading assessment, which was a highlight of the *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education 2016*, as well. This continued focus suggests that early grade reading assessment is a multiyear trend in the field. This section is unique in that it looks at ways that scholarly research is conducted in the field, as well as how evidence from CIE research is used to make decisions about educational development, policymaking, and practice. The problem, which is frequently discussed in CIE research and development reports, is that comparative data or evidence related to education almost always is subject to as much misuse or abuse as there are opportunities for advantage or benefit from comparative international education data, programs, and projects.

In Part 4: Area Studies and Regional Developments, the focus on context is spread around several regions of the world. In addition to region and area-specific contributions, this section includes a special contribution looking at the importance of “context analysis” in CIE studies, which is a crucial component in the investigation of regional developments and area studies worldwide. More specifically, there is specific focus on Oceania in terms of how to regionally conceptualize CIE. There are also chapters focusing on the impact of international student assessments and international student recruitment, both in Eastern Europe. The perennial interest in and impact of international student assessments is worth noting. Finally, the contexts for CIE studies are reviewed along with the ways that contextual analyses are carried out. In some contrast to the previous section’s focus on the benefits and abuses of comparisons of educational systems and data, these chapters illustrate the tug-of-war between policymakers’ and educators’ functional needs and solution-oriented uses of comparative international education information or data, which may not be as linear or functional.

Unlike previous years, there is no fifth section dealing with Diversification of the Field in the *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education 2017*. Although the editorial team followed up on recommendations and suggestions from previous *Annual Review* contributors and representatives from the *Annual Review* Advisory Board approached experts in the CIE community about contributing to this section on diversification of CIE, there ultimately were no viable manuscripts submitted for review or possible inclusion. This is

not a new development, either. In each of the five years that the *Annual Review* has been published, this section has been the most difficult to fill. CIE scholars, authors, and professionals over the past five years have seemed to be much more comfortable critiquing old injustices related to CIE or re-analyzing the same phenomena that comparativists have examined for half a century (but with some supposedly new focus) than looking ahead at the future of what CIE has the potential to become or where it is expanding into new issues or territories (both literal and figurative). This lack of attention or interest in the diversification of CIE suggests a clear obstacle to the development of CIE as either a scholarly field or a professional area of specialization (again echoing Davidson et al., this volume). Without the ability to diversify, CIE both will stagnate and disseminate back into the various social science fields and the general realm of educational foundations that currently comprise the bulk of theoretical and methodological understanding among CIE scholars and practitioners.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education 2017* would not be possible without the outstanding dedication, intelligence, and efforts of the editorial team. The 2017 editorial team consisted of Petrina Davidson, Calley Stevens Taylor, Maureen Park, and Nino Dzotsenidze. These four editorial assistants have worked tirelessly throughout the past year to develop the manuscripts and assemble the content published within this volume. They worked closely with each of the chapter and discussion essay authors, as well as with each other in ensuring the continuity and high quality of each section and the individual contributions within each of them. In addition, these editorial team members served as both the toughest critics and the strongest advocates for contributing authors. All of us benefiting from the quality content and insight in the *Annual Review of Comparative and International Education 2017* owe them each a huge debt of gratitude for the rigor and substance that they encouraged and guided every author to develop and for their vision in putting together one of the strongest *Annual Reviews* ever to be published in the International Perspectives on Education and Society volume series. As Series Editor, I am individually indebted to Petrina, Calley, Maureen, and Nino, and give them my utmost thanks, appreciation, respect, and gratitude for all that they have done to make the fifth anniversary of the *Annual Review* the strongest yet. And I am personally thrilled that most of this team will be returning to the editorial team for next year's *Annual Review of Comparative International Education*.

Alexander W. Wiseman
Volume and Series Editor