

# 30TH CESE CONFERENCE 2026

Worlds of Learning: Comparative Perspectives on the Future(s) of Education

# CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

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**CESE**

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# Keynotes

## **The Future as Promise: Community, Inquiry, and World-Making**

*Jakob Egholm Feldt*

*Roskilde University*

The university has always been a machine for making time. Positioned at the generational interchange between past and future, it has served as the institution through which a society imprints its present onto what is to come: knowledge, traditions, and the forming of subjects capable of carrying the world forward. This function presupposes a particular philosophy of time: that the future holds a promise, that the developmental line from past through present to future is intact, and that education's task is to prepare those who will inhabit a better world that human-organized efforts are building.

That promise has cracked. Not only because of policy failures or insufficient resources, but for structural reasons that implicate modernity's deepest self-understanding. Climate change, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and political disorientation have not arrived as solvable problems. They signal that the developmental line is broken, that humanity's 'horizon of expectation' has collapsed into the present, and that the future is no longer an open space. The future has become a very present source of anxiety, statistical prediction, and management leading to a calculative regime that forecloses the openness on which modern education depends.

This talk does not propose a solution. It proposes something fluffy, an attitude as a way of inhabiting the educational situation when the promissory structure of modern education has become unreliable. Drawing on Dewey's situational ethics of inquiry, Latour's call for exploratory world-orientation, and Ingold's travelling-along-lines, the talk argues for a form of educational practice that is modest but with high stakes, unprogrammable, and attentive to how 'we' form around things that matter. Community, inquiry, and world-making are not solutions, but what remains after the promises have dissolved, when it becomes untenable to capitalize further on the future.

## **(Re)creating Communities of Sense: Pedagogies of Embodied Worlding**

*Sharon Todd, Professor Emeritus*

*Maynooth University*

This presentation takes its starting point in the idea that modern conceptions of education are unable to provide a meaningful response to the current planetary crisis. Built on a profound separation between human/nature, such conceptions have contributed to a sense of disconnection and estrangement from other forms of life. This has largely been done through creating what Jacques Rancière calls communities of 'common sense:' that is, taken-for-granted understandings and sense experiences of a world one shares with others. In light of this, my question is how might education push against 'common sense' in a way that is more responsive to the times we are living in and that takes seriously our embodied connections with human and more than human others?

My task here is to explore how education can create new ‘communities of sense’ through attending to the explicitly aesthetic dimension of our interconnected lives. Drawing on the original Greek root *aisthetikos*, aesthetic refers to the bodily ways we perceive and sense what is around us. It signals the mode through which each of us comes into being through our relations with/in/of the environment. Thus education, seen through its practices of pedagogy, is not simply about the transmission of skill or cognition, rather it is composed of embodied encounters that in effect create certain communities of sense.

Drawing on the work of Donna Haraway, Bruno Latour and others, I outline how these pedagogical practices can be seen as forms of ‘worlding.’ Worlding here concerns not only the sense we humans make *about* the world but also underlines our co-existence with other forms of life in creating ‘worlds’ with them. Seeing education as a process of worlding offers a more expansive sense of what it *can* do in these current times of urgency – not in order to solve the problems of the planet, which it cannot do, but to help us face those problems more responsively.

### **Worlds of learning in times of authoritarianism: educational repair and anti-racist futures**

*Arathi Sriprakash*  
*University of Oxford*

Entwined political, technological and economic infrastructures of authoritarianism are deepening in power and ubiquity, threatening human and ecological life across the world, including in liberal democracies. We are living in times in which people are fearful about speaking against a live-streamed genocide. We are living in times in which knowledge and truth is manipulated to divide and control. We are living in times in which racial dispossession and suffering are not only justified in the name of economic gain but celebrated too. What worlds of learning are needed in these times?

In this talk, I reflect on the historical relationship between education and the state, authoritarian or otherwise, to argue that education has long been complicit in sustaining racialised power and control. Indeed, as Goldberg’s (2002) thesis on ‘the racial state’ suggests, racialised meanings and projects are integral to the imagination, ordering, and management of all modern states, and education has been a key vehicle of this work. Looked at in this way, the infrastructures of authoritarianism in our present times might be taking new intensified forms, but they are founded in existing and enduring racial logics that education has long served.

I therefore argue we need radical visions of educational repair which take seriously the redress of racial harms sustained through education and which create epistemic and pedagogic foundations for anti-racist futures. I set out what the contours of such repair-praxis might look like in education, drawing on insights from the Reparative Futures of Education project ([www.repair-ed.uk](http://www.repair-ed.uk)). Then, in discussing the Global Action for Racial Justice in Education Project (<https://antiracisteducation.org/>), I reflect on how the field of comparative education can learn with and from activists and organisations around the world who are engaged in creating anti-racist futures. These are but seeds of hope in times of intolerable injustice and unfreedom, but it is hope that must be nurtured and fought for.

## **Lauwery's Lecture: Requiem for Comparative Education?**

*Jeremy Rappleye  
The University of Hong Kong, China*

Is the field of Comparative Education slowly perishing? As the older Kosmos fades, so too does the unifying thread of tradition, and with it the certainties of theory and method. An older generation is passing, trying to pass on tradition before they depart, only to find a field discomforted by decolonial discontent. Further afield, the world is in jeopardy: even if we could somehow return to tradition, wouldn't we now be 'reading the wrong world'? While easy to equate such fragmentation/pluralization with specific people and paradigms, such tensions are instead symptomatic of the limits of long-standing 'metaphysical assumptions' in our field (Lauwerys, 1959). In such a moment, what are comparativists to do? Shall we pay tribute to our departing Souls, or shall we desecrate their final resting place and reclaim these spaces? What does a (comparative) education of the future look like, assuming its recent afflictions are not terminal?

In this talk, I reflect on why the current field has ushered in its Requiem. As every metaphysics has its mode of learning, might the current limits be generated by anachronistic modes of learning, modernity's residuals? What prevents 're-reading the Kosmos' (Cowen, 1996)? What new forms of learning would promote a paradigm shift? Yet, here an insoluble paradox emerges: How could we learn new forms of learning without simply reinscribing the older metaphysics, thus reinforcing its hold upon us? Narrating these themes from within the European Horizon, I want to wander playfully alongside Europe's most illustrious thinkers – from Greek Antiquity to Enlightenment hubris to Post-Modern pessimism – to sketch out a different path forward. This offers no solutions to the World's problems but, instead a humbler gesture towards a Comparative Education of the future.

# The Robert Cowen Symposium on the Future of Comparative Education

## A Critical Historization of Comparative Education and its entanglements with geopolitics

*Chair: Lefteris Klerides, CESE President (2022-26)*

The aim of this panel is to promote a critical historicization of comparative education. We start from the premise that the history of comparative education is still in its infancy (Cowen, 2009) and has mostly been concentrated on academic centres in the US and the UK (Manzon, 2010; Tröhler, 2023), while the history of the field in other regions remains largely “invisible.” We understand the development of comparative education not only as an academic project, but also as a “political project” (Brehm 2023) that was and is subject to geopolitical and “epistemological power games” (Tröhler 2023). From a decolonial perspective, recent contributions have emphasised the imperialist and colonial logics of the field, that, given its rather Western and Eurocentric rationalities, would need to be epistemically expanded and rethought. (Silova 2025; Takayama et al. 2017). In contrast, others see this move as part of “dogmatic decolonialism” (Vickers & Epstein, 2024).

In this panel we consider this debate and other contributions that seek to analyse the histories of comparative education in different regions (Epstein, 2021, Phillips, 2022) as a welcome resurgence of the interest in the history of the field. The panel aims to analyze and problematize the history and historical narrative of comparative education with its intertwined political, epistemological, and ethical assumptions, principles and implications in relation to power relations, transnational entanglements, specific world orders, local resistance movements and invisible voices.

Four papers will approach this aim from different perspectives and emphasis:

Comparative Education as Safeguard or Complicity? A Critical History of CIES in Geopolitical Perspective, *Iveta Silova*

Nationalism as an Inscribed Motif in the Epistemology of Modern Comparative Education – A Historical Reconstruction, *Daniel Tröhler*

Erase and Rewind: Reconstructing the Comparative Epistemologies of European Education Programmes across the Twentieth Century, *Christian Ydesen*

*The political matrix of the development of comparative education in Latin America: between Imperial/colonial forces and self-determination, Cristina Alarcón López and Jason Beech*

### **Paper 1**

*Iveta Silova*

*University of Arizona, USA*

### **Comparative Education as Safeguard or Complicity? A Critical History of CIES in Geopolitical Perspective**

Comparative education has increasingly been understood not only as an academic field but as a political project, entangled with geopolitical interests, epistemological power relations, and shifting global orders (Brehm, 2023; Tröhler, 2022). Building on these debates, this paper offers a critical historicization of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) as a key institutional site through which the field itself has been governed, contested, and ethically negotiated.

The paper traces the emergence and evolution of CIES from its post–World War II formation to the present, situating the society within broader geopolitical transformations. Drawing on institutional histories, archival traces, and biographical fragments—particularly the legacy of William W. Brickman, CIES’s first president—the paper examines how early comparative educators understood their work not merely as scholarly inquiry, but as a political and ethical response to the catastrophic failures of education under fascist and totalitarian regimes (Silova, 2025).

Yet, commitments to intellectual freedom, neutrality, and international dialogue frequently coexisted with liberal, colonial, and geopolitical assumptions that shaped what could be compared, how, and to what ends. Across successive historical moments, CIES functioned both as a space for critical engagement and as an institution marked by strategic silences—particularly when geopolitical pressures rendered certain forms of critique professionally risky. Notably, periods of intensified critique within comparative education—including recent debates surrounding coloniality and decoloniality—have often been accompanied by renewed appeals to disciplinary restraint, historical rigor, and epistemic balance. While frequently framed as safeguards against dogmatism or presentism, such appeals also operate as institutional boundary-making practices, shaping which forms of critique are recognized as legitimate, timely, or professionally acceptable.

By examining internal debates within CIES around neutrality, academic freedom, and the role of comparative scholarship, the paper argues that the history of comparative education cannot be written solely as an academic endeavor. It is also a history of institutional and professional responsibility, in which decisions to speak, defer, or remain silent carried material and moral consequences (Silova, 2025). In an era marked by renewed authoritarian pressures on universities and professional associations, revisiting these histories is a necessary condition for rethinking the responsibilities of comparative education today. The paper concludes by suggesting that a critical institutional history of CIES helps reopen comparative education as a negotiable political and epistemic project—not only to its geopolitical entanglements, but also to the ethical conditions under which the field itself becomes a safeguard against, or an accomplice to, broader regimes of power.

## **Paper 2**

*Daniel Tröhler*

*University of Vienna, Austria*

### **Nationalism as an Inscribed Motif in the Epistemology of Modern Comparative Education – A Historical Reconstruction**

Comparisons in the field of education have existed for centuries. Sometimes they were explicit, sometimes implicit, as in the curious travel accounts of Jean de Léry’s *Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil* (1578) or the fictional narratives of Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726). While these works were undoubtedly meant to entertain, they also sought to hold up a mirror to European life and education with the moral aim of reforming it.

With this moral impetus, such publications joined a long-standing tradition of explicit comparative reflection on education. Early examples include Roman comparisons with Greek education. Whereas proponents of the Roman Republic, such as Cicero or Seneca, frequently expressed admiration for the comprehensiveness of Greek *paideia*, the ideologues of the Roman Empire, such as Tacitus—ironically—celebrated the military and disciplinary education of the now-defunct Roman Republic.

For much of its history, this tradition of comparative education was predominantly temporal in nature, distinguishing between an “earlier” and a “later” period and employing narratives of

decline or progress. Well-known examples include Machiavelli and Lipsius during the Renaissance, as well as Montesquieu and, most prominently, Rousseau in the eighteenth century, who typically upheld educational principles of the Roman Republic as a model.

Rousseau's antiquarian educational patriotism coincided with the rise of European nationalism, within which early traces of today's dominant epistemology of comparative education can be found. This epistemology assumed a remarkably stable form following the global consolidation of nation-states around and after 1900 and continues to shape comparative education to this day. It is characterized by interpreting economically, politically, and militarily successful nation-states in educationalized terms, stylizing their school systems as models to be emulated—or, in an imperial gesture, imposed on others.

This form of comparative education is no longer primarily temporal but territorial. Nationalism is so deeply inscribed into its epistemology that it often goes unrecognized. National imitation, suspicion, and instruction increasingly shape the discourse in such a way that comparisons no longer even need to be comparative to count as such (Wohlhuter, 2008). As a result, comparative education risks losing not only its own historicity and historical consciousness, but also uncritically subscribing to the immanent normative system of nationalism—with its overt rivalries and latent imperialism—while neglecting fundamental questions concerning the relationship between education and ethical ways of political life.

### **Paper 3**

*Christian Ydesen*

*Universität Zürich, Switzerland*

#### **Erase and Rewind: Reconstructing the Comparative Epistemologies of European Education Programmes across the Twentieth Century**

Current debates on coloniality and decoloniality in comparative education have brought much-needed attention to questions of epistemic violence, power, and exclusion. At the same time, the increasingly acrimonious tone of these debates risks reproducing binary and dichotomous logics that foreclose historically grounded analysis and hinder constructive re-thinking of education in a period marked by geopolitical instability, institutional fragmentation, and multiple overlapping crises. Responding to recent calls to move beyond such binaries, this paper proposes a historical “erase-and-rewind” exercise that revisits the epistemic design of comparability itself within three influential European-based comparative education programmes.

The paper reconstructs the formation, rationales, and epistemological assumptions of: (1) the International Examination Inquiry (1931–1938), (2) UNESCO's Mediterranean Regional Project (1959–1965), and (3) the OECD's International Educational Indicators (INES) programme, launched in 1988 after a prolonged gestation period. Rather than treating these initiatives merely as vehicles of diffusion or domination, the paper opens their “engine rooms” to examine how specific comparative architectures were assembled through particular constellations of actors, political imaginaries, technical instruments, and moral vocabularies.

Across these three cases, the paper shows how comparability was never a neutral methodological choice but a historically contingent epistemic accomplishment. Each programme articulated distinctive ways of rendering education comparable, intelligible, and governable, shaped by interwar internationalism, Cold War developmentalism, and late twentieth-century neoliberal technocracy respectively. Yet a common denominator was their global reach: the comparative epistemologies forged in these European contexts travelled widely, shaping subsequent education programmes, policy instruments, and taken-for-granted understandings of what education is and should be.

By situating contemporary decolonial debates within this longer historical trajectory, the paper argues that revisiting the construction of comparative designs is a necessary condition for reopening education as a negotiable political and epistemic project. As the Education 2030 agenda approaches its end amidst polycrisis and multipolarity, the question is not simply how to reject past comparative frameworks, but how to understand their historical conditions of possibility, internal tensions, and enduring effects. Such a historically reflexive stance, the paper suggests, offers a more productive basis for reimagining comparative education beyond both epistemic innocence and epistemic purism.

#### **Paper 4**

*Jason Beech*

*University of Melbourne, Australia*

*Cristina Alarcón-López*

*University of Vienna, Austria*

#### **The political matrix of the development of comparative education in Latin America: between Imperial/colonial forces and self-determination**

Our aim in this presentation is to contribute to a comparative history of the history of comparative education (Cowen 2009), on the basic assumption that there are ‘multiple comparative educations’. The configuration of the field in Latin America was built on exchanges, entanglements, and interdependencies with other regions such as Europe and North America. Thus, the history of the field in Latin America is marked its transnational matrix, shaped by the region’s geopolitical position in the world system, as a peripheral region connected to the imperial and colonial legacy of the field (Manzon 2010, Takayama, Sriprakash and Connell 2017).

Based on the biographical analysis of eminent scholars of the field and of a wide range of historical sources that span from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we argue that the field has developed within an essentially *political matrix*. This implies not only that comparative education research was policy-oriented and interventionist, but also that the research itself was seen within a moral mission as a catalyst for social change and/or emancipation and for the reduction of poverty, marginality and inequality. Most of the comparativists that participated in the construction of the field, where not only intellectuals, but also active politicians who held public positions and openly identified with certain parties or political tendencies, which in almost all cases can be defined as liberal or progressive (in terms of the time and contexts in which they lived and worked). Comparison thus served the explicit and ultimate goal of constructing ‘a better society’.

The *regional* matrix of comparative education in Latin American seems also evident. Many researchers focused on Latin America as the main reference and unit of analysis. This regional and non-nationalist focus contrasts with their European counterparts, whose countries were mired in rivalries, conflicts and wars at least until the end of Second War II. The regional construct of ‘Latin America’ was already taken up by early 19th century comparativists such as Simón Rodríguez and remained present as a transcendental spatial reference, giving rise to a multitude of comparative studies within the region that made noteworthy contributions to the idea of a ‘Latin American Education’.

In this historical overview of the trajectory of comparative education in Latin America we problematise two parallel research logics visible from the beginning of the 19th century to the

present day: the logic of Western-civilising-progress; and the logic that seeks to enhance indigenist, decolonial, Latin Americanist and self-determined categories.

# Working Groups

## Working Group 1

*Carlo Cappa*  
*University of Rome 'Tor Vergata', Italy*

### **To compare: learning, measuring, and our joyful traged**

This paper aims to reframe comparison not merely as a method, but as a vital lens through which to rethink learning – and as a qualifying competency for learning itself. It challenges the contemporary “flattening” of education into a measurable and standardized product, arguing that such a reduction arises from a fundamental disharmony among the varied traditions that shape our educational thought.

Focusing on the composite reality of the West, the paper identifies two alarming trends: the surge of irreconcilable binaries and the retreat into simplistic formulas for complex issues. As education systems struggle to function as engines of individual empowerment, the political vacuum is filled by populist and isolationist rhetorics. This shift has eroded a globalist vision that – perhaps over-optimistically – wedded democracy to Western ideals, mistakenly believing that technical proficiency and correct slogans could replace deep-rooted pedagogical traditions. This “definitional obsession” has pushed the measurable toward the immeasurable, severing the link between data and ethical justification. Paradoxically, this creates a space where neoliberalism, identitarianism, and technocracy converge.

By tracing the historical development of comparative education through a philosophical lens, this study suggests that the field can bridge the gap between definitional rigor and critical openness. The goal is to move beyond the paradigm of measurable learning toward more flexible measured competencies – intellectual tools that empower individuals to inhabit complexity and escape the tyranny of identitarian tropes and demagogic refrains. In this regard, comparison is not merely an approach for reading the global confined within the ivory tower of academia; rather, it reveals itself as a fundamental sensibility – a disposition to be cultivated for the exercise of judgment in an age where the reassuring safety nets once upheld by auctoritas and tradition have vanished. Thus, a prudent moderation becomes the necessary antidote to the hubristic and illusory simplifications of the present.

*Anna Mańkowska*  
*Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland*

### **Educational Know-How – The Practical Use of Comparative Education for Educational Development**

#### Main Research Question

How can comparative education function as practical pedagogical “know-how” that supports educational development and informs real-world educational change across diverse cultural and systemic contexts?

#### Aims and Objectives

The proposed paper aims to examine the applied dimension of comparative education as a source of actionable knowledge for educational development. It seeks to identify how

comparative analyses can inform educational reform, enhance cross-cultural understanding of schooling systems, and provide tools for educators, researchers, and policymakers. The paper also aims to clarify who benefits from comparative education and in what ways its insights can be translated into practice.

#### Theoretical Perspective / Conceptual Framework

The study is grounded in the theoretical traditions of comparative education, drawing on classical and contemporary scholarship that emphasizes cross-national analysis, contextual understanding, and the interplay between global and local educational processes. Comparative pedagogy is approached as both an academic discipline and a practical framework for analyzing educational diversity, innovation, and transformation.

#### Methods and Inquiry Strategies

The research employs qualitative document analysis as its primary methodological approach. It analyzes existing educational studies and classical theoretical texts within comparative education in order to synthesize insights on the applied potential of the field. The analytical strategy focuses on identifying recurring themes related to application, transferability, and educational improvement.

#### Conclusions, and Implications

The paper argues that comparative education provides practical pedagogical know-how that can inform educational reform, professional practice, and policy design. It highlights the role of comparative analysis in identifying innovative solutions, promoting intercultural understanding, and enhancing educational development strategies. The anticipated conclusion is that comparative pedagogy should be viewed not only as an academic discipline but also as an applied field that strengthens evidence-based decision-making and supports educational improvement at local and global levels.

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University of Jyväskylä, Finland*

*Oshie Nishimura-Sahi  
Tampere University, Finland*

### **The PISA High Performing Systems for Tomorrow framework: A de-colonial reading of the OECD's Education for Human Flourishing**

This paper examines the OECD's High Performing Systems for Tomorrow (HPST) initiative, focusing on how non Western intellectual traditions—Ubuntu, Confucianism, and Buddhism—are referenced in its conceptualisation of education for human flourishing. Using a decolonial lens, particularly Moosavi's (2020) critique of decolonisation without decolonising, the article investigates the depth and nature of the OECD's engagement with these traditions. The analysis draws on qualitative content analysis of publicly available OECD documents and webinars, alongside decolonial scholarship that interrogates epistemic hierarchies in global knowledge production.

The findings indicate that although the OECD gestures toward epistemic diversity by referencing non Western traditions (Kristjánsson, 2023; OECD, 2025), these traditions are incorporated superficially and ultimately subordinated to dominant Western frameworks. Aristotelian ethics remains the conceptual anchor of HPST (Stevenson, 2022; OECD, 2025), while the broader initiative continues to operate within a paradigm of measurement, standardisation, and cross national comparison—an approach long associated with the OECD's influence in global education governance (Addey et al., 2017; Ydesen & Grek, 2019). As a result, HPST reproduces the epistemic hierarchies and marginalisation of non Western scholars

and perspectives, as highlighted in previous comparative education research (Silova et al., 2017; Takayama et al., 2017).

This paper underscores that when only a handful of jurisdictions—preselected as “high performing”—are positioned to speak for the global, the plurality of voices is curtailed and epistemic diversity is constrained. Moreover, efforts to “tailor” a pre defined Western framework to varied contexts risk tokenism and theory looting, rather than the unlearning required for genuine epistemic pluralism (Moosavi, 2020; Zembylas, 2017). Finally, the argument developed here asks whether an initiative rooted in the OECD’s assessment culture can meaningfully lead a shift toward human flourishing without reproducing the very hierarchies it seeks to transcend, and why a framework that is subsequently tailored to local contexts (OECD, 2025), should be preferred over beginning from a genuinely pluralistic epistemological foundation.

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### **Futures, somewhere else: The uses of educational utopia and uchronia**

Many accounts of ‘educational futures’ employ types of utopia, i.e. “sociogenetic fictional image[s]” (Elias, 2006a, p. 119) of an ideal society or part of society such as an education system. Nowadays, utopias are usually located in the future, although in its original formulation by Thomas Morus (1999 [1516]), ‘Utopia’ denoted an idealized society located in a different place (tópos is Greek for ‘place’). An idealised future society should therefore really be named ‘Uchronia’ (chrónos is Greek for ‘time’).

Utopian and uchronian thinking are techniques of spatially and temporally distancing oneself from contemporary and local conditions while at the same time envisaging radical and thoroughgoing change to these very same conditions. However, utopias and uchronias only become politically salient under certain conditions: in the words of Norbert Elias (2006b), utopias “can only have an impact on the development of a society if they are aligned with its possible futures” (p. 200).

The paper will analyse how this ‘alignment with possible futures’ works in practice. It will explore different strategies of making potential futures plausible in international education governance and investigate how temporal and spatial distancing operate in different configurations and entanglements in the construction of ideal educational futures, for instance when ideas of a perfect education system are projected onto actually existing education systems or, conversely, when idealized educational futures are carefully scrubbed clean of any references to actual places.

Theoretically and conceptually, the paper is based on Norbert Elias’s and others’ work on utopia and future expectations’ role in the shaping of political narratives (Beckert, 2016; Elias, 2006a, 2006b). Empirically, the paper will use materials produced by the OECD and UNESCO in the context of their recent ‘educational futures’-initiatives (cf. OECD, 2026; UNESCO, 2021).

*María José García Ruiz*  
*UNED, Spain*

### **The resurgence of the Western Civilisation: the needed hug between Modernity and Postmodernity**

In the present years of the XXIst century, one of the most tackled topics studied by historians, philosophers and comparatists academics is that of the current crisis of Western civilisation (Oñate y Zubia, T., 2014; Todd, E., 2024; Cantera, S., 2020; Delibes, A., 2024; Durand, G., 2011).

Definitely, one of the earliest and most incisive analysis of the Western civilisation crisis was developed by Oswald Spengler in 1918, in his two volumes in German language titled *The Decline of the West*. Among the multiple causes that have been advanced as explanation of the Western civilisation crisis, we would like to highlight one of the most relevant, that allude to the serious spiritual deterioration.

Academics like Cantera (2020) state that Christendom is in the marrow of European and Western identity. Christianity had an irreplaceable role as binder phenomenon and as promoter of the symbiosis of the invaders Germanic people and the conquered Romans that originated Europe: “without the action of the Church, the Germanic barbarism and the Islamic menace would have prevailed, and Europe would not have existed” (Cantera, 2020, p. 11).

Both Sotelo and Habermas stand out the role of Christendom in Europe, in Western Civilisation and in Modernity. The features with which Modernity is linked with are those of Christianity, Europe, West, universalism, tradition, morality, virtues and existential security (García Ruiz, 2011). The concept of Postmodernity implies a rupture similar to the one that occurred with the appearance of Christianity, and it would suppose that Christianity would have reached its end (Sotelo, 2003, p. 58). According to Sotelo, it is Nietzsche the philosopher that announces Postmodernity, for he was the one that brought to its last consequences the radical critique of the Christian element and reality.

Particularly harmful to Western civilisation has been the relativistic character of Postmodernism. And also very misleading and injurious has been Postmodern critique of religion and of social injustice in Modernity. The proposals of solidarity, protection of the weak, and inclusion of those in the periphery are already contemplated in the Gospels, as states the last apostolic exhortation *Dilexi te* of our holy Pope Leo XIV.

The academic Alicia Delibes alludes to the “suicide of Western civilisation”, for it is Europe and the West who are renouncing to its Christian identity roots, without the need of and external attack. Europe did commit suicide with itself when it did not attribute its Christian identity in the European Constitution of 2004.

A crucial way to the resurgence of the Western civilisation would be the promotion of the hug and compatibility between Modernity and Postmodernity. Not few academics (Habermas, 1988; Filmer, 1997) talk about the yet validity of Modernity.

The Benedictine Santiago Cantera has stated that “the historical persons that have exercised a greater influence in the evolution of temporal realities are, in this order, the saint, the thinker and the politician (Cantera, 2020, p. 80). Saint Benedict, Father and Patron of Europe, will help us to undertake the resurgence of Europe and of the West if we succeed in incorporating Christian spirituality in our real identity.

*He Qiao*

*The Capital Normal University, China*

*Chenxi Wang*

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**The Technical Value and Optimization Pathways of Instructional Blackboard Writing in Chinese Schools----from the Perspective of Stiegler's "Tertiary Retention"**

Abstract: As a fundamental and core skill for teachers, instructional blackboard writing has exerted a profound and extensive impact on the development and reform of education both in China and globally. In current educational practice, however, it faces a degree of alienation, necessitating a re-examination of its connotation and value from the essence of its technical nature. Based on Stiegler's philosophy of technology concerning "Tertiary Retention," instructional blackboard writing can be understood as an embodied and intentional technical existence. It serves not only as a functional extension of teaching activities but also as a carrier for the flow and integration of human cognition, further constituting a practical field for the symbiotic collaboration among teachers, students, and technology. To address the issues emerging in contemporary instructional blackboard writing, this study advocates a return to its educational essence. By strengthening human presence, promoting cognitive resonance, and adhering to the rhythm of education, it aims to facilitate a shift from instrumental "extension" to relational "symbiosis," thereby offering a theoretically informed practical pathway for optimizing classroom teaching in the intelligent era.

Key words: instructional blackboard writing; tertiary retention; technical value; optimization pathways

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### **Essential or obsolete? A Nordic cross-national comparative study on philosophy teachers' approaches to the history of philosophy in upper secondary school philosophy teaching**

At a time when international educational policies favour generic and transferable skills and competencies, the role of the disciplinary knowledge content within school subjects has become an important question. In the case of upper secondary school philosophy, this is particularly crucial with respect to the place of the history of philosophy and of older philosophy. The paper addresses this matter by examining approaches to the history of philosophy and to older philosophy among philosophy teachers in the upper secondary school across the five Nordic countries. The material comprises interviews with 45 philosophy teachers from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. From a qualitative content analysis of the material, various approaches were identified at the national level and then compared across the five countries. The approaches were also discussed in the light of philosophical and educational philosophical perspectives. Four main approaches emerged from the analysis: (I) Elder philosophy provides context and supports students' existential grounding and self-awareness; (II) Knowledge of elder philosophy is essential for understanding the present and its phenomena; (III) Elder philosophy offers fresh perspectives on contemporary issues and provides feasible solutions; (IV) Theories from older philosophy has often been proven wrong and is therefore obsolete.

The cross-national comparison reveals that the first approach, aligned with hermeneutic and existentialist philosophical orientations, was the most consistent across the Nordic countries, occurring in all except for Finland. The second approach, leaning towards theories of historicism and conceptual history, was identified mainly in Norway but also, to some degree, in Sweden and Finland. The third approach, corresponding to a pragmatic perspective, was dominant in Denmark and was also identified in Norway and Sweden. The fourth approach, mirroring a positivist philosophical position, was dominant in Finland but was found exclusively there.

The comparison shows both variation in how the history of philosophy and the older philosophy are perceived by teachers in the Nordic countries, and similarities, particularly in

the notion of the possibility of providing context and a deeper understanding of oneself, contemporary society and phenomena. Further implications for the results can be drawn from a previous Nordic cross-national comparative study (Varricchio & Tomperi, 2025), which examines the role and significance of the history of philosophy in the current upper secondary school philosophy curricula. A further examination could address how the teachers' approaches relate to the subject's national curricular constructions, which, in turn, rely on prevailing didactic and philosophical traditions in each country.

## Working Group 2

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### **Academic System Innovation for Enhancing Student Learning in Korea: Government Policies and University Strategic Responses**

This study investigates the key question: "How can substantive innovation be achieved to enhance the learning capabilities of university students?" Despite long-standing government-led initiatives for university reform in Korea, these policies have often failed to yield sustainable results. While the Korean government maintains strong centralized control over higher education, the lack of significant outcomes in academic system innovation necessitates a root-cause analysis. Grounded in micro-implementation policy theory, this research explores the gap between policy intent and institutional strategies by examining how universities employ political strategies to maximize their interests in response to government mandates.

A mixed-methods approach was employed for this analysis. First, a nationwide survey of 64 universities was conducted to categorize academic innovation into three distinct types: the "Resource-Sharing-Based Open Model," the "Student-Led Major Flexibility Model," and the "Experience-Based Practical Model." Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with seven key stakeholders—including academic leaders, professors, and innovation managers—from six leading universities to analyze institutional implementation strategies.

The findings reveal that academic system innovations are manifested across six critical areas: class management, student services, faculty support, administrative work, technology support, and educational performance management. Successful innovation models share a common infrastructure characterized by the organic integration of modularized major structures, flexible course management, data-driven in-depth advising, and automated administrative systems. Key success factors include strong presidential leadership, organizational commitment, a flexible institutional culture, and the adoption of AI and data-based management systems. Conversely, the study identifies significant constraints, such as short-term financial structures dependent on government projects, political conflicts between departments, and rigid regulations. Notably,

the tendency of universities to shift strategic directions based on specific government funding criteria significantly hinders the sustainability of innovation.

Based on these findings, this study offers two primary recommendations. At the policy level, the government must establish legal guarantees to ensure universities' autonomy in academic operations. At the institutional level, universities should internalize academic innovation into their specialization strategies and organizational culture. Academic system innovation should not be utilized merely as a means to secure financial support but as a core strategy to foster genuine educational change. Further academic insights and policy recommendations for higher education reform are discussed.

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### **Governing Lesson Study in South Africa: From Lending to Purposeful Borrowing within CPTD and QMS Regimes (1999–2025)**

Over the past 25 years, lesson study in South Africa has been taken up, reshaped and sustained (or not) through particular governance arrangements. This paper examines how those arrangements have conditioned the possibility of ongoing, school-based professional learning. Instead of treating lesson study as a neutral technique, we treat it as something that is governed: its purposes, authority, resourcing and accountability are set through policy instruments and through intermediary actors. We therefore ask (1) how national frameworks and provincial initiatives have positioned lesson study in relation to teacher development and performance management, and (2) when a donor-led innovation can move from “lending” to locally owned, purposeful borrowing in a deeply unequal system.

Conceptually, we bring policy-transfer work on lending/borrowing and ownership into conversation with governance research that focuses on how learning is steered—through instruments, incentives, reporting requirements and professional standards—and on the work done by intermediaries such as subject advisors and universities. Empirically, we draw on qualitative documentary analysis of key national policy and regulatory instruments for teacher education, development and management (including NPFTED/ISPFTEd, the CPTD management system and the QMS), complemented by project documentation and our long-term involvement in Japan-based and in-country training programmes for subject advisors.

We trace three phases: (i) MSSi (1999–2006), an early lending-type intervention with weak institutional anchoring; (ii) policy reframing (2006–2012), which gradually opened administrative room for collaborative, school-based professional learning in a decentralised system; and (iii) pilot-based repositioning (2012–2025), where lesson study has been linked to CPTD and QMS processes and to subject-advisor-led support in pilot schools, though uptake remains uneven across provinces.

Our central claim is that any emerging durability has grown less from a single plan than from the cumulative effects of project learning, policy construction and the situated work of multiple actors. By specifying how particular mixes of instruments and configurations of intermediaries shape what lesson study can become, the paper speaks to comparative debates on governing professional learning and on how systems can move beyond episodic international cooperation towards more sustainable infrastructures for school-based professional development.

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### **Between Policy and Practice: Educator Appointments and the Governance of Learning in Public Schools**

This paper examines how governance arrangements shape the management and organisation of learning systems in South African public schools, with particular attention to educator appointment processes as a critical site through which leadership authority, institutional integrity, and learning conditions are produced. Positioned within international debates on governing learning, the study explores how School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and trade unions operate as intersecting governance actors within decentralised education systems, and how their interactions enable or constrain transformational leadership in contexts characterised by political contestation and governance incapacitation.

Guided by Enactment Theory, the study conceptualises policy not as a fixed directive but as a socially mediated process that is interpreted, negotiated, and enacted within specific institutional and socio-political contexts. This theoretical perspective enables an analysis of how legislative frameworks governing educator appointments are reshaped through local practices, power relations, and organisational cultures.

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, engaging educators, school management team members, trade union officials, and SGB representatives across three South African provinces. Data were generated through surveys and semi-structured interviews. The evidence framework foregrounds lived governance experiences and decision-making processes, allowing for a nuanced examination of how learning systems are organised through both formal policy mechanisms and informal relational dynamics.

Findings reveal persistent tensions between the democratic ideals underpinning school governance and enacted practices. These include politicisation of appointment processes, coercive pressures, and constrained governance capacity, all of which disrupt leadership stability and the effective organisation of teaching and learning. At the same time, the findings suggest possibilities for renewal, where clearly delineated governance roles, ethical leadership practices, and digitally supported accountability mechanisms mediate relations between SGBs and trade unions, thereby strengthening institutional trust.

The paper concludes that governing learning in contemporary education systems requires more than procedural compliance. It demands capacitated local governance structures, responsible and transparent trade union engagement, and leadership practices attuned to human relationships. By foregrounding educator appointments as a governance mechanism that shapes learning systems, the study contributes insights from the Global South that address broader international concerns regarding decentralisation and the governance of education systems.

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### **Governing Learning through Global Benchmarks: The Political Use of PISA in Taiwan's Curriculum Reform**

Since its launch in 2000, PISA has exerted significant influence on education policy in numerous countries. Existing comparative education research has largely examined how poor PISA performance triggers reform agendas through crisis narratives and policy borrowing (Fischman et al., 2024; Steiner-Khamsi & Walldow, 2018; Volante & Mattei, 2024). However, far less attention has been paid to how strong PISA results function politically in high-performing

systems. This study addresses this gap by examining how PISA 2022 outcomes were mobilized in Taiwan to defend and legitimize the contested 2019 Curriculum Reform.

The 2019 Curriculum Reform aimed to move Taiwan's K–12 education away from exam-centered teaching toward competency-based learning. However, the reform has been politically contentious, with critics questioning a potential dilution of academic competencies. While National Large-Scale Assessments have been widely adopted in many countries, Taiwan has not developed comparable data-driven policy instruments, making it difficult to evaluate reform outcomes. Against this backdrop, Taiwan's continued strong performance in PISA 2022 was mobilized by the government as evidence of reform success.

Building on research about policy externalization and selective interpretation of global benchmarks (Jang, 2024; Waldow & Steiner-Khamsi, 2019), this study employs qualitative content analysis of policy documents and media discourse published in the aftermath of the release of PISA 2022 in Taiwan. The analysis examines how PISA was recontextualized as an external reference within domestic policy discourse.

The findings suggest that the Taiwanese government's use of the PISA 2022 outcomes can be seen as a strategy for gaining legitimacy, shaped by political and institutional factors. In the context of a highly contested curriculum reform and the absence of a curriculum-aligned national assessment system, PISA functioned as a strong reference of reform success. Its widespread public visibility and epistemic authority rendered it particularly influential in domestic policy discourse. Moreover, the discursive alignment between PISA's emphasis on future-oriented competencies and the competency-based approach of the 2019 Curriculum Reform enabled policymakers to plausibly present strong international performance as evidence of reform effectiveness. By examining a high-performing system, this study extends existing research beyond crisis-driven policy responses and demonstrates how positive PISA results can be strategically externalized to legitimize contested reforms.

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### **Framing a World Education Crisis: The 1967 Williamsburg Conference and the Making of Global Education Governance**

This presentation examines the 1967 International Conference on the World Crisis in Education, held in Williamsburg, as a critical moment in the global reconfiguration of education policy. It focuses on three interrelated dimensions that warrant historical investigation: the framing of education as a “crisis,” the internationalization of education, and the growing importance of education for “international development”.

The initiative to convene the Williamsburg conference came from U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson in the aftermath of the International Education Act of 1966 and within the broader context of American efforts to expand international cooperation during the Cold War. Johnson emphasized the need to stimulate “deeper mutual understanding among nations of the major education problems facing the world” and aspired to establish a Council on International Education that would advise a planned Center for Educational Cooperation within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Johnson, 1966). The conference thus reflected a deliberate attempt to elevate education to a central place in U.S. foreign policy and international initiatives.

The intellectual foundation of the conference was Philip Coombs's "The World Education Crisis" (1968). The book reflected the disenchantment with the post-war optimism in the potential of what education could deliver for societal progress. Coombs, a former Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs in the Kennedy administration and former director of the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), argued that a growing mismatch between education systems and societal needs threatened both education systems and societies themselves. The book was an instant international success, translated into at least 8 languages and widely read in ministries of education and planning offices worldwide. While its "crisis" framing was initially controversial, the eruption of student protests across the globe in 1968 gave the argument new urgency.

Beyond its immediate debates, the Williamsburg conference played a significant role in promoting "development" as a "fourth dimension of foreign policy" (Coombs, 1964) with education positioned as a key instrument of development planning. It was among the first high-level international meetings to frame education as a global issue, sparking subsequent initiatives such as the 1968 Bellagio Declaration on Educational Planning (Champion Ward, 1974) and the 1970 International Education Year, which sought to counter growing "aid fatigue" at the end of the first United Nations Development Decade. The conference also marked a shift away from narrow input-output models of educational planning toward more systemic and comprehensive approaches, contributing to increased interest in comparative and cross-national education research (Elfert & Ydesen, 2023). The Williamsburg conference still holds significance for current debates, insofar as it contributed to normalising "crisis" as a governing language of education, institutionalizing global education governance, and legitimizing educational planning as a technical, expert-driven field. This presentation is based on archival research, including the Torsten Husén papers and materials from the Rockefeller Archives Center.

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### **Infrastructures and the Making of Global Governing Panoramas in Education**

Applying an infrastructural lens (Star & Ruhleder, 1996; Larkin, 2013) to the development of education planning and quantitative expertise, the paper foregrounds how UNESCO's flagship reports on educational futures operate not merely as texts but as part of material infrastructures that guide epistemic frameworks and governance practices: From *Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow* (1972) to *Learning: The Treasure Within* (1996) and the recent *Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education* (2021), the paper will show how these reports not only represent and shape UNESCO's present futures (Primus, 2025), but also an epistemic infrastructure that underpin contemporary global education policy.

By analysing the content and tracing the materialities of the reports— their production processes, documents, the actors (scholars, policy-makers, international organisations) and their interdependencies, and the socio-historical contexts in which they emerge — the paper argues that UNESCO's flagship reports on educational futures function as infrastructural artefacts that shape and embody governing panoramas of education. The 1972 Faure Report situates education within post-industrial and democratic transformations, introducing lifelong learning as a universal principle. The 1996 Delors Report systematises education around the

“four pillars of learning,” providing a normative grammar that continues to organise policy discourse. The 2021 Futures of Education report further expands the panorama, integrating planetary sustainability, digital transformation, and social justice into a vision of education as a global common good. The reports embody panoramas by representing and manifesting particular understandings of problems, risks, and desirable futures, and by instigating them through the provocation of infrastructures of coordination and alignment, thereby shaping agendas and priorities.

Methodologically, the study employs discourse analysis of UNESCO’s reports, while considering their institutional, historical, and political contexts in detail, to trace the underlying and enacted epistemic infrastructure. This approach reveals how quantitative expertise, indicators, and planning tools become embedded in policy infrastructures, enabling particular framings of problems and solutions that travel across institutional and national boundaries (Grek, 2009). We investigate reports as elements of the infrastructure that enables and shapes governing panoramas, bridging research and governance by translating complex futures into principles and normative commitments that inform educational planning.

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### **Between National Reform and International Reference: Vocational Education in Spain in the Late 1920s**

This paper analyses the international dimension of Spanish vocational education and training (VET) reform during the late 1920s, particularly in relation to the Statute of Vocational Education of 1928. Its main objective is to examine how international references, comparative examples, and transnational debates were incorporated into the official discourse that accompanied the organisation and consolidation of a state-coordinated VET system. Rather than focusing exclusively on legislative change, the study explores how reform was framed within a broader international horizon while contributing to the structuring of a regulated national network of vocational institutions.

The paper is situated within the history of education and informed by perspectives from transnational history and the circulation of educational models. It approaches VET reform not as an isolated national development but as embedded in a European context characterised by intense exchanges on labour protection, vocational guidance, psychotechnics, and workers’ training. In this sense, attention is directed towards the ways in which foreign systems and international experiences were invoked as sources of authority and as legitimising resources in processes of institutional coordination and state intervention.

Methodologically, the research follows the historical method and is based on documentary analysis. The inquiry combines examination of legislative texts with a systematic analysis of specialised publications in order to reconstruct the argumentative frameworks through which reform objectives were justified and the emerging VET system was organised and publicly presented.

The main sources include the issues of the *Revista de Formación Profesional* (1929–1930), officially recognised as the bulletin of the Subdirectorate of Vocational Education, together with official documents and contemporary writings from the period. Particular emphasis is placed on identifying explicit references to other countries, international congresses, comparative data, and foreign institutional models that appear in these materials.

Preliminary findings reveal a notable density of international references in both legislative discourse and the journal. Foreign examples were consistently mobilised as benchmarks and as evidence of alignment with broader reform movements. Within this framework, the figure of César de Madariaga appears as one of the actors participating in international arenas related to workers' training and psychotechnics. Although the actor-based dimension remains exploratory at this stage, the analysis suggests that the consolidation of the 1928 reform was discursively shaped through processes of international referencing that supported the governance and institutional structuring of Spanish VET.

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### **Fragmented Education Governance and Educational Research - Education, Teaching, Schooling, and Epistemic Infrastructures**

Education policy research requires a fundamental conceptual shift. This is driven not only by increasing fragmentation within the research field but also by changes in educational governance. Education is increasingly governed within a diverse and dispersed landscape where authority, responsibility, and legitimacy are no longer primarily rooted in the nation-state or coordinated through international organisations (Elfert & Ydesen, 2024), but are instead distributed across networks of public agencies, private actors, digital platforms, expert communities, and epistemic infrastructures (Edwards et al., 2024). These shifts challenge traditional notions about where learning happens, how educational goals are set, and who is responsible for shaping educational futures.

Against this backdrop, this paper contributes to education policy research by shifting focus from governance as mere coordination or optimisation to governance as a historically situated condition that reconfigures educational purpose, professional responsibility, and institutional mediation amid fragmentation (Mifsud & Wilkins, 2025; Wilkins & Mifsud, 2024). Instead of viewing governance as a stabilising backdrop for education, the paper treats it as a dynamic and increasingly uncertain mediator of education's social and political meaning.

Conceptually, the paper draws on Acosta's distinction between education, teaching, and schooling (Acosta, 2026) to examine how contemporary governance re-shapes different "worlds of learning." Education is understood as a societal practice of transmission and intergenerational responsibility; teaching as a professional and ethical practice mediating between inherited knowledge and emerging subjectivities; and schooling as the institutional arrangements that organise education at scale and secure public accountability. Historically, governance relied –imperfectly– on aligning these dimensions; the paper argues that this alignment has progressively weakened.

Building on analyses of epistemic fragmentation in education research (Ydesen, 2026), the paper shows how governance increasingly operates through epistemic infrastructures such as indicators, benchmarks, rankings, scenarios, and digital systems. Artificial intelligence is

analysed not as a driver, but as an intensifier that accelerates data-driven coordination and enhances existing tendencies towards standardisation and responsabilisation (Williamson & Piattoeva, 2019).

By foregrounding governance as a condition shaping multiple worlds of learning, the paper contributes to comparative education debates on how learning is governed and how responsibility is distributed across fragmented educational landscapes. In doing so, it highlights how epistemic infrastructures increasingly mediate both governance and the production and circulation of educational knowledge, thereby reshaping the purposes and institutional organisation of education, teaching, and schooling.

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### **Decision-Making Processes and the Global Education Agenda beyond 2030**

The Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) is approaching its formal end. While it is important to assess whether the targets have been achieved, this paper focuses on a more fundamental dimension. It examines the decision-making processes that shaped SDG 4 and discusses whether the method of its formation constituted a significant weakness, with implications for post-2030 education agenda.

The analysis is framed by Donald Broadbent's distinction between symbolic and sub-symbolic levels of decision-making. At the symbolic level, strategic decisions are formulated in abstract, policy-oriented terms by small groups capable of negotiating coherent statements. At the sub-symbolic level, implementation depends on the distributed actions of many actors operating in specific contexts. In the context of SDG 4, a group of experts in an international meeting can set an overarching goal of education for all, but the realisation of that goal ultimately depends on teachers, administrators, and communities across diverse national systems. Symbolic agreement alone cannot secure practical transformation.

At the same time, there is no way that the decision on a question of a strategy can be handled by a very large number of people, with everyone's voice being heard. While broad consultation may aggregate diverse perspectives, it is typically ineffective at drafting precise alternatives. Committees function best when choosing between clearly defined options, not when generating them from scratch. This is why sub-committees and steering groups have a role in condensing the will of the masses into specific statements. This division of labour is not incidental but intrinsic to any complex system.

In this paper we look at the development of the SDG 4 and especially its roots in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), paying particular attention to the role of expert groups and more inclusive consultations, to see the intricate interplay between these two levels of decision-making. We draw on Broadbent's (1993) paper on planning and opportunism to explore the boundaries between these two necessary types of decisions, to draw lessons from past efforts to produce global goals for education, and to suggest lessons for the future drawing up of successor goals.

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### **Symbiotic legitimacy in international stakeholder consultations**

International organizations (IOs) in education governance have primarily relied on expert input in the past. In recent years, however, these organizations have increasingly shifted towards broader public participation, seeking greater contributions from ‘the people’ (Dingwerth et al. 2019). Consultations where lay people get to participate alongside state representatives or specialists in a certain field are more common than ever (Gleckman 2018). The future of education seems to significantly depend on this as both UNESCO in its latest Futures of Education initiative and the OECD in its ongoing project on the Future of Education and Skills 2040 strongly emphasize the importance of these so-called stakeholders. While UNESCO supposedly consulted “one million people” (UNESCO 2021) for its latest flagship publication *Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education*, the OECD annually invites diverse stakeholders such as “policy makers, teachers, teacher educators, school leaders, students, and social partners” (OECD 2026) to its Global Forum on the Future of Education and Skills 2040.

In an organizational environment that values inclusivity, the involvement of stakeholders comes with legitimacy function for these organizations (Gleckman 2018). However, from the stakeholders’ point of view, to have one’s opinion make it into an official document of these organizations is rather unlikely, particularly in consultations of such enormous scale. This raises the question of why stakeholders participate in these schemes at all.

In my presentation, I argue that these broad and open consultations provide a legitimacy space for both the people who participate as stakeholders as well as the IOs. Based on qualitative interviews with stakeholders and IO staff I show how participants take up the role of being proper stakeholders regardless of whether they hold a stake in any of the IOs’ projects. Rather than primarily contributing relevant ideas to the future of education, these participants appropriate the consultative spaces for their own purposes and thereby seek legitimacy from their own social environments. Such stakeholder consultations are thus a mutually beneficial set-up where participants become stakeholders not necessarily because they have veto powers on the direction of a project but rather because they stick to the script of being stakeholders in the first place.

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### **Human Flourishing and Education: The OECD Agenda in the Capitalocene**

While the Anthropocene is often used to emphasise the irreversible damage humans have inflicted on the planet and its ecosystems (Crutzen, P.J. & Stoermer, E.F., 2000), critics argue that it frames ecological catastrophe as a universal human experience, obscuring differences in responsibility and vulnerability (Moore, 2016). In contrast, the Capitalocene highlights how economic and political power shape global challenges and sustain the systems that have produced the current permacrisis (Moore, 2016). This perspective is particularly valuable for analysing how international organisations, such as the OECD, construct futures agendas and position themselves as global authorities in education.

This paper examines OECD’s Education for Human Flourishing—High Performing Systems for Tomorrow (HPST, 2018–2025) initiative through a Capitalocene lens, complemented by Biesta’s critique of the dominant language of learning (Biesta 2009, 2006). HPST positions itself as a response to technological change, declining student well-being, and environmental crises. HPST introduces three new competencies for human flourishing—adaptive problem-

solving, ethical decision-making, and aesthetic perception—and asserts that it moves education beyond traditional human-capital approaches (OECD, 2025).

The paper draws on qualitative content analysis of HPST reports, website materials, and webinars. The analysis suggests that HPST frames global challenges primarily as collective human issues, sidelining the political and economic forces that shape them. Rather than overcoming human capital thinking, HPST reconfigures future-oriented competencies as teachable, learnable, and measurable individual attributes. Biesta's (2006) critique clarifies the implications of this shift: when education is framed mainly through individual learning, other educational purposes are pushed aside. Flourishing becomes a universal skillset to be developed, while the socio-economic and ecological entanglements that a Capitalocene perspective urges us to confront, remain largely unaddressed.

HPST, therefore, extends rather than disrupts existing policy logics, presenting a vision of the future that leaves many crisis-producing conditions intact, including the role of schooling in reproducing existing structures rather than transforming them. Instead of engaging with the complexities of the present and recognising humans as mortal critters embedded in damaged but shared worlds (Haraway 2016), HPST reinforces a form of human exceptionalism. By doing so, it turns toward salvific futures that promise solutions elsewhere—often with apocalyptic undertones—rather than in the difficult work of staying with the trouble in the here and now (Haraway, 2016).

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### **Artificial Intelligence in Global Education Agendas: How International Organisations and Big Tech are Governing the Future**

International organisations (IO) have incorporated artificial intelligence (AI) in their education agendas and developed 'partnerships' and other shared initiatives with big tech companies. While these initiatives depict an emerging policy landscape with big tech's participation in global education reform (Gorur & Wijetunga, 2025), such 'collaboration' can lead to corporate capture of international development through new forms of technosolutionism and depoliticisation (Iazzolino & Stremlau, 2024), and reinforce private actors' geopolitical and economic dominance by managing narratives and norms (Nemorin et al., 2023).

This paper examines how 'collaboration' between big tech corporations and IOs influences imaginaries of AI in global education agendas. It aims to understand the interplay between global private actors' interests and technological developments, and how IOs' pursuit of legitimacy shapes the governance of global education futures. In particular, this article addresses the following research question: How do policy networks between big tech and IOs influence how AI is adopted in future of education imaginaries? The methodological design is based on a comparative network ethnography and assemblage ethnography. The analysis will focus on UNESCO, the OECD, and the WB, three prominent global organisations with distinct historical trajectories and traditions in terms of their ideologies and governance modes (Elfert & Ydesen, 2023). Data collection and analysis reconstructs UNESCO, OECD and the WB's policy networks with big tech companies and

other mediators involved in their operationalisation of AI agendas —e.g., events, ‘partnerships’, steering committees— and will examine related public documents, such as policy guidelines and frameworks. The list of big tech companies includes multinational corporations—Alpha/Google, Meta, Microsoft—with exceptional social and market power, grounded in their sheer scale and the platformisation they engender.

This paper is part of a broader research project at an early stage that will establish a body of empirical work revealing networks and sociomaterial elements involved in big tech’s influence on how IOs incorporate AI in their futures of education imaginaries. While ‘collaboration’ with the private sector has become a core component of IOs’ forms of governing education policy (Menashy, 2019), it is crucial to critically analyse how the alignment of IOs and Big Tech’s increasing political and economic influence shapes education futures. In the context of the growing ubiquitousness of AI in societies and the opportunities and risks this presents for education, this project is motivated by a broader interest in illuminating how the geopolitical reconfiguration of international cooperation affects education development.

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### **Leveraging OpenEMIS for Efficient, Fair, Secure, and Accessible Education**

#### **Assessments: Pathways to Integrated National Systems**

Education systems worldwide are under increasing pressure to deliver assessments, which measure the educational achievement and progress, while remaining efficient, equitable and secure, and ensuring alignment with national education goals. As countries advance their digital infrastructure, the integration of assessment systems within broader Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) becomes not only desirable but essential. Traditionally, EMIS and examination systems are separate due to concerns over data, privacy and security especially for high stakes, national examinations. In most cases, these EMIS and examination systems are not integrated. This often creates a situation where data is duplicated and inconsistent and where schools need to use multiple systems.

This paper explores how OpenEMIS—an open-source suite of tools designed to support education planning and management—can be leveraged to create, manage and administer integrated national assessments that address these imperatives.

Drawing on experiences from multiple country contexts, the paper presents concrete examples of how OpenEMIS has been deployed to support diverse assessment needs. Through modular design and interoperability features, OpenEMIS enables education stakeholders to collect, analyze, and act on assessment data in real time, linking student performance to school profiles, teacher data, and policy planning frameworks.

The paper proposes clear pathways for Ministries of Education and education partners to adopt and adapt OpenEMIS for assessment purposes, including implementation strategies, system architecture considerations, data security protocols, and approaches to institution strengthening. It also outlines options to integrate examination systems with EMIS, increasing efficiencies and facilitating opportunities for deeper insights into student learning and achievement.

Particular attention will be given to the generalized and highly configurable OpenEMIS software, ensuring Ministries require little to low software coding. Moreover, the paper discusses how OpenEMIS can serve as a vehicle for increasing transparency and stakeholder trust in national assessment processes through open data standards and clear pathways for dissemination of education data.

Ultimately, this paper argues that leveraging open-source technology like OpenEMIS can democratize access to high-quality assessment systems, reduce dependency on proprietary platforms, and empower governments to build resilient, data-driven education systems.

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### **Resisting Creatively: A Game-Based Futures Workshop with Teacher Communities**

In a recent conversation paper, *Hijacking the Digital Backlash in Education* (Forsler et al., 2025), Felicitas Magilchrist introduced the notion ‘forwardslash’, a key notion that attempts to move away from the metaphor ‘backlash’ which often reduces debates around digital technology into binaries. For Macgilchrist, there are rarely two positions in sociotechnical developments, thus ‘forwardslash’ puts forward a ‘third position’ which enables researchers to further understand how technology is used. Agreeing with Macgilchrist and as a former teacher myself, I have observed how teachers are frequently nudged towards adopting educational technologies in their classrooms in an uncritical manner. In the context of Malaysia, this is illustrated with compulsory certification courses that all public-school teachers are required to complete. In a highly centralized education system such as Malaysia, teachers often comply with such demands. Thus, the main guiding question is - how do we raise the critical consciousness of teachers, in such bureaucratic settings. Here, I designed and facilitated a futures workshop aimed at exploring how teacher communities negotiate, resist, or comply with the expanding presence of digital technology in the classroom. The main aim of the workshop is twofold – one to explicitly understand teachers’ use of technology in the classroom, and two, to implicitly raise teachers’ critical consciousness on such technologies and artificial systems that reconfigure the role of teachers in the classroom. Building on Lauttamäki (2014) futures workshop, my workshop blends elements of the traditional futures workshop model with a custom-designed set of “futures cards” - a game-based tool I developed through engagement with critical and speculative design literature. Having conducted two rounds of this workshop with two different sets of teacher communities in Malaysia, findings suggest the emergence of a heightened critical consciousness among teachers. More interestingly, this workshop enabled teachers to critically interrogate the ‘nudging’ mechanisms that were in place that pushed them to take up technology in the classroom without critical reflection, which has substantial impact on their perceived professional identity. The combination of futures thinking and playful speculation through a futures-based card game enables educators to tangibly question dominant narratives and assert their agency in shaping more equitable and human-centered educational futures.

*Nicklas Troedson  
Tampere University, Finland*

*Gunnlaugur Magnússon  
Uppsala University, Sweden*

*Wieland Wermke  
Stockholm University, Sweden*

### **The principal and inclusive education: Investigating the dynamics of negotiation and resistance in Finnish and Swedish education union journals**

This contribution focuses on the role of the principal in facilitating inclusive education policies in Sweden and Finland since 1990, it does so by analysing education union journals. These journals are taken to represent principals' collective professional voice concerning the dynamics of major educational reforms.

The data-sample consists of 255 articles from Sweden, and 434 articles from Finland. The material was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The theoretical foundation is based on Skrtic (1990) theory on organising special education.

The differences and similarities between the Finnish and Swedish contexts are intended to serve as an analytical device to highlight the relationship between contextual features and the unions' responses to the requirement to implement inclusive education policies.

Our findings show that the journals generalise inclusive education in three specific concerns: the student should be in focus, the organisational form of inclusive education is crucial, and responsibilities and resources must be clearly articulated.

During the 1990s, resistance to inclusive education within the journals was very explicit. In both Finland and Sweden, a narrow view of inclusive education is presented where focus lies on disabilities and diagnoses. Sweden favours special schools, special groups, and special educators dealing with certain, students. In Finland, on the other hand, the overall perspective is that small classes with a large proportion of special education teachers is the recipe for successful education. More recently, the Swedish unions arguments have softened. Inclusive education is in principle a worthy aspiration, but the realities of school systems do not allow for it. Special schools may not be the best way to move forward, but they are still needed. Special educational support and the potential for inclusive education is though tied to the funding of the educational system. In Finland, a short-term movement favouring inclusion, promoting the new three-tier model of support, is later abandoned. The need to manage this new system keeps principals occupied with tasks that distract them from their primary role and duties. The increasing problems associated with inclusion and the declining results seen in schools are reported as leading to a new reform of the three-tier model. The most surprising result of our comparative study is the overwhelming similarity of attitudes in both Nordic contexts. When encountering inclusive education, principals in both countries trigger their education unions united and public resistance, an ideological position which more or less remains in place for over 20 years.

*Wieland Wermke  
Stockholm University, Sweden*

### **Between inclusion and education standards. The formation of special education professions in time and space**

This contribution reports on a research project about special educators (SEs) in two national contexts with a historical perspective from the 1990s until today (2024) (Published in Wermke et al. 2025). The rationale behind this research design has been to gain further understanding of a specific group of educators and their formation in the conditions of modern mass education in various contextual configurations. The interaction of professional tasks, roles, and identity is assumed to reveal universal traits in support of pupils in need of special education, as well as the possible impact of specific policies, traditions, and constitutional mindsets. The cases of Sweden and Germany have been purposefully chosen to illuminate these interests.

In the presentation, I walk through various theoretical themes that can be considered from a comparative perspective on special education. We show that the formation of our professions in focus must be understood as complementary dynamics to the organising of special education in various school types (both special and general). We discuss the interplay of organisational and professional logic in the described complementary dynamics. We show that SEs' workload has grown and become significantly bureaucratised. In addition, they are forced to act as special education generalists. We argue that the absence of a particular specialist knowledge can be problematic. The problem with a dissolution of boundaries (as in the context of Sweden) is that, from this perspective, potential clients may wonder whether SEs can offer specialised solutions for all the problems to be solved. Eventually, they can, at best, only know which other professions can have a solution. This would lead to the profession's knowledge base being rather weak and replaceable, and thus potentially threatened by other professions with an interest in the field of schooling.

Finally, I propose a model that aims to support the comparative understanding of how the work with pupils with special educational needs is operationalised by SEs. The model combines two continua. In the two continuum poles, 'Specialist professions' are contrasted with 'Generalist professions', and 'Special schools' are contrasted with 'General schools'. Put the two continua together, and a four-field model emerges, displaying four configuration types (by its four quadrants), which illustrate, among others, the German and Swedish contemporary situation of inclusive education and their dynamics. This model presented is seen as a genuine contribution to comparative (special) education.

*Amos Lagziel*

*Technion - Israel Institute of Technology, Israel*

### **Navigating Excellence and Equity: Social Reproduction in Israeli Science Education Programs**

This study examines how elite science education programs in Israel navigate the fundamental tension between meritocracy and equity. Focusing on two national excellence programs: Alpha and Odyssey, the research investigates whether these initiatives reproduce or challenge existing patterns of social inequality, and how field dynamics among diverse stakeholders shape program accessibility and outcomes.

The analysis synthesizes Bourdieu's social reproduction theory with Archer's concept of science capital and Chan's dual-dimensional framework for understanding science. This integrated approach examines how excellence programs function both epistemologically in shaping what counts as scientific competence and socio-institutionally in distributing access to scientific capital and reproducing social hierarchies.

Employing qualitative methodology, this research analyzed 24 policy documents spanning 2004-2024 and conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 key stakeholders, including Ministry of Education officials, program directors from the Future Scientists Center, university representatives, and senior military personnel. Interviews averaged 75-90 minutes and were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis, with Bourdieusian concepts systematically informing the coding process to identify patterns of capital distribution, field dynamics, and mechanisms of misrecognition.

The research reveals significant social reproduction mechanisms embedded within excellence programs. Despite geographic expansion to all Israeli universities, demographic patterns show pronounced disparities: only 37% female participation, less than 5% Arab Israeli

representation, virtually no Ethiopian Israeli students, and limited presence from geographic and economic peripheries. Over 80% of participants have university-educated parents, compared to 50% nationally.

The programs' hybrid funding structure (60% philanthropic/40% governmental) creates a democratic deficit, allowing private capital holders to influence educational priorities without corresponding public accountability. This dependency establishes power dynamics where economic capital converts into field influence, potentially compromising program autonomy. The symbiotic relationship with elite military units where 40-90% of certain technology unit members are program graduates creates institutionalized pathways that systematically amplify existing advantages.

While successfully creating opportunities for gifted students, Alpha and Odyssey programs Currently fail to deliver equity. The tension between excellence and equity remains unresolved, with uniform selection mechanisms privileging students who already possess substantial science capital. The study demonstrates how ostensibly meritocratic excellence initiatives perpetuate social inequalities through complex stakeholder dynamics, revealing the need for fundamental reforms including increased public funding, multiple pathways to excellence recognition, culturally responsive pedagogies, and transparent accountability mechanisms. These findings illuminate broader questions about educational governance, social mobility, and elite educational pathways in knowledge societies.

*Lilach Marom*

*Simon Fraser University, Canada*

**“I don’t see the light at the end of the tunnel”: Hiring and Employment of Internationally Educated Teachers in Canada**

This paper explores the hiring and career trajectories of Internationally Educated Teachers (IETs) in Canada’s K-12 school system. While Canada has eased the recognition of international credentials, IETs often face systemic barriers to entry into the teaching profession. The paper develops the notion of international capital as a critical factor in defining teacher professionalism. While international capital is viewed as an asset, advancing mobility and status for elite professionals, it is often devalued in teaching, where local knowledge and experiences are prioritized. Through a mixed method design, including survey of IETs across Canada and interviews with both IETs and stakeholders, the study explores how policies and hiring practices devalue IETs’ professional expertise and pose barriers to employment. While changes in policies make recertification more streamlined and accessible, they do not guarantee equitable hiring and career progression. The study calls for policy and hiring changes to better integrate IETs, ensuring hiring practices reflect Canada’s commitment to diversity and inclusion in education.

*Maria Yudkevich*

*University of Haifa, Israel*

*Dmitriy Potapov*

*Miro, Germany*

*Irina Shafranskaya*

## **Worlds of Disruption: Institutional Character and University Responses to COVID-19 and AI**

**Purpose and Objectives.** Our paper develops a comparative typology of university responses to systemic disruption, with particular attention to how COVID-19 experience shapes institutional openness to AI. We study commonly assumed relationship, that innovative institutions stay innovative, but also look at a more interesting counter-dynamic looking at if a poor performance during COVID (and the competitive damage that followed) make institutions more willing to engage with AI-driven change?

**Theoretical Framework.** We draw on DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) account of institutional isomorphism: coercive, mimetic, and normative pressures that ordinarily push universities toward convergence. Under disruption, these pressures weaken, and institutional differences become more consequential. We combine this with Kosmützky and Meier's (2026) framework of competing as action, which treats universities as strategic actors engaged in observing rivals and courting third parties through performing, strategic informing, influencing valuation criteria, and attracting attention. This combination lets us distinguish two paths to innovation. One runs through prior innovative capacity; the other through competitive failure. An institution that lost enrollment or reputation during COVID has specific reasons to pay close attention to what AI might offer: reasons that a historically successful institution may not feel with the same urgency.

**Methods and Data.** We use LLM-based generative agents, each built around a specific institutional archetype defined by governance structure, funding model, and national context, and given a representation of that institution's COVID-era performance. Agents reflect on this experience before responding to AI-disruption scenarios — making the sensemaking step explicit rather than assumed. Outputs are compared against a documentary analysis of COVID-era institutional communications to assess whether simulated reasoning patterns correspond to observed ones.

**Expected Results and Conclusions.** The analysis yields five institutional profiles. Proactive innovators maintain consistent innovative responses across disruptions. Reactive innovators performed poorly during COVID and are now more motivated to engage with AI precisely because of that experience. Mimetic adopters follow the field regardless of their own history. Normative resisters adapt slowly, constrained by professional logics that filter change cautiously. Symbolic decouplers update their language without changing their structures. The broader point is that competitive failure, where institutions genuinely learn from it, can be as generative as competitive success which matters for how policymakers think about which universities need support and which simply need room to act.

### **Working Group 3**

*Eleni Prokou*

*Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, Greece*

## **Accreditation policies, ‘market’ responsiveness, privatisation trends and the individualisation of the responsibility for learning in higher education, in the EU and in Greece**

The European Union (EU) education policy (through the Bologna Process, the Lisbon Strategy etc.) has been transferred to member states and has been analysed as the shift of governments’ concern from the aim of ‘equality of educational opportunities’ to that of economic ‘efficiency’, namely, ensuring the ‘quality’ of higher education systems across Europe. The ‘quality’ of higher education has been expressed through the emphasis on the ‘outputs’, cost ‘effectiveness’ and the reduction of state funding, the attribution of the responsibility for education/learning to the individual, state control from a distance (or else, the dominance of the so-called ‘evaluative state’), the creation of the ‘market-driven’ university. Through an analysis and interpretation of Greek higher education reforms and laws, the argument of the paper is that the aforementioned EU policy trends and directives have been transferred to Greek higher education over the last two decades, having been ‘translated’ (and/or delayed in their implementation) in the context of the Greek university tradition and the Greek social formation. For instance, an emphasis has been placed on policies of accreditation of learning (e.g. through the generalisation of the ECTS and the introduction of the EQF) and recently, through discussions around tools such as the microcredentials. Nevertheless, policy tools focusing on learning outcomes, which are at the centre of the concern of policies of accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes, are expressing the individualisation of the responsibility of learning and ‘market’ responsiveness, while at the same time, they are promoting the blurring of boundaries between various institutions of post-secondary education and are gradually associated with privatisation trends.

*Lorena Sanchez Tyson, University of Hertfordshire, UK*  
*Charlotte Nussey, University of Leeds, UK*

## **The gold standard for evidence or (re)production of coloniality? Critical reflections on a systematic review**

The climate crisis is not only an environmental emergency but a matter of justice, one that is shaped by colonial histories, extractive economic systems, and uneven geographies of responsibility and harm. While the role of research and innovation in addressing climate change is often positioned as a core contribution of universities around the world, less attention has been paid to how universities themselves are implicated in the crisis, or to how they might contribute to more just and regenerative responses. Existing literature tends to focus on sustainability in higher education or climate change and schooling, often within policy-oriented or technocratic frames. Far less is known about how universities are responding (materially, pedagogically, and institutionally) to the demands of climate change from a justice lens.

This paper critically reflects on both the process and findings of a systematic review which sought to address the under-researched role of universities’ responses to the climate crisis. In the paper, we draw on our experiences of synthesising, mapping and building a typological framework through engagement with 151 peer-reviewed articles empirically exploring university actions responding to the climate crisis published in English between 1990 and June 2020 in the Web of Science database. We explore how the initial research question of the systematic review - how are universities responding to the challenges of climate change? – left us unsettled and paused in the writing up. Expanding on this, we therefore reflect on our asking: To what extent are justice-oriented, decolonial, or community-based responses made visible within peer-reviewed literature? Our aim in this paper is thus not only to present our

synthesised evidence on university responses, but to interrogate whose responses are recognised, whose are overlooked (and why), and what actions and knowledges ‘count’ in the context of the rapidly escalating global climate crisis.

Our review, and this paper which reflects on the process of generating it, thus highlights the coloniality of knowledge production with a concentration of evidence from the Anglophone Global North, raising questions of the colonial reproductions of the methodology itself. It further explores the paucity of justice framings in the reviewed literature of universities in relation to the climate crisis, and disconnects from action, relational and empathetic forms of knowledge. We conclude with reflections on how the systematic collation of evidence exert control within the university, limiting worlds of learning by prioritising what already exists over transformative imagination of what could be.

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*Mili Mili*  
*King's College London, UK*

### **The working and pedagogical experiences of university lecturers in a marketised and uncertain landscape of international higher education**

This presentation examines how a growing dependence on international student fees and rapid shifts in global student mobility are reshaping lecturers’ working and pedagogical lives in UK higher education. Using a qualitative interpretivist approach, we draw on one-to-one semi-structured interviews with lecturers in one university department to explore how they experience and negotiate these sector wide pressures in their teaching practices, curriculum decisions, and classroom dynamics.

Currently the UK higher education sector is shaped by intersecting pressures of intensified marketisation and a rapidly shifting landscape of internationalisation (Kemiche, 2024). Universities have become increasingly reliant on international students, predominantly from China and India, to secure financial sustainability, yet recent data indicate a downturn in recruitment (HESA, 2026). International student mobility is shifting due to a range of factors including the changing UK political dynamics, China’s growing appeal as a study destination, and the emergence of more affordable regional education hubs in Africa, the Middle East, and East Asia (Brooks et al., 2024). Consequently, universities across the UK face significant financial and structural pressures, leading to staff redundancies, programme and module closures, widespread restructuring, and, even in better resourced institutions, substantial changes to teaching and learning requirements (Times Higher Education, 2026).

This study is informed by a growing body of academic critique that examines how forces of marketisation and internationalisation are reshaping the principles, values, and teaching practices that underpin academic work and learning cultures. These include critiques of university governance (Collini, 2012), analyses of increasing workforce precarity (Loveday, 2018), and concerns about the effects of efficiency driven standardisation on teaching and learning (Berg & Seeber, 2016). These all point to systemic pressures that mirror the global trends of marketisation and internationalisation in reshaping higher education in the UK.

Drawing on our data, we report how lecturers navigate intensified workloads and growing accountability pressures, including expectations to deliver a positive student experience to support evaluation metrics and recruitment. We also examine how they balance these demands with maintaining academic rigour and responding to a student body with increasingly diverse

pedagogical and emotional needs. In doing so, we consider the ways in which internationalisation, often framed through institutional marketing and revenue imperatives, shapes lecturers' work and teaching practices in specific and consequential ways.

*Andreas Vasilopoulos*  
*University of Patras, Greece*

*Christina Vyza*  
*University of Patras, Greece*

### **Greek universities and Erasmus+ student mobility (2014-2022)**

Lesjak et al. (2015) have highlighted a number of factors that pose a significant impact on Erasmus+ student mobility. These factors include the size of the country, the cost of living, geographical distance, the educational background of the population, the quality of the universities, the language of the host country, and the climate. Conversely, credit mobility exhibits distinctly divergent patterns. The number of incoming and outgoing Erasmus+ students indicates that credit mobility is based on reciprocity. It is important to note that, despite the financial support provided by the EU and other bodies, differences in living costs and geographical distance remain significant factors in explaining Erasmus+ mobility patterns. The Erasmus+ student mobility programme appears to favour Mediterranean countries, which are renowned for their temperate climate. However, when the size of the higher education institutions (HEIs) is taken into consideration, ETER data show a much higher level of credit mobility in Spain, followed by Ireland and some Scandinavian countries (especially Finland and Sweden). In any case, the factors influencing students' decisions to continue their academic studies in foreign countries may be found within the geographical boundaries of their respective countries of origin—push factors. Pull factors are defined as factors that operate within the host country, thereby rendering it comparatively more attractive than other potential destinations. It is the combination of both forces that ultimately explains student mobility, whether at the international level or within the Erasmus+ programme (González et al., 2011).

The present paper seeks to shed light on the patterns of student exchanges towards and from the Greek universities (incoming & outgoing mobility). The present study draws on official EU mobility data (<https://data.europa.eu/>) and corresponding data from ETER ([www.eter-project.com](http://www.eter-project.com)) for the years 2014-2022, with the aim of presenting the numbers and patterns of incoming and outgoing mobility involving Greek universities, in order to understand their relations.

Relevant data complement the extant body of literature on Erasmus+ student mobility, specifically the part concerning policies and practices pertaining to student mobility.

*Chenzheng Ma*  
*University of Vienna, Austria*

### **Critical Thinking as Situated Practice: Doctoral Students' Meaning-Making at an Elite Chinese University**

This study investigates how doctoral students in education at an elite Chinese university interpret the concept of critical thinking (CT) in regularly held research group meetings in relation to higher education policy discourse. While CT is often emphasized in policy as a set

of cognitive skills oriented toward creativity and innovation, students' own meaning-making in their lived experiences reveals both similarities and differences from these expectations. The research draws on a hermeneutic phenomenology-inspired framework, integrating a comparative perspective to explore how individual students make meaning of the concept. CT is approached not solely as a set of cognitive skills or dispositions but as a socially and culturally embedded practice, enacted through engagement with academic environments, peer interactions, and cultural interpretive resources.

Data were collected through two months of fieldwork in Beijing, China, combining observation of research group meetings with semi-structured interviews across three rounds with nine doctoral participants. The first round consisted of four mini focus groups, allowing initial exploration of the breadth of participants' relevant experiences and understandings, while the second and third rounds involved one-on-one interviews to clarify, deepen, and validate emerging insights. Interview questions focused on participants' understanding of CT in research group meetings and reflections on the relevance of policy discourse.

Analysis followed a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, with transcripts segmented into meaning units, coded into sub-concepts, and synthesized into themes under an overarching conceptual framework. This framework captures students' interpretations of CT beyond cognitive skill definitions, highlighting context-sensitive judgments, relational reasoning, and the adaptation of cultural resources in meaning-making.

When interpreted in light of international research on CT enactment, findings reveal that students' CT encompasses both deliberate cognitive processes and implicit, situationally informed judgments regarding participation, communication, and engagement with academic and cultural norms. Some students pay special attention to explicit reasoning and the conscious transfer of CT into action, whereas others integrate tacit understandings of sociocultural expectations. The resulting conceptual framework and sub-concepts illustrate CT as a dynamic, contextually embedded practice beyond skill-based definitions and revealing its relational and cultural dimensions.

These insights contribute to comparative higher education research by demonstrating how policy discourse is interpreted and enacted at the micro level and how cultural resources shape doctoral students' engagement with CT in China. The study underscores the importance of recognizing culturally informed and contextually situated interpretations in policy design and supervision practice, offering a nuanced understanding of CT that connects official expectations, student experiences, and culturally grounded meaning-making.

*Mie Shigemitsu*

*Osaka University of Economics, Japan*

### **Learning with AI: Who is in control?**

This study examines the autonomous application of artificial intelligence (AI) technology in language learning. Specifically, it analyzes variations in the use of Grammarly, an automated writing evaluation tool, among university students with differing levels of English language proficiency.

Learner autonomy is typically defined as learners' ability and capacity to take responsibility for their own learning (e.g., Benson, 2001; Holec, 1981; Little, 1991; Nunan, 1996). Despite its importance, methods for evaluating learner autonomy are not yet well established (Wang et al., 2024). To address this gap, it is necessary to examine observable behaviors that indicate how learners assume responsibility for their learning. The integration of AI into educational

contexts has generated both optimism and concern regarding its effects. (Alpizar-Chacon et al., 2025) While some learners use AI technology to enhance their learning, others depend heavily on AI direction or adopt its suggestions without critical evaluation. Active engagement in the learning process is essential for developing language proficiency. Consequently, investigating the autonomous use of technology is important for understanding AI's role in promoting learner autonomy.

The participants in this study are university students who are non-native English speakers. The research uses multimodal interaction analysis to investigate learners' use of AI technology in English-language writing. Editing processes on the computer screen are recorded and analyzed, along with learners' gestures, facial expressions, and vocalizations, to capture behaviors during pauses in the writing process. Questionnaires are also administered to assess participants' language proficiency and prior experience with AI.

The results indicate that advanced learners use AI technology more autonomously than less advanced peers. Students with greater confidence in their English-language abilities devote more time to evaluating AI suggestions and frequently revise the text independently rather than accepting recommendations uncritically. These findings suggest that less advanced learners may benefit from additional guidance and support from instructors to use AI effectively and to foster greater learner autonomy.

*Maria Maddalena Scognamiglio  
University of Rome 'Tor Vergata', Italy*

### **Governing artificial intelligence in european higher education: a comparative analysis of regulatory configurations and institutional responsibility**

The governance of artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the institutional architecture of European higher education. Beyond technological adoption, emerging regulatory frameworks are redefining how universities allocate responsibility, incorporate accountability mechanisms, and define their public identity. This contribution investigates how European and national AI policies translate supranational regulatory pressures into differentiated governance configurations in higher education systems.

Drawing on comparative education and policy studies, and drawing on theories of policy performativity (Williamson, 2017) and critical studies of AI (Selwyn, 2019), the study conceptualises regulation as a performative force capable of shaping institutional responsibilities and identities. While recent comparative mappings of AI policies in European higher education have documented emerging national approaches (Stracke et al., 2025), this work proposes a typological interpretation of governance configurations. Supranational frameworks, including UNESCO's Planning Education in the AI Era (2019) and the European Commission's Ethical Guidelines for Educators on the Use of Artificial Intelligence and Data (2022), establish regulatory baselines based on transparency, fairness, and accountability. Rather than examining automated assessment practices per se, the analysis focuses on the formal policy architectures and regulatory frameworks that enable and legitimise the adoption of AI in universities.

The research adopts a comparative qualitative policy analysis, based on an examination of national and supranational regulatory texts governing AI in higher education in Italy, the Netherlands and Finland. The cases were selected to reflect different regulatory cultures in the evolving European landscape of AI governance. A comparative perspective allows for the identification of structured translations and differentiated governance logics across different institutional contexts. A structured comparative matrix analyses regulatory architecture,

integration into quality assurance systems, allocation of institutional responsibility, and governance logics underlying AI supervision. Through a systematic qualitative analysis of European and national regulatory documents on AI in higher education, the study identifies patterns of convergence and differentiation.

The comparative analysis highlights three ideal-typical configurations of governance emerging from the different national translations of European AI regulation: a regulatory-integrated model, characterised by formal incorporation into quality assurance systems and compliance structures; a trust-based capacity model, based on professional autonomy and improvement-oriented supervision; and a fragmented-transitional model, marked by partial alignments and uneven institutional integration. This comparative typology constitutes the main contribution of the work, offering an analytically grounded framework for understanding how AI governance restructures institutional accountability in European higher education and reshapes the public identity of universities in evolving accountability regimes.

Aliya Makhmutova  
University of Vienna, Austria

### **Shadow Interactions with GenAI: Negotiating Epistemic Authority and Control in the Age of Generative AI**

While universities are trying to exert control over students' use of GenAI, a parallel and often invisible learning ecology is emerging among students. This study employs a Constructivist Grounded Theory Ethnography to analyze how students in two distinct settings – Austria and Kazakhstan – use Large Language Models in everyday learning while navigating knowledge construction and agentic uncertainties introduced by GenAI. The main ethnographic data derives from students' authentic conversations with GenAI for university learning alongside intensive interviews to capture the meaning-making processes of students' interactions with the machine. Addressing the Working Group's inquiry into how learning is controlled, preliminary ethnographic data from Austria reveals a profound tension between institutional attempts at regulation and students' decision-making. "AI-proof" assessments, AI declaration requirements, and surveillance are often met with students' subversive compliance. The ambiguity of AI detection has created ironic situations where professors praise the "authenticity" of texts that were, in fact, AI-assisted. Consequently, students are actively redefining the boundaries of academic labor, differentiating "cognitive input" from "textual output" and utilizing AI as a "pre-supervisor filter" that destabilizes traditional pedagogical hierarchies.

Furthermore, students are in the process of readjusting their moral compass to align with the new learning settings that AI has provided: never blindly "copy-paste" is the main rule for most students, with many of them engaging in complex "hybridization" strategies to maintain psychological ownership over automated content. Ultimately, the study argues that these "shadow" interactions constitute not simply academic misconduct, but represent a fundamental shift in learning processes, which in turn calls for a re-evaluation of the university's structure, control mechanisms, and role in knowledge validation. Data collection in Austria is complete (n=18); data collection in Kazakhstan is ongoing, and comparative preliminary findings will be presented at the conference.

*Ricardo Lozano*

### **From Academic Policing to Social Justice: Revisiting Education as a Human Right in the Age of AI**

Education is widely understood as the ultimate engine for social mobility and economic development. In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights first articulated this vision, stipulating that education should be a free right designed to promote the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of fundamental freedoms. However, this ideal exists within a fragile ecosystem. Despite its critical role in fostering social cohesion and stability, over 200 million children remain out of school worldwide, leaving this promise quietly unfulfilled.

As Artificial Intelligence permeates the educational landscape, it introduces the profound realization that AI does not merely create new disruptions, but exposes and magnifies pre-existing fractures in societal integrity and social justice. In this light, the AI crisis in education must not be merely understood as a challenge of modernity, but as a reflection of a longstanding deficit of integrity within our broader social structures.

The challenge addressed by this conceptual piece is twofold. First is the institutional struggle: the immediate pressure on higher education to regulate AI for academic purposes. Second, and far more critical, is the structural challenge: a profound lack of awareness regarding the intentionally built-in biases of algorithms designed to manipulate unsuspecting consumers. When these biased systems enter the classroom, they transcend their role as simple tools and transform into a new frontier of social injustice.

By analyzing the intersection of algorithmic bias and the fundamental right to education, this study explores whether AI serves as a tool for democratic expansion or a mechanism for further exclusion. The study concludes that the real threat is not the student's use of technology, but the invisible manipulation of the learner. To protect the future of education, we must move beyond academic policing, and address the systemic biases that threaten to turn our greatest promoter of growth into an entrenched mechanism for exclusion.

*Ece Cihan Ertem*

*University of Vienna, Austria*

### **Beyond Internationalisation: Crisis-Driven Academic Migrants and Their Impact on Learning Processes in Austrian Universities**

In the early twenty-first century, internationalisation and academic mobility have become defining concepts shaping European higher education policies (Jin and Cortazzi, 2012; Kashima and Loh, 2006). Universities are increasingly expected to compete in a global market for students and staff (Hill and Kumar, 2012; Shore and Wright, 2015), while presenting themselves as open and diverse institutions (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004; Giroux, 2015). Yet these developments unfold against a backdrop of geopolitical crises, democratic backsliding, and the erosion of academic freedom worldwide (Ruth, Johnson, and Schrecker, 2024; Scholars at Risk, 2024). Existing research has largely conceptualised academic migration as voluntary and career-driven, with much of the literature concentrating on macro-level outcomes and student mobility rather than on the experiences of academic staff themselves (Carroll and Ryan, 2005; Jin and Cortazzi, 2012; Kashima and Loh, 2006; Larsen, 2016; Vavrus and Pekol, 2015). This orientation has overlooked a growing group of academics whose mobility is shaped by crisis rather than choice.

This paper examines the experiences of crisis-driven academic migrants in Austrian higher education, specifically those who migrated due to wars, authoritarianism, or targeted threats to academic freedom between 2015 and 2025. Austria represents a particularly instructive case since internationalisation has been explicitly defined as a strategic priority in the National Higher Education Mobility and Internationalisation Strategy 2020–2030 (BMBWF, 2020; Mandl et al., 2021) and research universities such as the University of Vienna illustrate this intensity, with international academics comprising approximately 50 percent of active academic staff (University of Vienna, 2023).

Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of informational capital (Bourdieu, 1987, 1998) and an intersectional analytical framework (Sang and Calvard, 2019; Dy, Marlow, and Martin, 2017), the study investigates how gender and ethnicity shape recruitment, workplace integration, and career trajectories within Austrian academic institutions commonly perceived as egalitarian. The qualitative research design combines institutional document analysis, expert interviews with internationalisation and HR staff, and in-depth narrative interviews with crisis-driven academic migrants in the social sciences and humanities.

The paper argues that significant gaps exist between universities' formal internationalisation commitments and their actual implementation under crisis conditions. Crisis-driven academic migrants occupy a particularly revealing position from which to examine existing internationalisation policies and contribute to the “learning ecology” of universities. Their trajectories and contributions deconstruct universities’ internationalisation and diversity policies when recruitment is entangled with urgent protection needs, precarious legal statuses, contested public narratives about migration, and macro neo-national tendencies. By foregrounding these perspectives, the paper contributes to ongoing debates on academic migration, epistemic justice, learning processes, and academic freedom amid contemporary global challenges.

*Nafsika Alexiadou*  
*Umeå University, Sweden*

### **Geopolitical tensions and Higher Education: (re)defining internationalisation and academic mobility in Sweden**

This presentation examines recent shifts in Swedish higher education discourses (HE) and practices around internationalisation, emerging in response to rising geopolitical and security concerns. These shifts have generated policies that (subtly) redefine the internationalisation ambitions at the national level, as well as the mobility experiences of certain groups of academics. The presentation has two aims. First, it offers a critical analysis of the broader geopolitical landscape, situating European HE policy developments alongside national policy changes in Sweden and their implications for universities. Second, drawing on extensive qualitative research, it explores how these dynamics influence academic identities, with particular attention to academic mobility. The findings shed light on how individual academics navigate their careers under increasingly challenging conditions, underscoring the importance of linking personal experiences and perceptions to system-level policies and discourses in HE.

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### **Between Complicity and Resistance: Higher Education Reform and Academic Community Responses in Georgia amid Authoritarian Resurgence**

Georgia's higher education reform, announced in October 2025, unfolds against a backdrop of accelerating democratic backsliding and intensifying state control over public institutions. Officially framed around quality enhancement, the reform's implementation reveals a fundamentally different agenda. This paper investigates the gap between declared objectives and concrete policy steps—the centralization of governance, isolation from international academic networks, and disposal of institutional assets—exposing how reform rhetoric obscures a calculated political project. It further examines the dilemma facing academic communities: whether to sustain an already-disrupted educational process or seek alternative forms of practice and resistance.

Theoretically, the paper draws on scholarship examining how the convergence of authoritarian and neoliberal politics constricts academic space, deploying nationalist-populist discourse as ideological cover for repressive policy (Giroux, 2018; Jafarova, 2025). To theorize academic responses, the study mobilizes Hirschman's (1972) tripartite framework of exit, voice, and loyalty. Rather than discrete choices, Georgian academics adopt unstable, overlapping configurations of all three—reactive and improvised—each carrying significant personal and structural costs. Gramsci's (1971) distinction between the war of position and war of maneuver offers a further analytical lever; yet it risks becoming a legitimating fiction when loyalty is performed as voice and where the horizon for long-term resistance may not exist.

The study employs an ethnographic design grounded in the researchers' direct engagement with the reform as it unfolds. Data sources include policy documents, ministerial statements, legislative proposals, and in-depth interviews with university leadership, academic staff, and students.

The findings reveal that the reform advances its political agenda along three axes: expanding direct state control over universities, reducing and reallocating public resources, and targeting the most vocal academic institutions. A deliberate fragmentation of implementation—in which institutions receive instructions sequentially, without access to the overarching plan—generates uncertainty, limits institutional capacity, and functions as a governance strategy to suppress coordinated resistance. Within public discourse, the reform has been characterized as a "war against intellectualism" and an "intellectual occupation." In response, segments of the academic community are engaging in collective mobilization and the creation of alternative educational spaces, while others opt for loyalty as survival, reflecting broader global patterns of academic life under authoritarian pressure.

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### **Technocolonialism in Higher Education: A Comparative Analysis of China's and the U.S.'s Policies and Initiatives (2021-2025)**

This study conducts a comparative empirical analysis of the phenomenon of "technocolonialism" in China's and the U.S.'s higher education over the past five years (2021-2025). It examines the manifestations, characteristics and impacts of technocolonialism in the

two countries' higher education policies and initiatives, explores their differences and commonalities, and puts forward targeted suggestions for resisting technocolonial pressures and promoting higher education transformation, in response to the "learnification" critique and the instrumentalisation of education. The study adopts a critical lens on technocolonialism as its core theoretical framework, focusing on how technological rationality colonises higher education goals, practices and policies. Adopting a comparative policy content analysis approach, the study systematically sorts out, codes and compares China's and the U.S.'s higher education policies and initiatives over the past five years (2021-2025), focusing on policy texts related to technological application, digital transformation, scientific and technological achievement transformation, and academic research supervision. It empirically examines the manifestation and influence of technocolonialism in both countries' higher education practice, and explores effective paths to resist technocolonialism and promote educational transformation. The core data sources are official higher education policy documents of China and the U.S. over the past five years (2021-2025). For China, the sources include key documents such as the Education Power Construction Plan Outline (2024—2035), the "14th Five-Year Plan" for Technological Factor Market Special Planning, and relevant policies issued by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Technology. For the U.S., the sources include executive orders on higher education (e.g., orders on scientific research supervision and campus ideology regulation), policies on federal research funding adjustment, and relevant initiatives from the Department of Education and National Science Foundation. These policy texts are used as empirical evidence to compare the penetration of technocolonial logic and the space for resisting such logic in both countries. Preliminary empirical results show that both China and the U.S. have shown obvious technological instrumentalism tendencies in their higher education policies over the past five years, reflecting technocolonial characteristics. China focuses on technological integration and achievement transformation to support national development, while the U.S. presents a technonationalist orientation with strengthened research supervision and talent flow restrictions under conservatism. The study concludes that emphasising holistic human development and balanced educational goals can effectively resist technocolonialism. Against the backdrop of Sino-U.S. competition, this study helps to deepen the understanding of the interaction between great power competition and higher education transformation, and provides insights for avoiding the alienation of higher education into a tool of technological and geopolitical competition.

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### **Greek universities and Erasmus+ student mobility**

Lesjak et al. (2015) have highlighted a number of factors that pose a significant impact on Erasmus+ student mobility. These factors include the size of the country, the cost of living, geographical distance, the educational background of the population, the quality of the universities, the language of the host country, and the climate. Conversely, credit mobility exhibits distinctly divergent patterns. The number of incoming and outgoing Erasmus+ students indicates that credit mobility is based on reciprocity. It is important to note that, despite the financial support provided by the EU and other bodies, differences in living costs and

geographical distance remain significant factors in explaining Erasmus+ mobility patterns. The Erasmus+ student mobility programme appears to favour Mediterranean countries, which are renowned for their temperate climate. However, when the size of the higher education institutions (HEIs) is taken into consideration, ETER data show a much higher level of credit mobility in Spain, followed by Ireland and some Scandinavian countries (especially Finland and Sweden). In any case, the factors influencing students' decisions to continue their academic studies in foreign countries may be found within the geographical boundaries of their respective countries of origin—push factors. Pull factors are defined as factors that operate within the host country, thereby rendering it comparatively more attractive than other potential destinations. It is the combination of both forces that ultimately explains student mobility, whether at the international level or within the Erasmus+ programme (González et al., 2011).

The present paper seeks to shed light on the patterns of student exchanges towards and from the Greek universities (incoming & outgoing mobility). The present study draws on official EU mobility data (<https://data.europa.eu/>) and corresponding data from ETER ([www.eter-project.com](http://www.eter-project.com)) for the years 2014-2022, with the aim of presenting the numbers and patterns of incoming and outgoing mobility involving Greek universities, in order to understand their relations.

Relevant data complement the extant body of literature on Erasmus+ student mobility, specifically the part concerning policies and practices pertaining to student mobility.

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### **Enhancing Equity in Student Support: Addressing SEND Disclosure Gaps Among International Students in UK Higher Education**

Contemporary higher education policy across Europe increasingly frames inclusion, wellbeing, and disability support through individualised models of learning, self-disclosure, and personal responsibility. While such approaches are often presented as equitable and student-centred, research suggests that they risk reproducing exclusion when they rely on culturally narrow assumptions about autonomy, agency, and help-seeking (Tavares, 2024; Liasidou & Gregoriou, 2024). This study examines how these dynamics unfold in relation to SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and mental-health disclosure among international students in UK higher education, a group that remains significantly under-represented in disclosure statistics despite growing participation in the sector (Advance HE, 2023; HESA, 2024).

Drawing on an ongoing qualitative study conducted at a UK university and its associated International College, the study explores international students' lived experiences of navigating disclosure processes, alongside institutional perspectives on student support provision. Data are being generated through semi-structured interviews with international students and focus groups with professional services and academic staff involved in student support. The analysis foregrounds how dominant “worlds of learning” within the university privilege particular ways of being a learner articulated, self-advocating, and procedurally literate; while marginalising students whose cultural, linguistic, or educational histories shape different relationships to disclosure, authority, and support (Glass, Heng, & Hou, 2022).

The study argues that SEND disclosure operates not simply as an administrative act but as a culturally situated practice embedded within neoliberal logics of responsabilisation and learnification. Recent sector research highlights how inconsistencies in institutional communication, delayed support, and unclear disclosure pathways disproportionately affect international and postgraduate students (Evans, 2025). In this context, equity initiatives that emphasise individual disclosure without interrogating institutional epistemologies risk reinforcing deficit framings of international students rather than challenging structural barriers (Price, 2025; Office for Students, 2023). By situating SEND disclosure within broader comparative debates about learning, inclusion, and the social role of the university, the study contributes to CESE discussions on how educational futures might move beyond instrumentalised notions of learning towards more relational, dialogic, and culturally responsive forms of student support, aligned with global commitments to inclusive and equitable education (UNESCO, 2016).

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*University of Bath, UK*

### **Between Clarity and Entrapment: University Transition Experiences of County High School Students in Jiangsu, China**

China's 1999 higher education expansion dramatically increased university enrolment, yet the institutions that absorbed this growth were not designed to support students from working-class and farming backgrounds. This policy shift created a structural paradox: county youth now had access to universities, but universities had little provision for the transition difficulties these students would face. It is within this context that a striking pattern emerged from my interviews with 36 young people: students who could clearly articulate their difficulties were not necessarily those who overcame them. A PhD student at a top Chinese university described academic drinking culture as a "compliance test", yet his response was not resistance but more precise compliance. A young teacher knew her current life "isn't what I want every day", yet she gave up three master's offers because they were "too far" from home. These students were not confused; they saw their situations with clarity. Yet this clarity did not help them move forward. Why do some students navigate university transitions smoothly while others remain stuck?

To understand this pattern, context about Chinese county high schools is necessary. In China, "county" refers to administrative units below prefecture-level cities, typically smaller towns. County high schools serve students from working-class and farming families through intense exam preparation: students typically arrive at 6:40 AM and leave after 10:00 PM. Following the 1999 expansion, credential inflation emerged as employers began requiring higher qualifications for the same positions (Lin et al., 2024). County youth occupy a unique structural position: they receive enough education to perceive structural constraints clearly, yet often lack the cultural and social capital to change their situations. As Reay, Crozier and Clayton (2009) found in the UK context, working-class students in higher education frequently experience a profound sense of not belonging, navigating institutions built around assumptions that do not reflect their backgrounds. Unlike European contexts where students often have gradual educational choices, some Chinese county students must choose their university major at age 18, often with limited information and heavy family involvement, a policy design that concentrates transition risk at a single moment.

Liminality theory provides a useful lens for understanding these difficulties. The concept, developed by Turner (1969), describes being "betwixt and between", no longer in one's

previous state but not yet in the next. University represents a prolonged liminal period: students have left their county high school identity but have not yet established adult professional identities. Ybema, Beech and Ellis (2011) distinguish between transitional liminality, a temporary "not-X-anymore-and-not-Y-yet" state with an expected endpoint and perpetual liminality, a more lasting "neither-X-nor-Y" condition. However, their analysis focuses on professionals who productively navigate between groups. This study finds a different pattern: when students cannot see achievable endpoints within the institutional pathways available to them, perpetual liminality becomes entrapment rather than flexibility.

The key distinction concerns whether students can see achievable long-term goals within their institutional context. Some students experience transitional liminality: a military academy student Hua describes his experience as "serving a prison sentence", but he knows it ends in four years with guaranteed employment. A first-year student Zhong dislikes his assigned major, but can see concrete institutional options: compete for a major transfer, apply to graduate school, or retake the entrance exam. Other students experience perpetual liminality without clear direction: they remain stuck not because they lack awareness, but because they cannot envision where sustained effort within available institutional pathways might lead.

This difference is not random. Fuller (2014) found that trust in educational institutions is a prerequisite for, rather than a result of, educational engagement. Similarly, this study finds that students who experienced positive feedback in high school, where seeking help led to support, where effort led to results, entered university believing "action works." They look for exits because they expect institutional action to be effective. Some students who experienced the opposite, being humiliated for asking questions, seeing effort lead nowhere entered university believing "action is dangerous." Even when institutional pathways exist, they do not look for them, or do not dare to use them. The same structural position (perpetual liminality) produces different outcomes depending on what beliefs about institutions students bring with them.

#### Methodology

This qualitative study was conducted in Jiangsu Province, China, during the Spring Festival period in February 2024. Jiangsu is an economically developed coastal province whose county high schools are known nationally for intensive exam preparation and high university admission rates.

Participants were recruited through convenience sampling and snowball sampling. The researcher, who has a county high school background in Jiangsu, accessed potential participants through personal social networks, including introductions by relatives and mutual recommendations. Conducting fieldwork during Spring Festival when students and workers return to their hometowns enabled access to participants at different educational stages and in different cities.

The final sample comprised 30 participants (17 male, 13 female), aged 18–29. Participants included current undergraduate students (n=18), current postgraduate students (n=6), and employed graduates (n=6), attending institutions ranging from normal universities to elite 985/211 universities. For in-depth analysis, 8 cases were purposefully selected following the principle of maximum variation (Patton, 2002) to identify the boundary conditions under which different transition outcomes occur.

Data collection used semi-structured interviews lasting 1.5 to 2 hours each. The interview guide covered six thematic areas: family background, university experience, identity and social cognition, academic challenges, future planning, and reflection. Interviews were conducted in Mandarin and transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis employed reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), with particular attention to how institutional contexts, including university structures, policy-shaped pathways, and family expectations, were embedded within participants' accounts. The concept of "perpetual liminality" emerged inductively from noticing that participants with the clearest

understanding of their situations often appeared more deeply stuck rather than better positioned to escape. Cross-case comparison then identified the conditions distinguishing students who transitioned successfully from those who remained trapped.

The research received ethics approval from the University of Bath, UK. All participants provided informed consent and are identified by pseudonyms. The researcher's insider position facilitated cultural understanding, while reflexive practices including journaling addressed potential bias.

#### Conclusions

The central finding is that all participants could analyse their situations clearly, yet many chose what they themselves described as unsatisfactory options.

The study identifies four patterns of response to perpetual liminality. First, precise compliance: a PhD student saw through academic drinking culture as a "compliance test," then complied more precisely. Second, cognitive restructuring: a teacher who gave up three graduate offers reframed her situation as "learning to love myself." Third, anticipatory withdrawal: a graduate prepared for exams with minimal investment because "I won't pass anyway", then indeed failed. Fourth, action inefficacy: a master's student successfully changed supervisors after conflict, but still described his industry as "declining", winning one battle did not change his structural position.

A key finding concerns how the same institutional opportunity produces different outcomes. Three students all successfully transferred majors in their first year. One described it as "achieving my first small goal" and went on to plan graduate school. Another said "it was fine" and five years later reported "I don't know what I'm doing." A third had her preferences overridden by parents and reframed it as a "shared family goal." The difference lay not in the institutional opportunity itself, but in whether students experienced the transfer as their own agentic action, a finding that points to the limits of assuming that expanding access to university pathways is sufficient to support student transitions.

The theoretical contribution is specifying when perpetual liminality becomes entrapment rather than flexibility. Ybema et al. (2011) describe perpetual liminality as potentially productive. This study finds it becomes entrapment under two conditions: when students cannot see achievable endpoints within available institutional pathways, and when prior experiences have taught them that "action is dangerous." Under these conditions, reflective capacity is redirected from planning escape to designing adaptation. For universities and policymakers, this suggests that supporting county students requires more than providing formal pathways, it requires attending to whether students believe those pathways are available to them.

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### **What Students with Disability Need to Succeed in Higher Education: Teacher's Perspectives**

What Students with Disability Need to Succeed in Higher Education: Teacher's Perspectives  
Background: Students with intellectual disability remain underrepresented in Higher Education (HE) institutions in Saudi Arabia despite ongoing efforts to enhance educational opportunities for them.

Method: This qualitative study investigates the perspectives of twelve special education teachers from fifteen examines the perspectives of 12 special education teachers from 12 high schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, using thematic analysis of data collected from semi-structured interviews.

Results: The findings highlight three essential factors for supporting students with intellectual disability in HE: (1) the development of inclusive programs that accommodate varying learning levels, (2) the creation of supportive learning environments fostering both academic and social inclusion, and (3) targeted skills training to help students overcome academic challenges.

Conclusions: To promote success for students with intellectual disability in HE, personalized transition programs, university collaborations, and adaptable, inclusive courses and environments are essential. Future research should focus on the perspectives of policymakers, administrators, and students and evaluate the long-term impact of inclusion programs.

Keywords: Intellectual Disabilities; Higher Education; High School; Inclusion

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### **Institutional Contexts and Youth Career Paths: Longitudinal Evidence from Russian Higher Education**

Career decision-making is shaped by both individual and institutional factors. In stratified higher education systems, selective universities often provide labor market advantages – higher earnings or access to prestigious employers – due to their reputational capital and embedded cultural norms (Binder, Davies & Bloom, 2016). Yet, we still lack an in-depth understanding of how these advantages form and how they influence youth transitions to work over time (Mayhew et al., 2016).

This study explores how institutional contexts – specifically selective vs. non-selective universities – shape career aspirations, perceived employability, and actual career transitions among young adults in Russia. Drawing on longitudinal qualitative data, we compare how students from different institutional settings internalize, navigate, and respond to structural inequalities in higher education.

In the first wave, based on 44 in-depth interviews with economics and management students, we find that despite relatively similar socioeconomic backgrounds, students experience different levels of uncertainty and preparedness. Those attending elite universities develop broader occupational expectations and demonstrate greater self-efficacy, partly due to access to institutional resources, professional culture, and social networks. Students at non-elite universities focus on technical skills, underestimate the university's reputational capital, are poorly informed about the "rules of the game," and are passive in utilizing the institution's career services.

Currently in its second phase, the study follows the same participants three years after graduation to examine how their career aspirations align with actual trajectories. This approach illuminates how institutional environments influence youth transitions and strategies in navigating the early career phase under conditions of labor market uncertainty.

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### **Universities as Institutional Contexts of Career Expectations in Russia: Longitudinal Evidence from Selective Institutions**

Despite the recognized role of universities in preparing students for the labor market (Clarke, 2018), little is known about how university experiences shape early career expectations, a key determinant of subsequent educational and occupational trajectories (Arcidiacono et al., 2020). Drawing on social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1994), this study investigates the formation of students' career perceptions, operationalized as confidence in obtaining employment and clarity about the intended field of work. We examine both individual attributes – gender, social background, and work experience – and multidimensional university experiences, encompassing academic engagement, faculty interactions, peer discussions, and extracurricular participation (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Previous research has largely focused on isolated career programs (Williams et al., 2022; Jackson et al., 2024) or specific cultural framing of university environment (Binder et al., 2016), neglecting the integrated influence of institutional, social, and curricular dimensions on career expectations.

Using longitudinal data from 300 students across four selective Russian universities, regression analyses show that academically and professionally oriented activities – including peer discussions, diligent coursework, and participation in science or arts projects – significantly enhance career confidence and choice certainty. In contrast, broad socio-demographic characteristics and non-targeted extracurricular participation exhibit negligible effects.

These findings advance understanding of how universities function as institutional contexts shaping students' perceived professional horizons and demonstrate the importance of embedding academic, social, and professional development opportunities into higher education curricula.

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### **“Oh my God, there’s something really wrong and I don’t quite understand it.” Stigmatization and Recognition of Jewish Faculty in Canadian Higher Education**

This paper examines the experiences of Jewish faculty in Canadian higher education after the Hamas attacks on Israel on October 7, 2023. While Canadian universities publicly commit to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), the findings show that Jewish academics occupy an ambiguous position within these frameworks. Drawing on Lamont's concepts of stigmatization, recognition, and cultural membership, the study analyzes survey data from 120 Jewish faculty and interviews with 51 participants to trace how stigmatization unfolds across five interconnected layers: spatial, policy, cultural, interpersonal, and personal. Participants reported a sharp deterioration in physical and emotional safety; limited institutional recognition of antisemitism within EDI policies; informal cultural boundaries that delegitimized Jewish

perspectives; ruptured collegial relationships; and a profound loss of belonging unless they disavowed parts of their identity. A central mechanism of stigmatization was the rise of anti-Zionism as a cultural repertoire, which positioned Jews outside the boundaries of care, reflecting a recognition gap. Addressing this gap requires revising EDI frameworks, providing nuanced education about Jewish identity, and cultivating a capacity to see the human before the frame.

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### **High-Skilled Mobile Academics in Higher Education Internationalisation and EDI: A Comparative Study of South Korea and the UK**

In a time when talent is a valuable geopolitical economic currency, this paper considers the lives of high-skilled mobile academics in South Korea and the UK. Using biographical narrative analyses, it explores how they form their academic subjectivities and contribute to knowledge production amid political polarisation, neo-nationalism, and increasing institutional competition for scientometrics-based ‘excellence’. It analyses the interplay between individual agency and institutional strategies for international impacts on global rankings and academic homogeneity as an unintended consequence. It discusses how the global ranking business is influential in forming transnational identity capital (Kim, 2017) and ‘Matthew effects’, a phenomenon where those who are already successful receive disproportionately greater advantages as scholars and institutions. Additionally, it reveals the interface between internationalisation and EDI in higher education to attract and retain global talent amid increasingly volatile international relations.

## Working Group 4

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### **Neoliberalism, Community Activism, and School Based Curriculum**

**Purpose of the Study.** This study delineates the process of curriculum development of a school-based curriculum for an alternative primary school program in marginalized communities. The study outlines four phases of the curriculum development process, and the ideologies and activities that drove and shaped each phase of the process.

**Theoretical Framework.** Discussions about the effects of neoliberalism on curriculum reforms employ western theorization where the link between curriculum reforms and neoliberalism tends to focus on government policies and control of national curriculum and testing to match corporate needs, free-market, and marketization ideologies. Western frameworks do little to contextualize how neoliberalism energizes local communities to advocate for contextualized school curriculum reforms. One can argue that in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) grassroots activism for curriculum reforms is an effect of education neoliberalism where local education

beneficiaries demand that school-based curriculum must align curriculum to children's life experiences and environment. From neoliberal analysis, school-based curriculum reforms provide curriculum freedom to schools and teachers. The involvement of local community actors such as opinion leaders, parents, teachers, NGOs, religious institutions, and even students, highlights the importance of context-specific education that reflects the unique challenges and opportunities of different regions.

*Modes of Inquiry.* This study employed qualitative study using individual and focused group interviews, combined with extensive classroom observations of different subjects, participant observations, and extensive analysis of curriculum and curriculum-related documents.

*Findings.* I highlight four key findings in the study. First, curriculum development of this school-based curriculum deviates from the "technical" approach highlighted in curriculum literature and incorporates an organic approach the stakeholders believed addresses the learning needs of children from marginalized communities. Second, the process is political and not dictated by neoliberal ideologies or government policy initiatives but solely based on what the communities believed to be relevant and important for addressing their children's socioeconomic and sociocultural needs. Third, the curriculum development process empowered community members to determine the content their children learn. Fourth, the process reveals that context is important as community members were determined to provide curriculum content that reflects their context and cultural values.

*Conclusion.* How might education bureaucrats contextualize curriculum to reflect the backgrounds of communities that are socially, culturally, economically, and politically marginalized? What aspects of the local cultures should education experts affirm or discard in the schooling process to affirm marginalized communities' sense of identity while enabling learners to become part of the global community?

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### **Recontextualising 'Learning': Construction of Marginalised Learners in Public Schools in Delhi, India**

Several studies have critically analysed the neoliberal turn in education and the new discursive regime of educational ideas aimed at improving school efficiency through market-oriented pedagogical approaches. These set of reforms are part of the aim to improve 'quality' of schools, with emphasis on the development of indicators and measures of quality, particularly in terms of input and outputs to measure effectiveness of schooling through learning outcomes. However, there is a lack of empirical evidence to suggest that standardisation and homogenisation can reduce social inequalities. In fact, such a conceptualisation of education focused on standardised testing can lead to the reproduction of inequalities, as those with cultural and economic capital can adapt to the situation more quickly. Assessments can further affirm and naturalise the "lower" abilities of the schools, like in India, where surveys have repeatedly implied that better learning takes place in private than government schools and can also reduce instruction and curriculum to the matters which are tested. By following this line of inquiry, the paper aims to understand how the neoliberal conceptualisations of education as outcomes, focused on measurability and standardisation, work alongside notions of caste/class to construct 'learning' in government schools and marginalised 'learners'.

This paper uses Basil Bernstein's concept of 'pedagogic device' to frame the movement of neoliberal discourses from the economic and political field, to the school, to understand how discourses are recontextualised in schools by actors (teachers), in their intersection with the

cultural beliefs and class/caste structures. The focus of the paper remains on the ‘recontextualisation’ of discourses and of teachers, wherein educational ideas of accountability, measurability and policy discourses become embedded with the prevalent discourses of government schools, and reaffirm cultural beliefs about marginalised students’ capabilities, their educational trajectory and the relevance of language, skills and knowledge for them.

This paper is drawn from ethnographic studies conducted over seven months in two government schools in Delhi, India, with a focus on the primary section, using participant observation and semi-structured interviews with teachers. The findings reveal that neoliberal discourses, alongside ‘deficit’ beliefs about marginalised learners, contributed to a narrowed perception of learning among the teachers and created a low-expectation environment in which the emphasis was on teaching to test. The teacher's perception of learning and what type of learners marginalised students can be, was concomitantly shaped by cultural beliefs about education, notions around social identity and the institutional norms.

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### **Montessori as a travelling pedagogy: Negotiating fidelity and local hybridisations across contexts through the boundary case of symbolic play**

More than a century after its emergence, Montessori education has become one of the most widely disseminated pedagogical approaches in early childhood education worldwide. Yet its longevity and global diffusion have produced a paradox: while “Montessori” continues to denote a coherent pedagogical identity, classroom practice increasingly varies across countries, training traditions, and educational cultures. Building on Low’s notion of pedagogy as a “travelling” formation (Low, 2022), this paper conceptualises Montessori as a travelling pedagogy that circulates not only people-to-people and place-to-place, but also time-to-time, accumulating reinterpretations as it is recontextualised across successive historical moments.

Drawing on comparative education scholarship on policy borrowing and educational transfer (Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012) and on the vernacularisation of global education policy (Weninger, 2017), the paper argues that long-standing pedagogical approaches tend to evolve from unified methods into plural epistemic traditions, shaped by cultural, epistemic, and material constraints. As they become embedded in different national systems and professional communities, tensions emerge between fidelity claims and local hybridisations. Montessori is a particularly revealing case, given the strength of its canonical texts, certain theoretical ambiguities, the diversity of training institutions, and the absence of a single global authority capable of defining stable legitimate practice—unlike more centralised pedagogical networks such as those associated with Reggio Emilia (Edwards et al., 2012).

The paper explores these dynamics through the contested status of symbolic play in Montessori early childhood settings (3–6 years). Research on Montessori education has long debated the role of imagination and pretend play within the method (Lillard, 2013; Lupi, 2022), while recent literature and preliminary observations from an ongoing Italy-based study on Montessori early childhood settings suggest significant cross-cultural variation. In some contexts, symbolic play is incorporated and pedagogically legitimised; in others, it is treated as incompatible with core Montessori principles and therefore marginalised. These divergent positions function as boundary markers that reveal deeper epistemological differences concerning the nature of the method and the balance between orthodoxy and adaptation. Symbolic play thus operates as a diagnostic case through which broader processes of negotiation within global Montessori communities can be examined (Gaggioli et al., in press).

By analysing symbolic play as a boundary practice within a travelling pedagogy, the paper proposes that contemporary Montessori education should be understood not as a fixed and unified method, but as a dynamic and negotiated pedagogical tradition shaped by local cultures, institutional histories, and professional epistemic communities. In conclusion, the paper outlines a comparative international research agenda aimed at mapping how Montessori is interpreted and implemented across contexts, and at collaboratively developing shared observational tools and analytic panels to study the transformation of global pedagogical models over time.

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### **Platformisation in Education and the Emergence of Transnational Modes of Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum – Lessons from International projects in eTwinning**

In recent years, a growing body of comparative research on teaching, learning, and didactics has been published (Hudson & Meyer, 2011; Hallizky et al., 2016; Ligozat et al., 2023). Empirical comparative research into classrooms has identified patterns of instructional strategies that differ across countries (e.g., the TIMSS 1995 video study, Stigler et al. 1999)). The research has demonstrated that there are national and cultural differences regarding the conceptualisation of academic knowledge about teaching and their role in teacher education depending on the national and cultural context (cf. Rakhkochkine 2012). Despite the persistent fragmentation among national and regional traditions of teaching and learning, there is a noticeable trend toward the universalization and even standardization of subject-specific didactic approaches and teaching practices. This trend is driven by factors such as international student assessment studies, the processes of lending and borrowing educational practices, globalization in the production of teaching materials, internationalization in teacher education, and international teacher mobility.

One of the recent trends in education, which gained momentum during the COVID-19 pandemic, is platformization. Platforms have impacted many spheres of economic and social life, and education is no exception. According to Kerssens & Van Dijck (2021), the transformation of educational content, activities, and processes means that they become part of a corporate platform ecosystem, including its economies, data infrastructures, and technical architectures. Global platforms contribute to the commodification, globalization, and privatization of educational provision (Kerssens & Van Dijck, 2023). The platforms seem to have impact on the teacher professionalism by fostering predefined topics and teaching strategies (projectification) (Decuypere & Lewis 2023).

By the example of the European platform eTwinning, this paper explores the research question of how different national and cultural traditions in didactics and curriculum are negotiated and transformed within the transnational virtual spaces of educational platforms: What are the main characteristics of the transnational teaching, learning, and curriculum on eTwinning and how do they develop or are transformed (in collaborative interactions, modified by technical framework of the platform, depending on partner selection etc.)? The first part of the paper presents a theoretical analysis of research into national traditions of teaching, learning, and curriculum from a comparative perspective, with a particular focus on transnational curriculum and didactics, as well as platformization in education. The second part of the paper is based on a small-scale study that make a step beyond the theoretical reflections and explores the possibilities for empirical research by examining collaborative projects in eTwinning. The paper argues that the platform has a standardising impact on the selection of goals and the

content of teaching and learning, the language of instruction and co-operation, the teaching methods and assessment that is related more to the objectives of the projects and less to the national assessment schemes.

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**Mapping Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Competence in the Greek Curricula for Literature in Secondary Education. A methodology for comparing national curricula with European competence frameworks**

The concept of competences comprised of knowledge, skills, and attitudes/dispositions closely linked to then individual's lifelong learning potential was significantly reinforced by the EU Council Recommendation on the eight key competences for lifelong learning (2006 & 2018). Among these key competences is, as expected, the ability to learn how to learn, which in the updated wording (Council of the EU, 2018) is part of the personal, social, and learning to learn competence. At the same time, over the last decade, the European Joint Research Centre has developed competence frameworks for a number of key competences, including personal, social, and learning to learn competence, which is analyzed in the LifeComp framework (2020).

Given that a. in the context of international educational governance, European educational discourse plays a decisive role in shaping and converging national education policies, b. the development of lifelong learning subjects is an evolving and significant goal of initial education, c. key competencies are expected to have been developed by the end of compulsory education, and d. students in Departments of Educational have shown particular interest in developing personal, social, and metacognitive skills in the subject of literature (Samara 2025), our paper aims to map Personal, Social, and Learning to learn competence in the new Literature curricula for lower and upper Secondary Education, developed by the greek Institute for Educational Policy. Thereby, we seek to provide a clear picture of the extent to which the curricula for Literature incorporate the contemporary European discourse on competencies, particularly regarding the learning to learn competence, thus aiming to develop future lifelong learning individuals.

Methodologically, we use content analysis, drawing on relevant studies (see World Bank 2024) and specializing in the LifeComp framework. We develop a solid methodology for mapping personal, social and learning to learn competence in national curricula, that can also have a scaling potential for the mapping of other national curricula, or possibly for the mapping of other key competencies. The results of our study highlight specific aspects of the lower and upper secondary School Literature curriculum and can be useful to educators and education researchers, while at the same time we seek to contribute to the academic dialogue on competencies in Greek education.

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### **Thinking pedagogies ‘otherwise’: a multicultural and multilingual toolkit for teaching and learning research methods, through staff-student partnerships**

A range of literature has highlighted that research methods are particularly difficult to teach, with little consensus of what constitutes best practice (Wagner, Garner and Kawulich, 2011). Nind & Lewthwaite, for example, find that “historically the teaching of research methods has received little pedagogic attention” (2018, p. 398). More recent work has highlighted the emotional burden that this places on students (Nind et al., 2019), a lack of evidence on what constitutes ‘effective’ pedagogical approaches (Nind & Lewthwaite, 2018), and the need for recognition of and engagement with decolonising approaches and epistemologies of the South (Class, 2023; Escobar, 2019). Situated within a burgeoning set of work within the decolonial field that focuses on pedagogy, this paper engages with questions not just of what but how we teach (Laing, 2021; Arday, Zoe Belluigi and Thomas, 2021; Millner, 2023; Torres-Olave, Avraamidou and Moura, 2025), in embodied, empathetic, entangled, relational and imaginative ways. Against critiques of these approaches as ‘soft’, we draw on critical pedagogical perspectives that reclaim the emotional and highlight the political, emphasizing the importance of attendance to asymmetrical power structures and their transformation (hooks, 1994; Freire, 1970).

In response to these related concerns, this paper will share the emerging draft of a multicultural and multilingual toolkit that aims to ‘think otherwise’ (Fúnez-Flores, 2022) about critical pedagogies for research methods within higher education (Murrey, 2023). The toolkit draws on a series of qualitative and participatory research activities conducted with internationalised students and educators in the field of sustainability, including semi-structured interviews, listening rooms and reflexive anonymous letters, as well as two participatory workshops with artists to co-create meaning across language, and hold space for alternative and contextually grounded ways of approaching research methods pedagogy. Conducted inter-linguistically in languages spoken by the research team, and inspired by Tuhiwai Smith’s insights that research is “one of the dirtiest words” (Smith, p.1), our approach draws on arguments that language profoundly shapes our culture, histories, identities and learning in both subtle and structural ways (Ngũgĩ, 1986; Mei, 2024). Both the toolkit itself, and our presentation of it, will include critical reflection around our own positionalities in relation to this work (Gani & Khan, 2024), and our shared process of making meaning in staff-student partnerships (Bovill, 2019), with key principles of empathy and socio-cultural exchange at the heart of our research encounters.

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### **Competition and Collaboration: A Qualitative Inquiry into the Influence Mechanism of Peer Relationships on Adolescents’ Achievement Motivation**

1 Purpose. This qualitative study investigates the characteristics, formation, and maintenance of study partner relationships among adolescents, and examines how these relationships influence their achievement motivation. Grounded in a social-constructivist perspective and

drawing on theories such as Self-Determination Theory and Social Comparison Theory, the study addresses two core research questions: (1) How do adolescents understand and describe the characteristics, formation, and maintenance of their study partner relationships? and (2) Through what specific situations and psychological processes do these relationships affect their achievement motivation?

2. Design. A qualitative research design was employed, using semi-structured online interviews with five adolescents from international or similar educational settings. Interviews lasted 30–60 minutes and were transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify patterns related to collaboration, competition, emotional support, self-efficacy, belonging, and goal orientation.

3. Findings. The study partner relationships are characterized by a dynamic interplay between collaboration and competition. Collaboration manifests in tutoring, knowledge complementarity, and emotional support, while competition involves academic comparison, progress monitoring, and self-improvement drives. Relationships typically emerge from pre-existing friendships, seating proximity, or shared extracurricular activities rather than purely academic needs. Maintenance is sustained through shared goals, mutual encouragement, and healthy rivalry. Motivation is influenced through three pathways:

- Academic collaboration enhances self-efficacy and behavioral persistence. Participants reported increased confidence and direct experience of success through partner-supported learning.
- Social comparison and competition elicit dual effects: healthy competition fosters performance-approach goals, while mismatched competition triggers performance-avoidance goals and anxiety.
- Emotional support and companionship fulfill relatedness needs, reduce learning isolation, and enhance intrinsic motivation by transforming studying into a shared, emotionally secure experience.

Notably, the study also revealed that excessively close partnerships may lead to social fatigue and cognitive resource depletion, highlighting a potential downside of intense peer ties.

4. Value. Theoretical implications align with Social Cognitive Theory (learning through observation and feedback), Self-Determination Theory (satisfaction of autonomy, competence, and relatedness), and goal orientation frameworks. Practically, the study suggests that educators should facilitate study partnerships through structured collaborative activities; parents should provide emotional support while avoiding comparative remarks; and students should cultivate partnerships based on shared improvement goals and open communication. This study contributes to understanding how informal peer learning relationships operate as complex motivational systems, offering nuanced insights for educational practice and adolescent development research.

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### **Learning and chance – action research for socially vulnerable young people’s transition from school to education or jobs**

The transition of young people from school to vocational training or paid work is an issue that has been discussed for years by politicians, labour market organisations, companies, educational researchers, teachers, and more.

The project, from which the article presents results, dealt with the transition problem for socially vulnerable young people in preparatory basic education. The aim of the project was to promote the social and professional integration of German and Danish students in preparatory basic education, up to the age of 25, in education or employment. The overall aim of the project was to promote students' personal, professional, social, and intercultural competences, and to broaden students' mobility and experience in the transition to a fully qualifying education or a job.

In the project, there was launched a series of experimental activities in collaboration between students, employers, and others. These included future camps, exchanges, and internships abroad, and events for the development of local communities. The aim was to promote the competence development of socially vulnerable young people through the establishment of democratic learning processes and learning spaces that embraced a sustainable change perspective.

The project was conducted as an action research project in the tradition of critical-utopian action research. Critical action research takes its starting point in societal issues and seeks to solve these together with those affected by the issues in everyday life. The project worked with the problem of young people's transition from a change perspective, where researchers worked together with primarily teachers and students, to create practical knowledge about the issues and work together to find ways to do things better. Basic knowledge in the project was produced in cooperation with Danish and German teachers, students, employers, and more. It was considered crucial to create real opportunities for sustainable change in the transition of (socially disadvantaged) young people from school to vocational education or a paid job.

The project draws on subject-oriented identity and learning theory. Through the project, it was sought to make the subjective, meaning-forming learning and development processes visible in the form of the student's own narratives. Besides, the article will argue for the importance of the student's biographical experiences as central factor in relation to the transition from school to the job market or further vocational education.

## Working Group 5

*John Benedicto Krejsler  
Aarhus University, Denmark*

### **Emerging Multipolar World Challenges to Eurocentrism in Education**

The presentation argues that a fundamental Bildung crisis is emerging with far-reaching consequences for European education. The world is currently undergoing a fundamental geopolitical shift from a Euro-American dominated world order towards a more multipolar world. What in Euro-American thinking and policy development has been seen as 'universalist' models, standards and norms that merited global coverage are being exposed as Euro- or Anglocentric, and increasingly appear as the particular Eurocentric regime of truth of a hegemon in decline (Baker 2012; Bhambra et al., 2018; Boidin et al., 2012; Fleras, 2021; Krejsler, 2025).

A fundamental rethinking of the purpose of education and its content is urgently required. This will be a major challenge for European school and education systems, where national versions of Eurocentric curricula will become more difficult to maintain and justify (Baker 2012; Boidin

et al., 2012; Stricklan & Wang 2023). In short, there is a marked lack of sensitivity to the traditions of thinking that the new geopolitical poles of the near future such as India, China but also Africa and the large diaspora populations represent (Gandhi, 2019).

With inspiration from postcolonial theory the presentation proposes an attitude that is appropriately sensitive in relation to a multipolar world and its many poles (Gandhi 2019; McLeod 2007). Postcolonial thinking has been central to the critique of a hegemonic Western world order, its accompanying monopolization of cultural norms, influence on previously colonized countries, cultures and mentalities (e.g. Chakrabarty, 2000; Morton, 2003).

The exploration of the hypothesis at stake produces troubling questions about whether concepts of 'universalism', 'individual rights', 'democracy' and so forth were really that universal after all (Chakrabarty, 2000; Morrow, 2009). Maybe they should - more modestly - be reconsidered as ideas from a particular cultural sphere that need sincere engagement with other traditions in a more truly cosmopolitan ambition. This - on the other hand - is not in any way an argument for saying that all ideas in all cultures are equally good and worthwhile pursuing here... or maybe not even there! (Baker, 2012; Krejsler, 2025).

In conclusion, the presentation argues for more constructively activist engagement with the Other in a fragile world as a precondition to avoid provincializing otherwise rich European traditions, making them more fit for engagement with the plurality of traditions in a multi-polar world (Bhambra et al., 2018; Krejsler, 2025).

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*Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus-Senftenberg, Germany*

*Felicitas Acosta*

*University of Buenos Aires & National University of General Sarmiento, Argentina*

### **Alternative Epistemologies of Learning: Language–Culture Relations Beyond Binary Framings in Comparative Education**

In the international discourse on comparative education, the topics of "colonialism," "postcolonialism", and "decoloniality" are becoming increasingly significant. These are often epistemological questions connected to the meaning and purpose of comparative studies in education. One question under discussion is whether comparative education is inherently "Eurocentric" and, in this sense, "colonial" in orientation, as evidenced by its neglect of indigenous forms of education and learning.

This presentation examines how current discussions on coloniality challenge the historical foundations of comparative education. The field emerged alongside the global expansion of modern schooling from Europe, and early comparative inquiries were often embedded in processes of observation, borrowing, and reform across national systems shaped by imperial and colonial contexts. Recent scholarship points to enduring epistemic hierarchies in the discipline, visible in dominant theoretical frameworks and publication networks centred in the Global North. At the same time, comparative historical research shows that educational ideas have never circulated in a purely way. In many regions, external models were adapted, contested, and combined with local traditions and political projects. Rather than treating comparative education as either inherently colonial or entirely emancipatory, this perspective highlights the need to analyse layered processes through which educational forms travel, interact, and are reconfigured.

In this sense, examining the modern educational history of indigenous peoples offers a revealing lens for moving beyond binary interpretations. In several contexts, educational practices have emerged that integrate modern institutional schooling with indigenous languages, knowledge, and cultural practices: alongside national (and colonial) languages, indigenous languages are also taught, and alongside school subjects, indigenous myths and cultural practices are discussed and taught. Fundamental to this is the connection between language(s) and culture(s), which was already noted by Wilhelm von Humboldt, one of the traditional references for "modern education". Interestingly, the comparison suggests that Humboldt's theory of education cannot be fully understood without considering the broader relationship among linguistic plurality, culture, and education. This leads to the thesis that, in a certain sense, this is also a modern indigenous educational concept; an insight that can be realised today by examining the educational history of "small" indigenous peoples.

We therefore inquire whether the academic discussions on coloniality/decoloniality, viewed through the lens of modern indigenous educational history, can advance comparative education beyond binary interpretations of colonial imposition versus local resistance. Can comparing languages and cultures within complex (neo-)colonial power structures shed light on the meaning and purpose of learning, education, and schooling?

*Susanne Röss*

*Technical University Berlin, Germany*

### **Perspectivity as practice of irritation in comparative and international research**

Dealing with a plurality of worldviews has been an integral part of comparative and international education. Efforts to recognize marginalized subject positions are at the core of various international and comparative endeavors (Krüger-Potratz & Lutz 2002). Critical race and feminist as well as post-/decolonial perspectives consider epistemic plurality a necessary corrective to current approaches in comparative education (Bulgrin et al. 2025). Such efforts face challenges: they are often delegitimized on epistemological grounds – viewed as ideologically driven identity politics, based merely on experiences [rather than reason], hence not “truly” scientific. Moreover, calls for epistemic plurality often assume that they lead to transformation with (politically) desirable outcomes (e.g., knowledge justice), whereas they also open discursive spaces for antidemocratic perspectives (Drerup 2019). Taking the incommensurability of colonial difference in symbolic and material terms as a starting point, the proposed paper reflects on how comparative research can be sensitive to power-differentiated knowledge systems without reproducing colonial logics of difference (Fritzsche 2021; Silova 2020). By proposing “perspectivity” as “practice of irritation”, it reflects on epistemic plurality as an intertwined social and epistemological phenomenon. The paper develops a notion to re-think/with “difference” and how it is reified (or not) through theoretical and methodological practices in view of historical and epistemological contingencies in educational knowledge production. The aim is to provide a heuristic and/or method that makes moments of irritation (limiting or expanding contingency) palpable (Röss & Costa, under review).

*Aabha Rawat*

*Dr B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi, India*

### **Beyond the dominant discourse: Local literacy practices as hybrid knowledge systems**

In contemporary societies, new technologies of communication are engendering newer ways of meaning-making, connections, interactions, identities, and forms of knowledge production and dissemination. In response to these developments, we are witnessing a global shift in educational policy and pedagogic discourses to accommodate the digitally mediated forms of learning into the established discourse or, in some cases, to redefine the very purposes, structures, and futures of institutionalised education. However, much of the research that informs these global trends originates in Global-North contexts, underscoring the enduring colonial underpinnings of global knowledge economies in shaping which epistemologies and educational priorities come to define dominant notions of learning worldwide. Against this backdrop, through specific attention to India's early literacy policies and curriculum frameworks, the paper foremost unpacks the dominant discourse behind the 'global' and 'digital' push in education in general and literacy in particular. Taking the recent prioritisation of foundational literacy in the Indian educational policy landscape as an example, along with its conceptualisation and pedagogisation, the paper sheds light on the increased convergence around neoliberal logics of standardisation, measurability, and accountability in shaping early literacy agendas. It further juxtaposes policy and curriculum initiatives with ground practices by reporting findings from ethnographic case studies of four grade-one students from a resettlement colony in India who attended a low-fee private school in the vicinity. Data collection for the study involved six months of participant observation in the school, home, and community contexts, and semi-structured interviews with the focal children, their parents, the class teacher, the principal, and the school owner. The findings shed light on how dominant policy discourses manifested in everyday classroom routines, as examined in the local school's operationalisation of literacy pedagogy and epistemology, particularly in relation to much hyped digital literacy practices. The contextual analysis points towards the digital uptake of literacy as a situated resource, shaped by institutional constraints and dominant epistemologies, rather than as inherently empowering or critical tools often suggested in public policy documents. The paper further explores literacy practices in children's everyday contexts to highlight the evolving nature of meaning-making and communicative epistemologies emerging from the dynamic interaction of indigenous knowledge forms and new technologies, resulting in richer, hybrid modes of engagement and learning. The paper concludes by contrasting the epistemic differences between the multimodal literacies of dominant discourse and children's everyday contexts, underscoring acts of agency and 'resistance' against broader structures of inequality and hierarchy that the school-based forms obscured.

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### **Re-claiming space and history: Indigenous women's reparative pedagogies for Peru's history of conflict**

How can we reimagine the education of difficult histories in the present and for the future? This is an urgent question in Peru, which endured a devastating internal armed conflict (1980-2000), claiming 69,000 deaths—75% of whom were Indigenous people. However, state-sanctioned silence has become institutionalised, leading most teachers to omit the subject from their classrooms entirely. In response, Anfasep, a grassroots Indigenous women-led organisation from Ayacucho—the region most affected by the war—has taken on the role of educating communities about this past in their own terms and at the margin of the formal education system.

This paper unpacks three interconnected components of Anfasep's reparative pedagogic work grounded in Indigenous epistemologies: space, storytelling, and histories of resistance. Anfasep's praxis involves 'walking' across Ayacucho, the city from which they were forcibly displaced during the war. They reclaim public sites in the city, making them reparative spaces to share their histories. These spaces intentionally disrupt the dominant rhythm of the city architecture, including a memory museum, a site of commemoration, and the ruins of a former military base. Within them, Anfasep employs diverse storytelling methods— material objects, oral testimonies, and embodied narratives— often blending Spanish and Indigenous languages to share their experiences of both enduring harms and resistance to injustices.

Drawing on theories of reparative justice in education (Sriprakash, 2023) and Indigenous knowledges (Battiste and colleagues, 2000; Sumida Huaman and colleagues, 2014), this paper presents findings from a Participatory Creative Ethnography conducted in Ayacucho. It demonstrates how Anfasep's reparative pedagogies challenge where and how difficult histories can be taught and learned, revealing urban space as both a material and symbolic pedagogical ally in processes of repair. Through reclaiming spaces and the stories shared within them, Anfasep enables communities to build new relationships with Peru's painful past. Learning from Anfasep's work, this paper positions reparative pedagogies as inseparable from the political, epistemic, and spatial work of repair. This inseparability reveals that teaching and learning about this history constitutes work toward survival and the possibility of life.

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### **Spectres of Hiroshima: An autoethnographic analysis of peace education**

This paper explores the politics of childhood through an autoethnographic analysis of the author's experience of peace education in Japan during the 1990s. It aims to recast an apoliticised childhood by uncovering the often-overlooked 'political bits' embedded in the author's childhood memories of peace education and by illustrating how these political dimensions cultivate and reactivate political subjectivity over time. In doing so, the paper contributes to scholarship that challenges the apoliticisation of childhood in formal and informal educational contexts (e.g., Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Qvortrup, 2008). Methodologically, it advances sociomaterial approaches to the study of childhood and politics by demonstrating how such approaches enable analysis of the affective and temporal dimensions through which political subjectivity takes shape.

Positioning Japan's post-war peace education as a form of Memory Pedagogy (Yamana, 2020), this paper presents a case study demonstrating how it contributed to shaping Hiroshima as a site of cultural memory (Assmann, 1995), and to orienting the author towards envisioning a peaceful world free of nuclear threat.

The methodology is informed by key concepts from sociomateriality (e.g., Latour 2005), affect (e.g., Ahmed, 2004, 2010), and hauntology (Derrida, 1994). Conceptualising affect as a force that sustains a 'worknet' (Latour, 2005) across time and space, the analysis demonstrates how cultural memory continues to haunt the present, shaping one's political orientation and actions into adulthood. Drawing on the author's childhood encounters with Japanese comic series Barefoot Gen and experiences in a school trip to Hiroshima, the paper traces how emotions circulate between human and nonhuman entities, forming a worknet consisting of educational aims (e.g., national peace education policies), material objects, bodies, and memories, and consequently, leaving traces in the blueprint of life that continues to shape the author's thoughts and actions in adulthood.

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*University of South Florida, USA*

### **Rethinking learning futures: Exploring Teachers' Pedagogies to Support Roma Students**

**Purpose:** Roma people represent the largest and most marginalized community in the European Union, yet educational inequities persist. In Bulgaria, nearly two-thirds of Roma children aged 6–14 still attend schools exclusively composed of Roma students (European Commission, 2022) and around 18% of Roma children aged 7-15 are not enrolled in school (European Commission, n.d.). Despite national inclusion strategies, there is a notable lack of emphasis on culturally responsive pedagogy in teacher education, leaving teachers ill-prepared to meet the needs of diverse students (Kyuchukov & New, 2016). As Gay highlights (2021), it is crucial for teachers in schools with culturally and linguistically diverse students to have cultural knowledge of their students' experiences, values, and needs. This cultural awareness helps teachers build authentic and trusting relationships with students, leading to increased student engagement and improved achievement (Banks, 2006).

**Theoretical framework:** Guided by the theoretical framework of culturally responsive teaching, the study aimed to contribute to rethinking learning futures by examining how teachers' pedagogies can support equitable educational trajectories for Roma students in segregated urban high schools.

**Methods and data sources:** The study employed exploratory qualitative design using semi-structured interviews with 14 teachers who taught Roma students across diverse subjects. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns and emergent themes.

**Results:** The analysis revealed that teachers developed cultural awareness through informal and voluntary practices, including building trusting relationships with Roma students and their families and sharing strategies with colleagues. Three interrelated themes emerged: fostering trust, implementing culturally responsive teaching practices, and signs of developing critical consciousness. Teachers fostered trust by engaging with families, providing social and emotional support, and understanding students' cultural and socio-economic contexts. Pedagogical strategies included adapting instruction to reflect students' lived experiences and community knowledge, connecting curricula to students' cultural frameworks, and creating inclusive classroom environments. Teachers recognized structural inequities such as poverty and early marriages, particularly affecting girls, but largely viewed school segregation as difficult to address.

**Implications:** This study underscores two critical implications. First, pre-service and in-service training must prepare teachers to develop pedagogies that honor Roma students' minoritized knowledges and lived experiences. Second, structural inequities—including poverty and school segregation—must be addressed at the governmental level to enable equitable education. By centering teachers' practices and relational engagement with Roma students' knowledge worlds, this research advances rethinking learning futures and contributes to scholarship on alternative epistemologies of learning, offering insights for educational justice and inclusion.

*Selai Balkhi*  
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**Feminist Resistance Imaginaries: Heroism, imagination and female self-empowerment  
in contemporary Afghanistan**

This qualitative study examines how women in Afghanistan, across diverse educational and life backgrounds, conceptualize heroism and how imagination operates as a resource for agency under conditions of severe political and social restriction. Drawing on narrative interviews and participant-generated drawings, the study explores women's understandings of strength, responsibility, education, and hope within a context marked by structural exclusion. Guided by feminist, postcolonial, and educational perspectives, the analysis reveals that heroism is not understood as an exceptional or spectacular act, but as an everyday, relational practice grounded in perseverance, care, moral integrity, and the commitment to learning and sustaining hope. Imagination emerges as a central dimension of agency, enabling women to envision alternative futures, maintain a sense of self, and negotiate meaning beyond imposed limitations. Through symbolic and visual expressions, women articulate forms of resistance that are quiet yet politically significant. By foregrounding women's own narratives and images, this study contributes to feminist and postcolonial debates on agency and resistance and demonstrates the epistemic value of visual methodologies for researching subjectivity in contexts of repression.

Working Group 6

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**Countering Populist Discourses through Intercultural Education: The Role of  
Community-Based Engagement in Teacher Education**

The concept of multicultural coexistence has gained increasing attention in educational and social policy debates, raising questions about whether teacher education can contribute to the realization of a multicultural society and the cultivation of global citizens. In Japan, rapid demographic change—characterized by an aging population and declining birthrate—has led to labor shortages and prompted policy shifts toward accepting foreign workers since 2019. As a result, the number of foreign residents has increased in some regions, transforming local communities and schools.

At the same time, the depreciation of the yen has accelerated inbound tourism, contributing to economic activity while also generating challenges such as overtourism, rising prices, and growing visibility of foreign investment in real estate. These developments have intensified public unease, leading some Japanese citizens to perceive foreign residents as a source of social and economic threat. As seen globally, such anxieties have created fertile ground for populist political discourse. In Japan, certain political actors have amplified fears surrounding immigration, and these emotionally charged narratives are often accepted uncritically, particularly among younger generations.

Under these conditions, there is an urgent need to cultivate perspectives that enable individuals to understand contemporary social realities accurately, identify emerging challenges, and

engage in informed dialogue about solutions. Education plays a crucial role in fostering the ability to connect knowledge with real-world social issues and to move beyond self-centered viewpoints toward a commitment to the well-being and sustainability of society. This raises critical questions regarding the roles and competencies required of teachers and how teacher education can contribute to developing such competencies.

This paper argues that teacher education should incorporate opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage directly with children from immigrant backgrounds as a core practice of intercultural education. Through experiential and relational encounters, students can gain firsthand insight into the structural, academic, and everyday challenges these children face both in schools and in their daily lives. By integrating community-based collaborative programs into teacher education, pre-service teachers may develop a more objective and critical understanding of contemporary social issues, enabling them to resist populist discourses. In this way, teacher education can contribute to the development of educators equipped with intercultural sensitivity and global citizenship.

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### **We all have a responsibility, like, even if we are just high schoolers!": How DC youth are engaging with global issues**

This paper investigates how high school students in Washington, DC learn for political engagement in a context marked by democratic contestation, structural inequity, and intensifying global crises. The study examines how young people interpret issues such as climate change, gender justice, and human rights; how they connect these global concerns to their local environments; and how schools simultaneously enable and constrain their civic agency. In doing so, it speaks directly to the concerns of Working Group 6: Learning for political engagement, including the roles of education in fostering active citizenship, the place of activism within educational agendas, and the tensions that arise in politically polarized settings.

The theoretical framework draws on critical and justice oriented global citizenship education (Andreotti, 2014; Pashby et al., 2020), which distinguishes between surface level awareness and deeper engagements with structural inequality and responsibility. It also incorporates scholarship on youth activism as civic learning (Christens & Kirshner, 2011; Wray Lake & Abrams, 2020), studies of digitally mediated civic engagement (Showden et al., 2023), and place based approaches that situate participation within community contexts (Smith, 2002; Yemini et al., 2023). These perspectives align with WG6's interest in capabilities for empowerment, marginalised knowledge traditions, and emerging forms of democratic participation.

The study employs a qualitative design based on 20 focus groups with 72 students from five diverse DC public high schools. Using inductive and theory informed coding, the analysis traces students' civic learning ecologies, their pathways into political participation, and the tensions they navigate between institutional norms and activist commitments.

Findings show that DC youth engage in hybrid activism, combining social media practices, school based opportunities, and community protest cultures. Although DCPS has invested in global education initiatives (Engel et al., 2016; Engel & Gibson, 2020), students report that their political awareness develops primarily outside formal curricula through peer networks, online platforms, and citywide mobilizations. They also describe institutional constraints,

including uneven support for politically sensitive topics and unequal access to civic learning opportunities, that reinforce broader patterns of marginalised youth civic participation (Applegarth, 2024; Brady et al., 2020; Sperduti et al., 2025).

The paper concludes by considering how schools might better support action oriented civic learning, protect educators and students engaging with contested political issues, and address disparities in democratic learning opportunities. The DC case offers comparative insights into how youth build civic capabilities in politically charged and globally interconnected contexts, contributing to WG6's broader project of understanding education's role in shaping contemporary political engagement.

*Yulia Nesterova*  
*University of Glasgow*

### **Building democratic capabilities in divided societies: Peace mediation as a tool for youth empowerment in Bosnia**

This paper presents a study that investigates how action research with youth, combined with capacity building and mentorship, can advance democratic engagement in ethnically divided post-conflict societies. It focuses on Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement institutionalised ethnic divisions and created governance structures that often exclude young people from meaningful participation. Against this backdrop, the project explores how youth can become active agents of political change and reimagine inclusive futures through participatory learning processes.

The research employs a peace mediation simulation as a pedagogical and methodological tool. This simulation engages Bosnian youth aged 18-29 from diverse ethnic backgrounds in collaboratively negotiating a peace agreement. Through this exercise, participants critically examine existing political arrangements, deliberate on alternative governance models, and practice inter-group dialogue. Pre- and post-simulation surveys, alongside observational data, assess shifts in participants' knowledge, attitudes, and capabilities related to democratic engagement, citizenship education, and activism. These measures help capture how experiential learning can strengthen youth agency and foster skills essential for democratic participation.

The project conceptualises empowerment as meaningful participation and co-production of knowledge, emphasising youth as partners rather than passive recipients in peacebuilding processes. By foregrounding young people's voices and perspectives, the research challenges adultist structures that perpetuate their marginalisation in post-conflict governance. It argues that education for democracy must go beyond formal curricula to include interactive, practice-based approaches that enable youth to exercise political imagination and develop competencies for activism and accountability.

Ultimately, this study highlights the potential of participatory education to cultivate democratic capabilities, strengthen inter-ethnic dialogue, and empower young people to actively participate in democratic processes and to hold power structures accountable. In doing so, the project contributes to debates on citizenship education, democratic learning, and youth empowerment in contexts where political systems remain resistant to change.

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### **Cautious Schools, Complex Worlds: Students' Engagement with Controversial Global Issues Across Contexts**

Educators are increasingly expected to support students in understanding complex and often divisive global issues (Zajda 2021). However, this task is becoming more challenging. On the one hand, social media has become young people's primary source of information, offering rapid access to global events and opportunities for engagement, but simultaneously, exposing them to misinformation, algorithmic bias, and polarising content (Røsok-Dahl and Ihlebæk 2024). On the other hand, research shows that at the school level, teachers often adhere closely to the prescribed syllabi, avoid politically or socially controversial topics, and rarely incorporate student voice (Kerr and Huddleston 2016; Pak et al. 2020). Furthermore, by prioritising global narratives over local realities, Global Citizenship Education (GCE) may inadvertently reinforce divisions within schools and communities and sometimes reproduce "us versus them" perspectives (Yemini et al. 2026). Our understanding remains limited on how students, who are positioned between extensive social media exposure and limited educational engagement, interpret global issues in relation to their everyday lived and educational experiences. This study draws on data from 152 discussion groups (Ross 2019), including some 760 secondary school students across six countries (Australia, Germany, Italy, Poland, the United Kingdom, and the United States). The discussions focused on themes such as social justice, global issues, activism, human rights, and GCE. Furthermore, their open format allowed participants to raise topics they considered relevant to themselves and their peers. Findings indicate that although social media exposure provides students with broad awareness of global issues, many express concern about misinformation and algorithmic bias. Students look to teachers and formal education for impartial and contextualised guidance; however, across contexts, school-based GCE was described as cautious and inconsistent. Students perceived teachers as reluctant to address increasingly politicised and current global issues in the classroom. Yet, in the discussion groups, they demonstrated the capacity and need for critical dialogue on controversial topics. They also indicated that recognising young people's lived experiences can promote interculturalism not only as interpersonal interaction (Zapata-Barrero 2016) but also as meaningful civic engagement. Together, these findings highlight a significant mismatch between the complex digital environments young people navigate and the narrow, risk-averse, curriculum-driven approaches common in schools. As a result, students often lack a trusted space in which to critically process the political information they encounter online. The evidence suggests that students are both willing and capable of engaging with controversial global issues, but they require educational environments prepared to support such engagement.

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**Democratizing education through community participation. The cases of Italy and Chile**

This paper explores how recent initiatives in Italy and Chile can contribute to fostering more democratic education systems grounded in the notion of education as a common good. This comparison is relevant because it examines two different systems: the Italian one, which is fundamentally public and state-based and organized around the autonomy of individual schools, and the Chilean one, which is based on a mixed provision model and includes several mechanisms that characterize it as highly privatized.

Focusing on Italian “Community Educational Pacts” and the Chilean “Servicios Locales de Educación Pública” (SLEPs), the paper examines how these initiatives seek to reconfigure education beyond highly bureaucratic and market-driven approaches. By identifying key convergences and divergences, the paper shows why a comparison between these markedly different systems is theoretically and politically significant, while also highlighting the limitations and criticisms that emerge from attempts to organize schooling according to more democratic principles in the two contexts.

The analysis is grounded in UNESCO’s proposal for a new social contract for education and in the notion of education as a common good (UNESCO 2015, 2021). Drawing on recent scholarship, Community Educational Pacts in Italy are interpreted as institutional expressions of a relational governance model that promotes subsidiarity, co-responsibility, and community participation, reimagining the school as a civic centre within local educational ecosystems. In Chile, the SLEPs reform is examined as a structural attempt to rebuild a public, territorially integrated education system following decades of privatization and municipal fragmentation.

The study adopts a qualitative comparative policy approach, drawing on established frameworks in qualitative and comparative case study research (Bray & Jiang, 2014; Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016). It analyses normative frameworks, policy guidelines, and institutional documents issued by the Italian and Chilean Ministries of Education and SLEP authorities, complemented by a review of existing empirical studies on the implementation and functioning of Community Educational Pacts in Italy and of SLEPs in Chile.

The findings suggest that both initiatives seek to re-embed schooling within local educational systems. The comparison highlights how different institutional paths can contribute to more democratic, equitable, and context-sensitive models of education governance. However, while Italian Community Educational Pacts mainly develop as bottom-up collaborative practices within an already public-oriented system, Chilean SLEPs represent a top-down reform aimed at countering a deeply marketized education system. These differences indicate that institutional backgrounds significantly shape the ways in which similar democratization objectives are pursued and achieved.

*Nakyung Lee*  
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**Citizenship-education as a tautology: Epistemic resistance and collective learning in East Asian #MeToo**

This study explores a way to reconnect activism and education, by investigating #MeToo discourse in East Asia, including China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. It argues that

citizenship education can promote learning for social justice when it is understood as a tautology. Drawing upon theories of epistemic injustice and resistance, this paper shows how #MeToo movements promote collective learning about sexual violence and social (in)justices. It presents the discourse of #MeToo in the region by interweaving the narrative of local cases. It conducted thematic analysis on media sources, publications, and interviews with #MeToo actors for cross-society comparison. The finding illustrates how epistemic resistance invites collective learning and what enables and disables the collective learning in the regional context. I first show that #MeToo actors challenge epistemic injustice by building connection, during which victim/survivors acquire new knowledge about sexual violence, perpetrators are invited to learn about physical boundaries, and citizens develop literacy on power relation and sexual violence. This finding leads to my argument that citizenship-education is a tautology for ‘citizen as learner’ and ‘learner as citizen’. Citizenship-education indicates that the learning for social justice takes place when citizens participate in connection building and that citizens holds responsibility to learn from their fellows. This study also investigates the disabling and enabling conditions for citizenship-education by zooming into local contexts, including constraints on citizenship-education and clues to navigate the dilemmas. This study challenges depoliticization of citizenship education by situating it at the intersection between activism and education. It also attempts to take a regional approach to citizenship education in East Asia with a special focus on activism.

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### **Bridging with gender Thinking about gender and education indicators, data and measurement with global, national and local knowledge brokers**

Research on gender and education policy processes documents a range of different perceptions among knowledge brokers, positioned in different locations in education systems and hierarchies (eg Greany, 2008; Unterhalter and North, 2010; Sharma et al, 2013; Dejaeghere , 2015; Unterhalter and North, 2017; Parkes et al, 2022; Knutsson et al, 2024; Baek and Steiner Khamsi, 2024). Much less attention has been given to bridging processes that develop learning between different sites of administration, citizen voice and political engagement. In this paper we compare different ways of thinking about bridges and the approach to learning about gender and education data each suggests.

The paper draws on reports on participatory workshops exploring understandings and data around gender inequalities in education conducted by the Bridging AGEE project since 2024 in Indonesia, Kenya and Malawi at national and local level, with reflections on forms of bridging to global settings. The analysis draws out how thinking about scale in global, national and local AGEE workshops is linked to the purpose of why connection is viewed as important and the forms of imaginaries around bridging that are articulated. These interpretations have

implications for understandings of work on addressing gender inequalities and supporting gender equality in and through education, with different experiences of co-ordination, implementation and consideration shaping the approach to work for the Bridging AGEE project in each of the three country contexts.

Mobilising insights about what data are to be collected and how bridges are to be built depends very centrally on what is driving the purpose of the bridge and the use of the data. A clear element of good practice and policy seems to entail being transparent about why and in what way the approach to work on gender equality in and through education is being formulated. The paper reflects on how transparency links with processes of working with ideas around gender across areas of difference.

*Bernard Brown*  
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**Teaching and Learning for Global Citizenship Education challenges and opportunities: a comparative analysis of approaches in Australia, Colombia and Mexico**

This presentation will examine Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in the contexts of Australia, Colombia and Mexico conducted through a research project funded by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) which spanned 2024 and 2025. The research was comparative and had a focus on teaching and learning approaches used in GCE and the discourses associated with them (see Aubert et al. 2008; Peraza et al. 2022). Various international organisations have acknowledged that the principles which have underpinned GCE have often been based on western (Global North) epistemologies and world views to the exclusion of perspectives from the Global South.

The investigation was underpinned by the dialogue between the Global South (represented by Colombia and Mexico) and Global North (represented by Australia), and examined the academic literature, education policies, programs and curriculum in these three countries. The objective was to advance the understanding and practices of GCE across different national educational contexts, focusing on effective pedagogical methods and reflections on teaching practice. To conduct this analysis, we adopted a critical perspective by taking into account a range of pertinent issues such as critical interculturality (Dietz, 2017) and student activism (Araiza & González, 2017). The presentation will critically examine specific teaching methodologies to foster critical global citizenship education, through meaningful active engagement and relevant contextual learning. These teaching and learning experiences can enable students to develop a critical awareness of the issues faced in their communities and challenge dominant paradigms and discourses related to GCE including Neoliberalism, and others based on western colonial epistemologies and consider alternative de-colonial perspectives (see Aguilar Forero & Salazar 2023; Stein & Andreotti, 2021; Torres & Bosio, 2020).

Arising from our project we propose several recommendations for educators to enhance GCE these are: 1. Promote active learning strategies for transformative collective action, in the contexts students are in. 2. Emphasize project-based learning as a way of deepening the experience and awareness of GCE. 3. Consider ways of re-conceptualising university education so as to engage meaningfully with GCE linked to democratic and emancipatory principle. The findings of this study broaden and enrich understandings of the ways in which GCE is contextualised in national contexts and in doing so we challenge and interrogate embedded

assumptions and influential discourses which characterise this field and construct meaningful alternative approaches.

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### **Teacher training in Education for Global Citizenship: lights and shadows in Spanish Higher Education**

This paper pursues contributing to reflection and critical analysis about how Education for Global Citizenship is being addressed in Spanish higher education. In order to carry this out effectively, preliminary findings of the Project entitled “Education for Global Citizenship and Teacher Training (EDCIMU\*)” will be presented and discussed with colleagues from other universities.

Education for Global Citizenship (EGC) is a paradigm that has been in constant development since its beginning between the 1920’s and 1930’s, and its relevance has grown exponentially, especially in an international context characterized by mistrust in democratic societies. Social and ideological polarization, which have also been intensified by the rise of national-populist movements in several different parts of the world, reinforces the urgency of supporting education that encourages students to develop critical thinking, global empathy, and civic engagement. Nowadays, EGC seems more relevant than ever before. In such a context, teachers must play an active and decisive role. For this reason, both their initial and continuous training becomes a determinant element for letting EGC enter schools and classrooms. Literature shows a crescent interest, not only in this topic, but also in strengthening the role of teachers in the transmission of knowledge, values, aptitudes, and essential skills for addressing EGC in the 21st Century. Contributing to research about teacher training in EGC will not only have a direct impact on teaching, but will also contribute to the configuration of informed, responsible and engaged citizenship towards existent and emerging global challenges. The hypothesis in this paper considers EGC as a key tool in order to provide students (future teachers and educators) with those necessary skills that will enable them to understand and act in accordance with the complexities within international problems from an inclusive and collaborative perspective.

Methodologically, the EDCIMU project (2024-2028) follows mixed methods. Academics from many Spanish universities collaborate in order to generate rigorous and applicable knowledge that strengthens EGC as well as contributes to the construction of fairer, more democratic and sustainable societies. In this contribution, the results of the comparative analysis of initial teacher training curricula show considerable challenges in relation to the competencies to develop an EGC for future professional development.

In conclusion, the analysis and improvement of educational praxis, teaching strategies, and teacher training curriculum at universities is crucial. Only through a solid and well-structured educational approach will it be possible to establish EGC in schools and to generate the desired long-term effects in society.

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### **Nordic Teacher Education for Democracy: Global challenges, national political cultures, and local contestations**

In most democratic states, initial teacher education (ITE) explicitly seeks to shape prospective teachers' values, competencies, and identities to sustain and develop education for democracy. We conceptualize this as the conscious state effort to educate the 'democratic teacher.'

The paper distinguishes between democracy as state governance (elections, rule of law etc.), an ideology (e.g., human rights), and a way of life (a democratic culture) in social, cultural and educational practice (Hansen, 2010). Correspondingly, educationalists often differentiates between learning about democracy, learning for democracy, and learning through democratic practices (Lenz & Andersen, 2019)—a triad also used in international documents, including the European Council's educational recommendations (Brander et al., 2023). We argue, however, that the content and emphasis of these three dimensions vary between types of democratic states due to distinct historical paths and political cultures.

Since the late nineteenth century, teachers in many Western countries have played central roles in the struggle for democracy—as educators, participants in civil society, and mediators between state and society (Holmén, 2018; Larsen, 2022; Lauglo, 1982). This historical inheritance continues to shape national ideals of the 'democratic teacher.' Consequently, national ITE programs aim to form teachers in line with these historically and culturally specific understandings.

We do not regard the democratic state as confined to government. Rather, drawing on Norbert Elias's concept of the survival unit and Thomas Højrup's fission perspective, the state can be seen as a complex collective agent seeking to secure cultural and political cohesion in competition with other states (Elias, 1978; Kaspersen & Gabriel, 2008; Reeh, 2011). Schoolteachers are arguably central to this process. Combining comparative and historical inquiry we trace multiple interconnected factors shaping the education of democratic teachers, including contemporary global agendas and challenges to democracy in education; the political cultures, loyalties, and historical imaginaries of nation-states; and the local practices and pedagogical ideas surrounding democratic learning in initial teacher education (ITE).

Research questions: How has national-level governance guided teacher education regarding the education of democratic teachers in Nordic countries since 1940? How have ITE programs in Nordic countries sought to educate the democratic teacher since 1940? What specific national challenges have shaped these efforts, as seen through the theory of states as survival units (Elias)? How can we assess the combined impact of global challenges, national political cultures, and local contestations on images of the democratic teacher?

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### **Developing a relational theoretical model for the analysis of the role of schoolteachers in modern democratic states**

In any society there is a complex and entangled mass of patterned human practices through which the society seeks to adapt, persist and reproduce itself (Rappaport 1999; Reeh 2026). It is however not possible to study and analyze everything at once, and it is therefore necessary to focus the frame of analysis without neglecting that other parts of the context may still be

relevant to the society's processes of reproduction. In modern societies, some (but not all) of these practices are institutionalized in the state educational system. In previous research (Reeh 2016), I used Norbert Elias' understanding of the state as a survival unit to focus the analysis on some of the most crucial drivers of education policy could be found beyond the educational system itself. Through the use of this theoretical model, I was able to argue that the teaching (of religion) in Denmark from 1720 to 2006 should pay more attention to the state's external relations and the state form, and that the shifts in educational policy were deeply interconnected with the state's attempt to survive in a shifting environment of more or less hostile other states such as Sweden, Prussia, Nazi-Germany, the Soviet Union etc. In this paper, I continue the development of this theoretical model. Firstly, I suggest that the analytical model should pay more attention to the cultural patterns that dominate a state, and that these can be regarded as collective ways of doing things or patterns of patterns (Bateson 1989) including the role of the teacher. Second, I suggest that model should pay more attention to collective groups with the state, such as teacher unions, political and religious movements/organizations that seek to contest the collective ways of doing things (teaching). The paper hereby seeks to establish a more comprehensive model that includes the external relations of the state, the state form, the dominant and contested internal cultural patterns as well as groups (e.g. teacher unions, political and religious movements/groups/organizations) and individuals (e.g. individual teachers) that may or may not seek to contest the collective ways of doing things. On the basis of the theoretical model, the paper will include examples of comparative studies of the role of teacher between the Nordic countries Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland.

## New Scholars Working Group

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### **Out of School and Out of Frame? Non-National Marginalized Children in the United Arab Emirates**

Over the past decade, 110 million more children have enrolled in school since the adoption of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on education in 2015 (UNESCO, 2024). Such developments align with the global principle recognizing education as a public good and human right since the mid-20th century (Daviet, 2016). However, despite such progress, the total population of out-of-school children has declined by only 1% during this decade (UNESCO, 2024). Moreover, the release of UNESCO's 2025 SDG 4 scorecard paints a starker image: due to national-level updates of school-population statistics, estimates of out-of-school children have increased from 251 million in 2024 to 272 million in 2025, with a projected undercount of 13 million due to conflicts in Sudan, Myanmar, and Somalia (UNESCO, 2024; UNESCO, 2025). Hence, according to UNESCO, "a more realistic estimate of the total out-of-school population is 285 million," leaving countries off-track to decrease the global number of out-of-school children by 165 million by 2030 (UNESCO, 2025, p. 17).

At the regional level, few statistics outline the state of out-of-school children's enrollment across the primary, lower-secondary, and upper-secondary levels in the Gulf states (UNESCO, 2025). This phenomenon may be further exacerbated by the fact that non-nationals are required to access private education in the absence of a public option, which is provided free of charge for nationals across the Gulf (Ridge et al., 2016). In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), UNESCO's 2023 Global Education Monitoring Report indicates that 1% of children across all levels remain out of school. In Ras Al Khaimah, a northern emirate of the UAE, census data show 2,267 out-of-school children aged 6 through 16 in 2023, of whom 75% are non-nationals (Ras Al Khaimah Statistics Center, 2023). The number of males is slightly higher than females, mirroring a broader trend of male educational disengagement in the country (Ridge, 2014; Ridge et al., 2022). However, census data do not illuminate the factors driving non-enrollment in the emirate.

Accordingly, this ongoing study seeks to explore the factors affecting non-national children who are not enrolled in school in Ras Al Khaimah. Engaging with theories of distributive and social justice in education (Martin & Gilead, 2020; Robertson & Dale, 2013), the study applies a mixed-methods approach using the UNESCO Global Out-of-School Children Initiative's Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE) (UNICEF, 2015). This framework identifies children not in school or at risk of dropping out across pre-primary, primary, and lower-secondary education. Over 50 semi-structured telephone and in-person interviews were conducted with non-national parents of out-of-school children in Ras Al Khaimah, spanning Arab, South Asian, and African families. Document analysis of existing sources, statistics, and policy documents complements the primary data.

Preliminary findings identify affordability, accessibility, and cultural challenges as the primary causes of non-enrollment. Parents reported the inability to afford tuition fees, with some families priced out of schools due to outstanding debt (Ridge et al., 2016). Bureaucratic barriers include expired residency permits and lack of official documentation required to re-enroll children, which compound already complex enrollment procedures (Farhat, 2024). Additionally, when required to prioritize, some parents indicated a subtle gendered preference in school enrollment, often favoring boys over girls.

Based on these findings, this study aims to propose targeted policy interventions to support marginalized families and uphold global educational inclusivity principles for the benefit of all children in the UAE.

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### **The Career Concept: How is Student Counselling Possible in Armenia and Georgia?**

This paper explores how student counselling and career development are conceptualised and institutionalised in higher education, focusing on Armenia and Georgia. It advances the notion of the career concept as a socially and institutionally mediated process through which university students develop a sense of self, future orientation, and professional trajectory. Drawing on comparative higher education and institutional perspectives, the paper examines how career pathways are shaped by university structures, policy frameworks, and counselling practices, and what forms of student experience can be meaningfully compared across national contexts. Particular attention is paid to the role of career centers as institutional sites for student counselling, active learning, and self-development. The analysis interrogates whether existing career services in Armenia and Georgia respond to students' developmental needs and to what extent they support reflexive career planning beyond short-term employability and a

Europeanisation perspective. The paper argues that effective student counselling requires a shift from narrowly instrumental models toward more holistic, student-centered and institutionally embedded approaches to career development and learning, sensitive to local contexts while informed by broader European higher education dynamics.

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## **Family Capital Configurations and Strategic Engagement with International Education in a Second-Tier Chinese City**

### **Purpose**

This study investigates how families with differentiated capital configurations strategically engage with the expanding and internally stratified international education market in a second-tier Chinese city. It asks: (1) How do families mobilise economic, cultural, and social capital when choosing international schooling? (2) To what extent does international education function as elite reproduction versus a risk-avoidance strategy amid intensifying competition in China's high-stakes examination system, particularly following the 2021 Zhongkao vocational diversion policy

### **Theoretical Framework**

Grounded in Bourdieu's (1986) theory of capital, the study adopts a relational and configurational approach to educational choice. Families' practices are understood as structured by their positions within a marketised educational field, where capital is field-dependent and unevenly convertible. Particular attention is paid to embodied cultural capital (e.g., strategic planning, familiarity with international curricula, self-presentation skills) and to the instability of middle-class positions in second-tier cities. This framework moves beyond elite/non-elite binaries to capture intra-class differentiation and the tension between commodification and legitimacy in international schooling.

### **Methods and Data Sources**

This qualitative case study draws on fieldwork (2023–2024) in nine international secondary schools, including public school international departments and independent international schools. Data consist of pre-interview surveys and 57 semi-structured interviews (52 students/alumni; 5 parents), each lasting 60–90 minutes. Capital was operationalised through sustained tuition capacity (economic), embodied and institutionalised forms (cultural), and network mobilisation during key transitions (social). Using iterative pattern coding, families were inductively grouped into three capital configuration profiles: high economic–low cultural (n=19), moderate economic–high cultural (n=18), and social capital–driven (n=15).

### **Results and Implications**

Two dominant strategic orientations emerged. Values-driven opting-out—primarily among culturally advantaged families—reflects ideological rejection of exam-oriented schooling and prioritisation of holistic development. These families demonstrated strong strategic navigation of curriculum choices, extracurricular portfolio building, and global university admissions. In contrast, economic refuge-seeking characterised families motivated by academic risk, fear of downward mobility under vocational diversion, or hukou-based exclusion. While able to purchase access to international tracks, students lacking embodied cultural capital often struggled with self-directed learning and application strategies, resulting in “educational limbo.”

Overall, international schooling operates both as a mechanism of strategic exit and as a differentiated market that reproduces inequality through uneven capital conversion. The study highlights how expanding educational choice in non-metropolitan China may intensify

stratification, as families' resource configurations shape divergent trajectories within ostensibly alternative pathways.

*Daria Khokhlova*  
*University of Zurich, Switzerland*

### **Europeanising History Teaching: Council of Europe and EuroClio Projects in Russia, 1990s–2000s**

This paper examines Russia's cooperation with the Council of Europe and the European Association of History Educators (EuroClio) on history teaching in the 1990s–2000s. Using the Russian case, it shows how these organisations promoted an agenda of Europeanisation through democratic approaches to history teaching, implemented through policy conferences, training seminars, and the production of teaching manuals.

The first part conceptualises the Council of Europe and EuroClio as global education policy actors. It draws on critical scholarship on education borrowing and transfer to analyse the knowledge, practices, and normative discourses these organisations promoted, using theories that interrogate Western-centricity in policy transfer (Silova 2012; Steiner-Khamsi 2014). It argues that their European agenda was defined less by common historical narratives than by pedagogical principles. An emphasis on teaching methods and skills, particularly multiperspectivity, made this agenda transferable across contexts and framed cooperation as professional exchange rather than content imposition. Methodologically, this part combines critical discourse analysis of project materials with interviews with European project coordinators and experts to reconstruct how they framed project rationales, defined objectives, and justified pedagogical approaches. Empirically, it draws on archival sources such as project documentation, policy reports, correspondence, internal working papers, and teacher-training manuals.

The second part examines local reception and effects in Russia as domestic politics shifted towards increasingly authoritarian and nationalist orientations and pressure on history education intensified. It argues that formal curricular change became less likely, but that these initiatives nonetheless created platforms for global–local interaction and shifts in teaching practice. The focus on shared methodological principles enabled work to continue in politically sensitive and polarised settings while preserving horizontal relations with Russian teachers. European experts largely introduced interactive pedagogies and offered classroom support, while local teachers retained autonomy over topic selection and historical interpretation. Methodologically, this part combines social network analysis (Finnigan, 2018) and network ethnography (Ball, 2016) to examine how cooperation was negotiated and sustained through interpersonal ties and professional communities. Empirically, it draws on interviews with European and Russian coordinators and participants, focusing on how they interpreted cooperation, constraints, and outcomes, and it traces key actors' trajectories to assess longer-term legacies.

Overall, the paper shows that these projects advanced a model of Europeanisation rooted in non-hierarchical knowledge exchange, and that an emphasis on multiperspectivity and teaching methods helped sustain cooperation under growing political pressure on history teaching in Russia. It also develops an approach for evaluating such initiatives by applying network ethnography to capture effects beyond formal policy change.

*Sandra Kildevang Andersen  
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### **Mapping Social Relations in Teachers' Work: Enhancing Institutional Ethnography's Transformative Potential**

This presentation offers a methodological exploration of the transformative potential of mapping the social relations of teachers' everyday work, drawing on the principles of Institutional Ethnography (IE). Anchored in Dorothy Smith's foundational aim of IE – to make change from below (Smith & Griffith, 2022) – the study departs from the assumption that teachers' experiences of, and navigation within (and around), the organisational conditions of their work significantly influence their professional meaning-making, pedagogical practices, and ultimately students' learning.

The presentation draws on a research design that integrates ethnographic fieldwork – comprising observations and interviews conducted over a total of nine weeks at three schools – with a document analysis of relevant institutional documents and research workshops inspired by the action research tradition involving both teachers and members of school leadership from the participating schools. At this stage, the project is concluding its initial pilot study, which has involved observing and interviewing three teachers across three schools.

By tracing the relations embedded in the activities of teachers, the mapping process can illuminate how social relations organise work processes and contribute to the educational challenges facing the Danish public school system (Folkeskolen). In this way, the analysis can identify potential sites for action that may enhance teachers' sense of meaning in their work while supporting improved learning conditions for students.

Drawing inspiration from the action research tradition, the presentation further examines how – and to what extent – the mapping of social relations can serve as a catalyst for social change. Specifically, it investigates the ways in which such mapping can empower teachers to articulate and address tensions in their work, thereby contributing to meaningful improvements in their working conditions encountered at both school, municipal and state level.

The aim of this work is to contribute to educational research by deepening understanding of the complexity of teachers' work and the institutional logics shaping it. Additionally, the study seeks to expand IE's methodological framework by integrating perspectives from action research, thereby strengthening the transformative potential of mapping social relations as a methodological and analytical tool.

*Annica Källebo  
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### **Reconsidering juxtaposition for comparison of early childhood education**

Early childhood education (ECE) does not map onto the nation-state as compulsory schooling but is constituted through a system "messiness" (Guevara, 2022) when viewed as its own system of education. In this contribution based on a doctoral dissertation, ECE's particular global composition is argued to require reconsiderations of comparative mechanisms as ECE may resist neat categorization and a priori assumptions of what a 'system' is.

This contribution reconsiders juxtaposition (cf. Bereday, 1964) from being considered a preparatory tool for comparison of predetermined units, to a productive process through which commensurability takes place through multi-scalar criss-crossing (Sobe, 2018) and movement

across all stages of inquiry. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in Bangladesh and Sweden, and Strathern's (2004) notion of comparison as active connections and productive juxtaposition, and Espeland and Stevens' (1998) work on commensuration as a social process, the contribution uses vignettes (Schöneich, 2021) as a representational form across space, time and scales, to analyze common challenges cross-contexts. Empirical findings suggest similarities in the function of the teachers as time-brokers, pedagogy as a forum for negotiation between colliding value systems of pedagogical aims and societal norms, and that ECE functions as an absorptive margin at the periphery of educational systems. The study shows that challenges in ECE are not reducible to questions of development, resourcing, or governance capacity alone, but are tied to how ECE is structurally organized and positioned in relation to wider institutional, cultural, and societal demands.

Through reconsideration of juxtaposition, the contribution then problematizes 'where' difference may be located within a 'messy' system and discusses the scale and scope of the unit of comparison.

*Yara Shahin*  
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### **European Universities' engagement with the SDGs: the case of Roskilde University and Critical Edge Alliance**

This bachelor thesis explores how European universities construct, communicate, and legitimise their engagement with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with particular attention to Goals 10, 16, and 17. The UN's SDGs emphasize reducing inequalities by promoting equal opportunities for all (SDG 10), strengthening peace and justice through inclusive and 'strong institutions' (SDG 16), and advancing global partnerships that support countries in achieving the entire agenda (SDG 17).

The project takes Roskilde University (RUC) and its role in founding the Critical Edge Alliance (CEA) as a central case through which to examine these questions. By bridging communication and international studies, the thesis investigates how commitments to the SDGs are articulated in institutional narratives, partnership frameworks, and the outward-facing discourses that situate universities as responsible globally engaged actors. Inspired by critiques of North–South research partnerships, the study investigates whether CEA's rhetoric of solidarity and critical pedagogy masks persistent asymmetries in agenda setting, representation, and institutional benefit.

A key part of the analysis focuses on Global South partnerships within CEA—what they are meant to accomplish, and how they position themselves within the broader landscape of global higher-education governance. Although alliances like CEA often describe their work as mutually beneficial, studies on epistemic coloniality raise questions about whether such collaborations still lean on Global North assumptions, funding structures, and institutional norms. Through qualitative document analysis and semi-structured interviews with relevant staff, the thesis examines how RUC and CEA present their global engagement and whether their communication practices challenge or reinforce the hierarchies they critique.

Ultimately, the study interrogates whether the legitimacy building narratives surrounding SDG engagement represent meaningful transformative commitments or operate more as symbolic gestures that blur uneven power relations within transnational institutional partnerships.

*Marcus Nuñez Seneca*  
*University of Cambridge, UK*

### **Radiant with Triumphant Calamity: Responding to environmental uncertainty in the university**

This project explores how a broad humanistic orientation can enable meaningful engagement with environmental crises that are increasingly presented as global emergencies, yet framed in ways that may limit our capacity to grasp and respond to what is unfolding. Responding to what appears as a polycrisis on multiple planes – including climate, ecology, politics, and knowledge creation – can seem to require that we scale an impossible mountain. Pedagogically, the impulse may be either to seek muscular forms of recourse or to retreat into the more manageable terrains of local worlds – modest hills, at best, that appear as realistic, if insufficient, undertakings. How, then, might we respond resolutely and with sincerity?

Building on my MPhil dissertation, I discuss UNESCO's new social contract, Latour's call to assemble commons, and the concept of dark pedagogy as possible ways forward. Undoubtedly, each programme makes valuable contributions to ongoing debates on the role of higher education in addressing environmental crises. At the same time, I argue that they engage only to a limited extent with how strands of thought in the humanities – which have enabled us to address major themes such as justice and equality – might be translated and extended in relation to environmental issues. Thus, valuable conceptual resources risk being left by the wayside in the effort to develop new educational responses to our present situation. With this in mind, I refocus the argument on what can emerge from existing programmes that have addressed crises which have challenged our capacity to believe in ourselves and in the projects – such as Enlightenment and modernity – in which we are embedded.

To this end, I develop a dialogue between the negative dialectics of Theodor Adorno and the vital materialism of Jane Bennett. Adorno's vigilance against false reconciliation and attentiveness to suffering are brought into productive tension with Bennett's emphasis on enchantment, assemblage, and more-than-human agency. Together, they illuminate a pedagogical space that resists both premature hope and resignation, cultivating critical self-awareness and affective responsiveness. Ultimately, the paper aims to articulate traditions in the humanities as both limiting and enabling conditions for repurposing what remains amidst deepening uncertainty about the natural world and our place within it. For a broad humanistic orientation, I argue, the aim is not to find final answers, but to renew the relevance of these traditions in a continuous effort to make sense of the world around us and to identify not-quite-utopian possibilities in education.

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### **Hybrid Pathways and System Capacity in Initial Teacher Education Reform in Italy: A National Survey**

Across Europe and the OECD education systems, initial teacher education (ITE) is increasingly discussed in relation to governance, system capacity, and the balance between concurrent and

consecutive models of teacher preparation. Comparative research demonstrates how institutional arrangements shape pathways into teaching and influence the broader continuum of professional learning, including induction and mentoring for novice educators. Within this international debate, the Italian case provides a particularly salient example of systemic restructuring.

After more than a decade without stable qualifying pathways for secondary teachers, Italy has recently introduced a new ITE model. This legislative overhaul combines elements of both concurrent and consecutive pathways, permits entry at various stages of higher education, and maintains a clear separation between teacher qualification and recruitment. Programmes are delivered by universities and other higher education institutions (HEIs) in collaboration with schools for the practical component. The scale of the reform is substantial: authorised training places increased from approximately 51,583 in the first activation cycle (2023–2024) to 76,753 in the second cycle (2024–2025). This expansion is linked to a broader national effort to recruit approximately 70,000 new teachers by 2026. While qualification pathways and recruitment policies have been restructured within a unified framework, induction and mentoring arrangements have remained largely unchanged, highlighting a partial misalignment between initial preparation and early-career support.

This paper presents a longitudinal national survey examining the early implementation of the reform across its first two activation cycles. Drawing on original datasets compiled from ministerial allocations and public institutional documentation, the study maps the activation of teacher education programmes across regions and institutional types. The analysis adopts a system-level perspective on governance and institutional mediation, examining how HEIs operationalise the reform and how the separation between qualification and recruitment influences system capacity and organisational practices.

Preliminary findings indicate significant institutional and territorial variation in programme implementation and governance arrangements. The rapid expansion of authorised training places raises critical questions concerning coordination, comparability, and policy coherence within a formally national system. By situating this domestic reform within internationally recognised debates, the study offers valuable insights into how hybrid ITE models are structured and governed during periods of systemic transformation.

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### **Extended Reality in Teacher Education - Building real world professional competencies with immersive technology and artificial intelligence**

How do we prepare our student teachers to face the real world after graduation? The news and public debate depict a school with increasing levels of bullying, involuntary school absences, violent episodes, and aggressive behavior among students. Many teachers experience social and relational difficulties in the classroom as challenging (Munthe & See, 2022). Studies show how such challenges often intensify the ‘practice shock’ for new teachers (Amdal & Willbergh, 2020) and that relationship building is not sufficiently addressed through teacher education (Aspelin & Jonsson, 2019; Jo, 2014). Skibsted & Matthiesen (2016) highlight relationship competencies as one of the most important concepts in today's schools and teacher education. Student teachers report a lack of connection between experiences from practice and the training they receive on campus (Aagaard et al, 2025). Teacher education seems to be too unpractical and provides students with too little actual experience and training in dealing with the

demanding situations they will encounter as future teachers (Chen, 2022). Immersive XR technologies, have the potential to provide authentic, life-like experiences, and are increasingly being used in teacher education (Wang, 2024). Through simulation – an imitation of a real situation, designed to resemble reality – student teachers have the opportunity to practice challenging situations they will encounter as professional teachers, without risk and in a safe environment (Faldet et al, 2021). VR simulation of real-life events gives students the opportunity to trial and error in otherwise demanding conditions and gives them the opportunity to develop a sense of resilience and self-efficacy (Parish et al., 2024; Wang, 2024). In line with the rapid development of generative artificial intelligence (AI), it is becoming increasingly important to understand how this technology can also be utilized in an educational context (Krumsvik, 2023). AI potentially changes both the way we communicate and can transform both pedagogy and students' learning experiences. AI will increasingly be used in human interactions and conversations, and it is being discussed how AI can shape not only human communication, but also, more generally, socio-emotional skills (Horizon Report, 2024). From this perspective, one can imagine that AI can be used in training student teachers' relationship competence.

Several studies suggest that we lack pedagogical models for the use of technology in simulating real-world situations, and that there is a need for more focus on didactic and pedagogical use of this technology to promote learning (Faldet et al, 2021; Flobakk-Sitter & Fossum, 2023; Korseberg & Stalheim, 2024). In a recent meta-analysis of classroom simulations in teacher education, the results suggest that less resource-intensive implementation designs can have just as good an effect as more resource-intensive designs (Coney, under review). In addition, the results suggest that more attention should be paid to the learning design in the use of simulations. (Coney, under review).

In this PhD project, I will investigate: What role can artificial intelligence and immersive technology have in the development of student teachers' relational competencies as future professionals? The design of this study is based on sociocultural learning theory and Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural perspective that recognizes the role of mediating artifacts and social interaction in learning processes. Simulation technologies imitate real-life experiences and can thus be seen as a specific type of digital artifact that has a mediating role in professional learning. The use of digital technologies has changed the interaction in educational contexts, where students no longer interact with each other or the teacher, but also with digital tools. The development of adaptive algorithms and AI challenges us to reflect on and study the role of technologies in this interaction in new ways (Kluge, 2024). This can provide an interesting perspective on the link between humans and technology in simulation situations and the training of relational skills. Säljö (1999) points out that digital technologies can provide experiences that resemble interaction with a teacher or a more knowledgeable person, but that the technology's limitations in interpretation and response require that a human supervisor is still necessary. With the rapid development of AI, it is now interesting to investigate the extent to which digital technologies today can supplement or replace human interaction in socio-cultural learning contexts, and how this should be taken into account in future learning design. Based on transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978) and the pedagogy of discomfort (Boler, 1999; Zembylas, 2003), I will examine how this as a theoretical and pedagogical framework can contribute to expanding student teachers' understanding of the development of their relational competence and analyze simulation situations where immersive technology is used for training in complex situations and demanding conversations. According to Boler (1999), the pedagogy of discomfort can help challenge prejudice and assumptions by facilitating collective observation, mutual exploration and conscious listening - a teaching practice that begins by inviting teachers and students to engage in critical examinations of values and established beliefs, and to examine constructed self-understandings in relation to how one has

learned to understand others (Røthing, 2019). Relational competencies, understood as skills, abilities, knowledge and attitudes that establish, develop, maintain and repair relationships between people (Spurkeland, 2012), can thus be explored in the light of transformative learning and from different angles, such as empathy, perspective taking, communication, trust building and conflict management, in addition to experienced resilience and self-efficacy. All of these are different angles to assess whether technology can support students in developing their relational competencies. A comprehensive theoretical framework will be developed based on the various theoretical and pedagogical concepts to create continuity throughout the different phases of the study.

The study will have a qualitative, combined design, where different designs will be used in different parts of the project. In the pre-phase of the project, I want to get an overview of the field, and more specifically, get an understanding of how immersive technology and artificial intelligence are used in training relational skills in teacher education and different educational contexts. I will conduct a thematic literature review that assesses the research in light of learning theory and whether pedagogical frameworks and learning design are used in the development and implementation of technology in competence development. This will give me insight into whether and how this technology is used in teacher education today, and at the same time give me an indication of knowledge gaps. In the first phase of the project, I want to investigate how student teachers experience opportunities and limitations in the use of AI chatbots as conversation partners in simulating demanding professional conversations and training relational skills. This will be a case study based on teaching activities in the subject of Pedagogy and Student Knowledge. Student teachers will participate in AI-simulated conversations with different types of chatbots, practicing demanding conversations, such as conflict management with students or communication with parents. The AI chatbots can offer a dynamic and flexible response and can simulate complex situations in a way that is adapted to the student's learning level. Both primary and secondary data sources will be used in the case study. Case studies are most often conducted using qualitative data (e.g. observations and open interviews), but quantitative data (e.g. existing statistics and structured questionnaires) can also be used. Using method triangulation, I can see whether the different data support each other (Yin, 2018). Although the data are not generalizable, they could be of great importance for the further study. In the second phase of the project, I will use Educational Design Research (EDR), a research method that combines design and research to develop and improve educational interventions (Wang, 2024). This sub-study will be based on the ongoing development project 'Virtual simulation training with artificial intelligence', funded with strategic R&D funds at the Faculty of Education. A fully automated virtual dialogue simulator with AI will be developed, where the dialogue unfolds in real time and with more realistic visual graphics – which will probably contribute to an increased degree of immersive experience and even more realistic simulation training for the student teachers in their development of relational competence. The goal of the second phase of the project is to explore technology-supported pedagogical and didactic frameworks for the development of relational competence from the perspective of students/experienced teachers/teacher educators, in addition to exploring how different types of immersive technology and AI can contribute to creating a realistic and safe space for training and developing relational competence. This development work will be done between the field of practice and academia, where the various parties (student teachers, teacher educators and experienced teachers) contribute to the development of pedagogical and didactic frameworks through several rounds of testing and investigation, data collection, evaluation and further development. I want to use action research in this sub-study, where action and research are combined in an iterative process, with the goal of both understanding and solving specific problems in a given context (Creswell, 2021). This means that both the researcher and the research subjects are considered co-researchers and

active participants in a common work process. Instead of interviews, I will use reflexive dialogue. In line with transformative learning theory, Reflexive dialogues provide researchers and participants with the opportunity to reflect on observed phenomena together, engaging in collaborative reflection that can allow both the researcher and the researched to benefit from the interaction (Røthing, 2019). This focuses on different aspects of practice and provides a different perspective on the situation, blurring the boundaries between research and researched into a more reciprocal relationship. Reflexive dialogues have been explored by previous researchers, mainly in the context of teacher education and teacher practice development. This literature highlights the benefits of engaging in reflective practice to improve teaching, focusing on teacher practice and understanding the application of theories and approaches in the classroom (Røthing, 2019).

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### **Shifting Responsibility for Teacher Professional Development in Greece: >From State Responsibility to Private Providers**

Continuous professional learning of teachers has become a central concern of contemporary education policy, as education systems respond to rapid pedagogical, technological and social change. While the Greek state also mandates continuous upskilling for teachers in response to these ongoing transformations, the responsibility for teacher professional development has shifted over the past decades, with the state no longer serving as the sole or primary provider. Instead, professional development is now delivered through a decentralised ecosystem involving universities, EU-funded initiatives, private educational providers, nonprofit organizations and digital learning platforms.

We examine the evolving landscape of teacher professional development in Greece through a historical and policy-oriented lens, tracing the long-term evolution of training provision to the present, while placing particular emphasis on developments following Greece's accession to the European Union. In this analysis, teacher professional development is approached as a key policy field and as a mechanism for governing professional learning, through which responsibilities, roles and expectations are distributed across multiple actors. Particular attention is paid to the contemporary period, in which professional development is framed simultaneously as a professional obligation and as an individual responsibility. As a result, we present that in recent years, professional development in Greece has evolved into a hybrid system, where responsibility is distributed across multiple actors, but ultimate accountability for accessing, selecting and often financing professional development is increasingly transferred to the teachers themselves, while the state maintains a regulatory and certifying role.

At last, we argue that this shift reflects a broader reconfiguration of responsibility in the governance of learning, whereby the role of the state has gradually moved from direct provision toward regulation and certification, effectively transferring both the cost and the burden of professional development onto individual educators. These outcomes seem to align with the current discussions on multi-provider and decentralised models of lifelong learning in Europe. By analysing the Greek case across different historical phases, the paper contributes to comparative discussions on the future of teacher professional development. It highlights the

tensions that arise between mandated professional growth and the distributed responsibility that characterises contemporary educational ecosystems, offering insights relevant to international debates on the future of teacher professional development.

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### **School Leadership and the Politics of NGO Education in Haiti**

The Haitian education system has long been severely affected by the ongoing impact of neoliberal policies (Wisner & Concannon, 2023), systemic oppression (Damas, 2024), educational segregation (Abraham, 2024), and ongoing processes of impoverishment (DeGraff, 2020), resulting in a heavy reliance on private actors, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Charles, 2023), to fill the gaps left by the under-resourced public education system. The recent escalation of violence, displacement, and humanitarian crises in Haiti has severely disrupted education, exposing children to heightened risks such as recruitment by armed groups and profound psychological trauma (Blanc et al., 2024; UNICEF, 2024; UNHCR, 2024). This volatile context fundamentally changes the conditions under which school leadership is implemented, as leaders face distinct challenges that are often overlooked in mainstream leadership research and training, which primarily focus on (ostensibly) stable, Western settings. Global interest in educational leadership beyond the “Western lens,” across diverse cultural contexts and across different governance structures is growing (UNESCO, 2024; Torres, 2025). Leadership is seen as a key factor in improving the quality of education and achieving SDG 4 (GEM Report, October 31, 2024), as well as in realizing overarching goals such as peace, security, and stability (Haastrup & Nwakibea, 2024). In fragile and conflict-affected settings, school leadership is seen as having unique potential to drive positive change (Leithwood et al., 2004), particularly where public systems are weakened by factors like transitional governments (Magno, 2013), as in the case of Haiti. Despite this, studies on school leadership in non-western contexts, particularly in crisis-affected contexts, remain critically under-researched (Striepe & Cunningham, 2022; Ceja-Rodriguez, 2025), and more particularly in highly privatized systems like Haiti’s (Jean-Marie & Sider, 2014). NGO-schools, which are private schools funded and directed by local and/or international NGOs, constitute a major part of the country’s educational landscape (Borger et al., 2023; Zanotti, 2010; Charles, 2023), and therefore demand our attention.

Using Haiti as an example, this ongoing doctoral study, which sits at the intersection of educational governance, NGOs, and education in emergencies (EiE), seeks to explore how school leadership is experienced in NGO-run schools within contexts of crisis in Haiti. With particular attention to their preparation and to the challenges faced by school leaders and the strategies they use to respond to overcome those challenges, the study employs a vertical case study design, drawing upon observation, document analysis and in-depth interviews, to explore the complexity of the conditions faced by Haitian school principals within the governmental structures of a speculative number of NGO-schools. Vertical case study research was chosen because this approach rejects the notion that cases can be clearly delineated in one place and instead uses a “translocal methodology” to track social processes across multiple locations, scales, and levels of power (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2015) This study is incorporating decolonial methods to challenge power imbalances by placing “marginalized voices” at the center of educational theory and practice (Shah et al., 2025; Mendenhall, 2023), while exposing the practices of those in power (Menashy, 2025).

Based on initial qualitative interviews with school directors, international and nongovernmental organization representatives, policymakers, education experts, and ministry

officials, conducted both remotely and on site during the first phase of the study, preliminary findings suggest two overarching themes.

First, school leaders appear to operate in a context characterized by limited professional preparation and significant role complexity. Across the schools studied, directors reported little or no formal pre-service preparation for leadership positions. Instead, most are appointed from teaching roles and rely on irregular in-service training opportunities, often provided through short-term donor-funded initiatives. These trainings are described as fragmented and rarely accompanied by systematic follow-up, mentoring, or coaching. As a result, many school directors expressed feeling insufficiently prepared to address the managerial, pedagogical, and crisis-related responsibilities associated with their roles.

Second, the findings indicate that school directors assume a wide range of responsibilities that extend beyond traditional leadership functions. In addition to administrative management, directors are involved in extensive communication with NGO headquarters and ministry authorities, reporting and documentation requirements, and logistical coordination within their schools. In crisis-affected contexts, these responsibilities may further expand to include responding to student displacement, addressing resource shortages, and managing psychosocial challenges among students. Several directors also reported continuing to teach while carrying out leadership duties, illustrating the multiple and overlapping roles they are expected to fulfill. As educational leadership continues to gain prominence globally, this study seeks to not only enhance scholarly understanding but also provide valuable insights for practitioners and policymakers, by engaging in a context-sensitive inquiry. School leaders everywhere play a pivotal role in establishing and maintaining safe and stable learning environments; in chronic conflict settings such as Haiti, the more we understand about leaders' efforts and challenges, the more likely we are to be able to increase the potential for peaceful learning contexts.

## **Thematically focused panels**

### **TFP1**

#### **Educational Participation, Inclusion, and Challenges of School Non-Attendance in Secondary Education**

Educational participation has become a central concept in contemporary research on inclusive schooling. Building on the work of Mel Ainscow and others, participation is commonly understood as extending beyond students' physical presence in school to include their meaningful involvement in learning processes, social relations, and decision-making within educational environments. In parallel, sociocultural perspectives on learning developed by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger emphasize that learning occurs through participation in social practices and communities rather than through mere exposure to instruction. From this perspective, educational participation is not only a condition for learning but also a process through which students develop identities as learners and members of a school community.

In this panel, we approach educational participation in secondary schools as a multidimensional concept encompassing at least three interrelated dimensions: access, engagement, and influence. Access refers to students' presence in school and their opportunities to take part in educational activities. Engagement concerns their active involvement in learning processes and social interactions in the classroom and school community. Influence points to students'

possibilities to express their perspectives and contribute to shaping educational practices and environments.

Within this framework, school attendance problems represent a particularly critical challenge. When students are frequently absent from school, their access to educational opportunities is immediately restricted. Absence limits their possibilities for engagement in learning activities and peer relations and reduces their opportunities to participate in the social practices through which knowledge, belonging, and learner identities are constructed. In this sense, school non-attendance not only interrupts instruction but also constrains students' participation across multiple dimensions of educational life. However, the pandemic has also taught us that participation and leaning can be practiced in many ways, and research on, among others, school attendance problems found that schools are not able to fulfill educational needs of all students. By bringing together perspectives from inclusive education, intercultural learning, and research on school attendance, this panel combines contributions that explore how education research can better approach and explain the complex relationships between attendance, engagement, and inclusion in Europe and beyond. We aim to discuss with conference participants how educational practices can foster meaningful participation for all students and how institutional frameworks in different societies and education systems can facilitate or limit these possibilities.

### **Paper 1**

*Misako Nukaga*

*The University of Tokyo, Japan*

#### **School Alienation, Non-Attendance, and Recovery: A Longitudinal Case Study of an Immigrant Student in Japan**

School non-attendance has become an increasingly serious educational issue in Japan. The number of students who do not attend school has risen sharply in recent years, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. While a growing body of research has examined the causes of school non-attendance, relatively little attention has been paid to the experiences of students with migrant backgrounds, whose numbers have steadily increased since the 1990s. Existing studies on immigrant children in Japan have mainly focused on the issue of non-enrollment, emphasizing the institutional exclusion of foreign children who are not subject to compulsory schooling. However, much less is known about how immigrant students who are formally enrolled in public schools gradually disengage from school and eventually become non-attending. This study explores the mechanisms through which school non-attendance emerges among immigrant students by focusing on the concept of alienation from school.

The paper analyzes the case of a Filipino 1.5-generation student who migrated to Japan at the age of twelve and later experienced school non-attendance during junior high school. The analysis draws on sixteen years of longitudinal qualitative data, including field notes and interviews collected through continuous engagement with the student since 2009.

The findings show that the student maintained strong aspirations for higher education, reflecting the phenomenon of immigrant optimism. Nevertheless, his sense of belonging in school gradually weakened. Three layers of fragile social ties contributed to this process: peer relationships, teacher support, and school-family connections. Symbolic boundaries based on language proficiency and "Japaneseness" limited his participation in peer interactions. Teacher intervention was limited, and the disappearance of a learning supporter reduced opportunities for academic guidance. In addition, the student's parents had limited Japanese language ability and knowledge of the school system, which weakened communication between school and family.

The analysis also highlights the recovery process. Participation in an alternative learning support center provided a supportive environment where the student rebuilt social relationships and regained motivation for further education. The center fostered a “culture of mutual engagement and encouragement”, where everyday interactions helped rebuild Antonio’s sense of belonging and self-esteem.

By tracing the interaction of social ties across school, peer, and family contexts, this study proposes a pattern explaining how alienation from school leads to school non-attendance among immigrant students. The findings offer implications for policies and practices aimed at preventing school exclusion and supporting educational opportunities for students with migrant backgrounds.

## **Paper 2**

*Dahab Jihar*

*University of Birmingham, UK*

*Neil Hall*

*University of Birmingham, UK*

*Sarah Hall*

*University of Birmingham, UK*

### **England's Shifting Approach to School Attendance: A Post-Pandemic Analysis**

This research examines how educational policies and practices in England’s state schooling system have shifted in response to sustained post-pandemic absence rates. The 2024 Department for Education (DfE) statutory attendance policy, ‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’ (WTISA), governing attendance practice across thousands of schools in England aims to improve school attendance, particularly among children who are vulnerable, disadvantaged and with additional needs. The policy introduced sweeping reforms, including local school attendance support teams, a pilot intervention programme, regional attendance hubs, and a national data monitoring and analysis platform, in efforts to foster collaboration.

Using Bacchi’s ‘What is the Problem Represented to be’ (WPR) analytical framework, the WTISA policy is interrogated to explore assumptions, power relations, and identifying silences and potential alternative problematisation. Although the WPR framework has gained attention as a method of policy interrogation within wider public policy analysis, few studies have applied it to English educational policies and none within the context of school attendance.

The WPR analysis shows acute tensions between the graduated and multi-disciplinary approach of the WTISA policy – aimed at fostering an inclusive school culture, and addressing complex, proximal and distal factors influencing attendance – and the strict, punitive interventions of the policy which appear to shift blame from schools to parents. Mapping of heterogenous practices reveals key events that have driven current policy problematisation: local governments mandates, changes to legislation and school inspection frameworks, school lockdowns during the pandemic, social and emotional learning, curriculum changes, mental health and wellbeing policies and a parliamentary public inquiry into school attendance.

Policies in England use neutral terms of ‘attendance’ and ‘non-attendance’. However, the problem representation within government policies constructs a discourse of blame that ignores inadequacies within the education system and, most importantly, the voice of the child.

## **Paper 3**

*Susanne Kreitz-Sandberg*

**What can we understand about school attendance problems and its prevention from the perspective of school professionals? Results from an international comparative study**

This presentation summarises results from the project “School Attendance in International Comparison” (SAPIC), conducted in pre- and post-pandemic Europe and beyond. The purpose of the project was to investigate national, organisational and individual dimensions of school attendance problems (SAPs) in secondary education in Sweden, the UK, Germany and Japan. The project used a mixed method approach combining quantitative analysis of large-scale data at the national level with qualitative case studies at the organisational and individual levels.

School attendance can be understood as a precondition for participation in education with its multiple dimensions of involvement in learning processes and social interactions in the classroom and belonging to a school community. Findings from the quantitative studies (Kreitz-Sandberg et al, 2023; Fredriksson et al., 2023, 2024) underline the need for more consistent data collections and complementary qualitative research in order to better understand the underlying mechanisms and consequences of school attendance problems.

The presentation specifically focuses on what can be learned about SAPs and their prevention from the perspective of school professionals. We conducted individual interviews with school leaders and focus groups with other school actors such as teachers, special needs teachers, SENCOs, school social workers and other school health professionals. These school actors provide valuable insights into effective strategies for prevention and intervention of SAPs. Their perspectives emphasize the importance of school-wide structures, early detection, and coordinated support systems. The presentation builds on previously published articles covering case studies from Sweden and Germany (Enderle et al., 2025, Kreitz-Sandberg et al., 2025). If time allows, comparisons will also be drawn with results from England and Japan, which have earlier been presented in conferences by Dahab Jihar (The University of Birmingham), Takayoshi Beppu (The University of Tokyo) and the presenter herself, but which have not yet been published.

The experiences of school professionals – strongly shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic – also provide insights into changing attendance patterns. Teachers in both Sweden and Germany reported that some students struggled to return to school routines after periods of remote learning, particularly those who had previously experienced attendance difficulties or had special educational needs. At the same time, the increased use of digital communication and hybrid teaching created new opportunities for supporting students who were unable to attend school physically (Kreitz-Sandberg et al., 2025).

Overall, professionals’ perspectives highlight the importance of coordinated, school-wide approaches that combine relational support, structured monitoring systems, and collaboration with families and external services.

## **TFP2**

### **Citizen Learning Amidst Disinformation and Social Conflict: Young People and Teachers Co-Constructing Curriculum through Transnational Dialogue**

*Chair: Lee Jerome*

One of the distinctive challenges of contemporary citizenship and political discourse is that young people (and many adults) are inundated with instantaneous but unreliable information and images, including intolerant or extremist opinions, which can be encountered through everyday communication. Against this backdrop, existing approaches to teaching about

controversial issues and online information may not engage with students' myriad situated experiences, strong emotions, or digital cultures and capabilities, which often remain disconnected from planned school curriculum.

This panel brings together initial findings from a transnational participatory study in Canada, Croatia, and England, *Co-Constructing Curriculum in Conflict (4Cs): Learning Amidst Disinformation and Social Conflict*, which is exploring how young people's experiences and democratic citizenship learning in schools may address divisive issues and intolerance, in contemporary contexts where young people are influenced by online disinformation and conspiracy narratives. In the 4Cs project, student and teacher participants are engaging in collaborative inquiry and dialogue in local settings, to discern needs and co-construct new educational projects to facilitate meaningful mutual engagement about the difficult social conflict issues and media sources the young people consider important.

In this panel, paper 1 provides the inquiry's rationale and a discussion of relevant literature to situate the broader project within the existing theories and practices of controversial issues pedagogy, conspiracy theory, media and critical literacy. Papers 2 and 3 share some initial findings from the first phases of the research, by exploring the experiences, perceptions and concerns of teachers (paper 2) and students (paper 3) in each context. This enables the panel to consider how schools are (and are not) engaging meaningfully with such challenges and, if so, with what effects. We also consider the ways in which these divisive issues and disinformation dilemmas manifest themselves in different national and school contexts. In the ongoing final phase of the research, students, teachers and researchers are co-constructing lessons and learning resources to tackle challenges requested by students. The papers will provide some insights into which issues are being addressed (and how) in these practical school-based projects. Overall the panel will provide comparative and transnational insights into student and teacher perspectives and experiences of the role schools play (and might develop) in relation to divisive issues encountered in and through online contexts.

### **Paper 1**

*Lee Jerome*

*Middlesex University, UK*

*Zrinka Ristic Dedic*

*Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, Croatia*

*Kathy Bickmore*

*OISE University of Toronto, Canada*

*Ben Kisby*

*University of Lincoln, UK*

### **Framing the curriculum in conflict: moving beyond existing advice for teachers in relation to divisive issues and media**

**Purpose:** In this paper we explore the foundations of the 4Cs project, which aims to find novel ways to promote learning about young people's encounters with divisive social issues (defined as emotive, experienced as meaningful, and often aligned with in-group identification and distancing from Others). These divisive issues, including the rise of racist and misogynistic influencers and the online media circulation of disinformation and conspiracy theories, constitute threats to democratic culture, trust, and citizen participation. Teaching about (and through) these divisive issues and (dis)information-opinion sources is situated at the nexus between controversial issues pedagogy, education about conspiracy theories, and digital media

literacy, and the 4Cs project aims to explore how to bring together transnational comparative insights from these lines of theory and practice to frame effective teaching interventions.

Theoretical framework: The problem of disinformation, plural and contradictory sources, and escalating social conflict and violence poses a fundamental challenge to contemporary modes of curriculum and schooling. While the range of information sources and ideological perspectives available to young people have multiplied and sped up exponentially, official school knowledge typically assumes or relies upon unitary truths affirmed by disciplinary experts (Apple, 2000). As McEneaney (2015, p.813) cautions, “the opportunity to encounter knowledge is not the same as acquiring it,” thus some kind of information-media literacy education is more essential than ever. To address this challenge requires recognizing and building upon young people’s informal knowledge and building bridges between these forms of knowledge and the curriculum delivered by teachers. This disconnect between students’ informal knowledges and the official knowledge of the curriculum creates varied challenges for teachers and calls into question aspects of what and how teachers teach. This educational problem mirrors the broader democratic problem that the erosion of standards of truth means that everything looks like a (potential) lie, which creates the prospect that ‘politics collapses into the personal and irrational’ and ‘civic culture withers’ (Giroux, 2020).

Methods: This paper draws on our analysis of research and teacher guidance literature which addresses how to teach about conflictual issues and media in the classroom. As well as a theoretically informed discussion of the approaches adopted in this literature, we include a report from a review of 99 articles and handbooks to identify common pedagogic strategies and learning intentions.

## **Paper 2**

*Boris Jokic*

*Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, Croatia*

*Jeremy Hayward*

*UCL Institute of Education, UK*

*Yucci Liao*

*OISE University of Toronto, Canada*

*Paula Filipec*

*Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, Croatia*

*Dareen Fatimah*

*OISE University of Toronto, Canada*

### **Handling Divisive Issues and Media Sources in the Classroom: Teachers’ Perceptions and Practices in Canada, Croatia and England**

Purpose: This paper focuses on how teachers in three contexts experience and handle issues that are divisive and difficult to talk about, and the media sources that propel them, in their classrooms and in interactions with their students. We consider which key divisive issues and media communication challenges they identify as affecting their students, and what pedagogical approaches they adopt to address (or avoid) some of these. We also explore the facilitating and inhibiting factors they encounter within their respective settings.

Theoretical framework: Our account of teachers' professional concerns and choices is framed by several theoretical elements. First, a key insight from the scholarship on controversial issues pedagogy concerns how issues become more or less controversial depending on the passage of time, the development of local-global political and social norms, and the specific context in which controversial topics are being discussed. Second, work on conspiracy theories and online extremism highlights issues that are not 'controversial' in the strict sense, but often reflect the views of small groups holding irrational, or ill-informed beliefs at least within a school's official knowledge framework. By adopting a broader focus on conflictual and divisive issues, we seek to explore practical ways for teachers to engage with such challenges to democracy in their classrooms. Third, we draw on the concept of 'ecological agency' to account for the ways in which teachers' decisions and actions are shaped by specific (trans)national and historical contexts (including curriculum, institutional culture, collegial support, student behaviour, and the wider socio-political and media environment).

Methods: In each country, three schools participated in the project. In each school, we conducted a focus group with teachers and in-depth individual interviews with teacher co-researchers to explore their practices, contexts, and experiences. The data will be analysed comparatively within each country, and across Canada, Croatia and England. Initial findings will be further discussed in an online transnational meeting with teachers and researchers.

Results: At the time of writing the research team is in the early stages of data analysis. The presentation of findings will include discussion of which divisive and media issues are highlighted in each setting, in relation to teachers' accounts of their contexts. We will also discuss what pedagogical approaches teachers adopt and consider to be effective or problematic. In addition to their own classroom practices, we will discuss how teachers in each setting perceive the school and community contexts as informing their experiences.

### **Paper 3**

*Kathy Bickmore*

*OISE University of Toronto, Canada*

*Faiza Hyder*

*Institutional Affiliation: Middlesex University, UK*

*Maria Paz Faundez-Bastías*

*OISE University of Toronto, Canada*

*Vlaho Kavain*

*Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, Croatia*

*Ruba Kallab*

*OISE University of Toronto, Canada*

### **Students' capabilities and educational needs in relation to conflictual issues and media (un)reliability in Croatia, England, and Canada**

Purpose: This paper focuses on how young people in each setting, aged 12-16, experience and handle issues that are divisive and difficult to talk about in school and beyond, including social and news media reliability. We pursued two strands of enquiry: first, which key issues they identify as divisive and, second, in what platforms, sites and modes they encounter such issues.

Theoretical framework: Digital media ownership, platforms, and usage have shifted enormously in recent years, contributing to the escalation of conflict and division (Schirch,

2021). Today's young people are immersed in environments that include the digital world (Chinn et al, 2021). Our approach to collective theory-and-practice-building takes seriously the idea that young people are experts in their own lives and that teachers and curriculum-makers may not readily understand young people's perspectives on many of the issues that affect them, especially where such diverse issues are mediated through differentiated and individualised online sources. By acknowledging that young people are 'differently knowledgeable' about online media, and foregrounding students' own interpretive frames (Cook-Sather, 2002), our approach seeks to disrupt some of the adult assumptions and knowledge gaps that may limit pedagogic possibilities (Simon, 2012). Transnational comparisons and contrasts deepen our comprehension of challenges and options.

**Methods:** These data were generated through a series of activities conducted in class during regular lesson time. The initial lesson focused on what issues young people experience as divisive and difficult to talk about. In the second lesson young people constructed visual representations of their experiences (and knowledge) of the online world where these issues circulate, and its consequences. In a third lesson they shared their experiences of whether and (if so) how these issues were discussed in school and made suggestions for what they would like the school to teach. Additional insights are drawn from interviews and a focus group with teachers at the same schools.

**Results:** At the time of writing the analysis is at an early stage but the presentation of data will address what issues are identified as important by young people in each setting, and why. We will also present an analysis of their understandings of the online world, what they identify as important and missing from their knowledge and capabilities. We will also discuss what and how they wish schools would offer for addressing these issues, in relation to each transnational context.

### **TFP3**

#### **Learning at the edge of Nations – Education in the Borderlands**

*Chair: Univ-Prof. Daniel Tröhler, University of Vienna*  
*Commentator: Dr. phil Sophie Pia Stieger, University of Zürich*

While border studies have traditionally been rooted in political science, sociology, and history, this panel argues that integrating educational science offers a vital, reciprocal contribution to both fields. We move beyond the view of education as merely "shaped" by borders, instead positing that educational practices actively participate in the production and performance of borders.

We conceptualize borders not as static lines, but as fluid, co-constructed outcomes of social practices. Drawing on the "spatial turn" in the history of education and recent developments in border studies—specifically the lenses of seeing at, across, into, and like the border (Gerst & Krämer, 2021)—this panel frames education as a space-making practice. We challenge the assumption that learning unfolds within pre-given scales (national or global), arguing instead that education is instrumental in stabilizing or destabilizing geopolitical and cultural orders.

This panel addresses a significant theoretical gap regarding education's role in shaping spatial orders by proposing new analytical categories. Empirically, we examine diverse institutional and geographic contexts through three distinct lenses. First, we investigate international branch campuses and the complexities of global mobility. Second, we explore varied "border-examples" across the Americas, including the Arizona ethnic studies ban, the lived experiences of transborder students at the US-Mexico border, and the integration of indigenous Queer language and philosophy into Quebec's schooling. Finally, we analyze a historical case from

post-war Europe to demonstrate how education was instrumentalized within borderlands for the purpose of nation-building.

By synthesizing these varied temporal and geographical cases, the panel demonstrates how institutionalized learning serves as a primary site for the maintenance, reproduction, and contestation of borders.

### **Paper 1**

*Enikő Gosztom*

*University of Vienna, Austria*

#### **Between Nations, Schools, and Ideologies: Borderland Education after the Dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy**

This presentation aims to explore how learning takes place in spaces that were once constructed as a single imperial territory but, following the emergence of nation-states, ended up on different sides of a border. These borders became decisive for how pupils lived, which languages they spoke, and which nation they came to identify with. It will discuss the results of a study that is based on two complementary theoretical perspectives, combining border studies and educational theory. On the one hand, it builds on the assumption that education is a central contributor to the making of national citizens. Rather than being a purely top-down phenomenon, this process relies on mechanisms of production and reproduction through learning. Drawing on the concept of national literacies (Tröhler 2020), the study argues that the ability to engage in national sense-making within a given context constitutes a significant educational goal. On the other hand, the study adopts the theoretical lens of seeing into the border (Gerst/Krämer, 2021), which shifts the focus from borders as fixed lines to borderlands as multidimensional social spaces and in-between cultural phenomena. Borderlands thus become analytical categories through which they can be understood as both products and producers of social, cultural, and historical processes.

The presentation sheds light on the results of an archival research project conducted in the former borderlands of Austro-Hungary in the 1920s, following the dissolution of the Monarchy and the emergence of new nation-states. After losing the First World War, the Monarchy dissolved in 1918 and two new states emerged: the Hungarian Republic and the Republic of German Austria. However, the precise location of the border between these territories became a contested issue. Between 1918 and 1922, the question of the border's exact course led to ongoing political and military conflict, particularly in the culturally and linguistically mixed region of West Hungary / Burgenland. Despite these broader geopolitical uncertainties, schooling continued to function in this particular region. Yet what exactly happened within formal educational institutions during this period in these regions remained largely unclear.

By adopting this approach, the presentation demonstrates, first, how primarily national-centralised ideas of education are challenged in borderland contexts; second, how learners' identities and knowledge are largely shaped by spaces that transcend nationalised understandings of borders; and finally, how bordering practices in education contribute to the active co-construction of borders, revealing the ways in which education can be instrumentalised within these processes.

### **Paper 2**

*Jennifer Wallner*

*University of Ottawa, Canada*

*Gavin Furrey*

### **Education at, across, in, and as a border**

The concept of a border is vexing. Most often, borders are seen as lines demarcating zones of legitimized authority. The multidisciplinary field of border studies continues to reveal the fluid, elusive, and diverse manifestations of borders in human societies. Broken down into three main tracts of geopolitical conceptualizations of borders, cultural conceptualizations of borders and critical studies of borders, Dominik Gerst and Hannes Krämer (2021) identified four perspectives to the investigations of borders: seeing at the border, seeing across the border, seeing into the border, and seeing like a border. This paper situates education within each of these perspectives, opening new lines of inquiry for border studies while re-examining education through various border perspectives. Education is both a product and producer of social processes associated with borders as tangible points and bordering as process and practice. Education, moreover, offers a compelling focus for investigating borders, as it situated at the interstices of geopolitical and cultural phenomenon. Using vignettes from the Americas, we explore how education is at, across, in and like a border. Seeing “at” the border emphasizes the significance of borders as demarcating the order of a (common) inside. Schooling equally serves to “signify the end of respective state territories, their sovereignty, and their identity” (p. 19), as demonstrated by Arizona’s ethnic studies ban (2010-2016). Seeing “across the border” emphasises the connecting rather than separating functions of borders. Schooling again emerges as an integrated mechanism of this border function, as illustrated by the tens of thousands of “transborder students” living in Mexico who attend schools in the United States. Seeing “into the border” draws attention to the “frontier” or “contact zone” are spaces in which we can appreciate “in between phenomena.” In Northern Quebec, for example, efforts to bring Cree language and ways of thinking into schools mix with Western learning imperatives demanded by both provincial curriculum and economic indispensability. Finally, seeing “like a border” appreciates border-related meaning-making. Studying education as a generative site of paradoxes and contractions of the border allows us to appreciate and critique the origins and legacies of mass systems of education imbricated in processes of statecraft. This exploratory examination of the role of schooling within these four perspectives is an asset to both fields, enriching our theoretical understandings of both schooling and borders in the 21st century.

### **Paper 3**

*Lourens van Haften*

*University of Groningen, Nederlander*

### **What Happened to Space? Revisiting the Spatial Turn in Educational History**

Over the past three decades, questions of space and place have been intensely debated across neighbouring fields such as human geography, sociology, and the history of knowledge. These debates have challenged container-like conceptions of space, advancing relational, material, and place-based understandings that emphasise how spatial formations are historically produced, grounded, and contested. In the history of education, the so-called spatial turn—emerging in the late 1990s and early 2000s alongside discussions of globalization, transnational circulation (Beech & Larsen, 2014; Fuchs & Roldán Vera, 2019; McLeod et al., 2019), and critiques of methodological nationalism—appeared to align with these developments. It promised to move the field beyond nationally bounded narratives and to rethink educational ideas, institutions, and practices in spatial terms.

Yet the engagement of educational historiography with spatial theory has remained partial. While historians of education readily adopted the language of circulation, mobility, and transnational connection, they rarely engaged more deeply with debates about what space and

place are and how they are constituted. In particular, the productive role of education in shaping spatial orders has remained under-theorised. As a result, spatial categories such as the national, European, or global often continue to function as pre-given analytical scales rather than as historical outcomes in which education played an active role.

This paper revisits the spatial turn as an unfinished theoretical project in the history of education. Engaging debates between relational conceptions of space—most prominently associated with Doreen Massey (2005)—and place-based approaches that emphasise grounding, materiality, and situatedness—particularly in the work of Jeff Malpas (2018, 2019)—the paper argues for a renewed focus on education as a space-making practice. Taking seriously Malpas’s claim that place is ontologically prior to space, and that spatial relations emerge from the connectedness of places, the paper foregrounds how educational institutions and practices both depend on and actively reconfigure place in the production of wider spatial formations.

To explore what such a reorientation implies, the paper turns to the phenomenon of international branch campuses as an analytically revealing phenomenon. Rather than treating branch campuses primarily as sites of knowledge transfer, global diffusion, or “states of exception” the analysis approaches them as educational institutions that actively produce space. Through regulatory arrangements, material infrastructures, institutional imaginaries, and claims to transnational equivalence, international branch campuses participate in the making of new spatial formations that both depend on place and transcend it.

By foregrounding education’s role in the production of multiple, overlapping spaces, the paper makes a plea for revisiting the spatial turn not as a completed shift, but as an unfinished historiographical agenda. Doing so, it argues, allows historians of education to engage more substantively with spatial theory and to better account for the material, institutional, and subjective dimensions through which educational spaces are historically constituted.

## TFP4

### **Pasts, Presents, and Futures of Learning: Comparative Sociotechnical Imaginaries of Education Governance**

*Chair: Prateeksha Tiwari*

This panel brings together four interconnected papers examining how sociotechnical imaginaries (STIs) shape worlds of learning across historical, global, national, and local sites of education governance. Focusing on the genealogy of lifelong-learning and AI imaginaries in Sweden (Rahm), the enactment of digitalisation through UNESCO’s Maturity Assessment Tool (Primus), sociotechnical imaginaries of rural primary education in China and India (Tiwari), and the reproduction of nationhood through the digitalisation of education in socialist and post-socialist contexts (Piattoeva), the panel draws on Jasanoff and Kim’s (2015) concept of STIs as shared visions of the future in which science and technology play a central role.

**Objectives and main issues**

The panel applies a comparative perspective along three intersecting dimensions. First, it compares temporalities of educational futures, tracing how historically sedimented imaginaries of technological change structure present policy problematisations (Rahm), while global governance instruments stabilise “present futures” through artefacts (Primus). Second, it compares scales of governance, examining how global policy instruments translate imaginaries into travelling templates, how national projects of digitalisation and nation-building are

performed through education (Piattoeva), and how these visions are negotiated in local educational practices. Third, it offers cross-contextual comparison, juxtaposing rural STIs in China and India to surface alignments, tensions, and alternatives that complicate state-led narratives of EdTech-enabled development (Tiwari).

Across these dimensions, the panel addresses questions central to comparative education: Who defines desirable educational futures? How do policy tools, infrastructures, and pedagogical practices perform and stabilise those futures? And how do imaginaries of equity, modernisation, and progress interact with local identities, national projects, and global governance logics?

Main perspectives

STIs provide the common analytical lens, extended through complementary approaches. Actor–Network Theory traces how tools, indicators, and actors co-produce educational futures (Primus). Genealogical methods (Foucault; Bacchi) reveal historically contingent problematisations and power relations (Rahm). Comparative Case Study methodology (Vavrus & Bartlett) enables vertical (state–local) and horizontal (cross-national) comparison of rural imaginaries (Tiwari). Theorisation of banal nationalism and public pedagogy foregrounds how digitalisation in education sustains national imaginaries (Piattoeva).

Structure

We propose to structure the session (120 minutes) into two main parts: presentations and discussion. In the first part, the papers will be presented by the authors (20 minutes each). In the second part, our discussant Saija Volmari (University of Jyväskylä) introduces the discussion with a response to the papers (10 minutes), followed by a discussion open to audience and participants (30 minutes).

### **Paper 1**

*Prateeksha Tiwari*

*University of Vienna, Austria*

#### **Whose Future is it Anyway? Comparative Analysis of Sociotechnical Imaginaries of Rural Education in China and India**

This paper explores how experiences, perceptions, and expectations of rural communities shaped in the light of technology-facilitated education in primary education can be conceptualised as local sociotechnical imaginaries in rural China and rural India and compares these imaginaries with state-led visions to surface alignments, tensions, and alternative sites of power. Drawing on Jasanoff and Kim’s concept of sociotechnical imaginaries (2015) — “collectively held, institutionally stabilised visions of desirable futures attainable through technology” — the paper extends the approach to show how multiple, locally rooted STIs coexist with, modify, or resist national imaginaries embedded in education and development policy.

China and India, at different stages of development and influence, offer a revealing comparative case. Despite divergent political systems, policy instruments, and histories, both articulate mid-21st-century goals of modernisation and development that link rural uplift to educational digitalisation (Modi, 2023; Xi, 2022). With large rural student populations, states promote EdTech as a strategy for communal prosperity, embedding state-sanctioned imaginaries in policy. Rural communities, however, are not passive recipients: they actively shape how technologies and pedagogies are adopted, reinterpreting them through local values, identities, and aspirations. A comparative lens on China and India surfaces how rurality is dynamic—more than a geographic location, it is a set of meanings that influence what counts as a desirable future for children, communities, and the nation.

This paper argues for attending to locally rooted rural imaginaries on their own terms and for examining tensions between state-led EdTech narratives and locally grounded visions of learning, equity, and social reproduction. Using comparative policy analysis and ethnographic fieldwork, the paper juxtaposes policy texts, interviews, and observations to trace how imaginaries travel and are contested. Vavrus and Bartlett's Comparative Case Study (CCS) approach will be used for comparing across two axes: between national and local STI of rural education in China and India respectively (vertical axis); and between local STIs of rural education in China and India (horizontal) (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016). This will lend insight into state-society dynamics across different political systems and cross-cultural constructions of rurality.

## **Paper 2**

*Franziska Primus  
Örebro University, Sweden*

### **Co-constructing Present Futures of Learning in Global Education Governance UNESCO's Maturity Assessment Tool for Digital Transformation**

This paper investigates how sociotechnical (Jasanoff, 2015) and educational imaginaries (Rahm, 2019) of digital transformation are entangled, enacted, and stabilised through the Maturity Assessment Tool from UNESCO's Digital Transformation Collaborative (DTC). Drawing on Actor–Network Theory (Latour, 2005), the study conceptualises the tool not merely as an evaluative framework but as an actant that performs agency by translating political visions, institutional expectations, and technological assumptions into (measurable) indicators of “digital maturity.” Agency is therefore understood as relational within this contemporary network of UNESCO's education-technology nexus (Priem, 2023). Rawat (2025) demonstrates how UNESCO's partnerships with Big Tech are notably shaping it.

As part of UNESCO's global governance network, the DTC tool is positioned to define what counts as digital progress and readiness in education systems. By tracing its development, diffusion, and uptake, this paper explores how the tool constructs and circulates sociotechnical imaginaries of digital transformation in education. These visions, in which technological advancement is both inevitable and desirable, shape global standards, potentially leaving limited space for alternative, context-sensitive pathways of educational change.

In alignment with ANT, the project follows the tool across different sites of inscription, including policy documents, guidelines, platforms, and reports, treating these as performative inscriptions embedded in the hybrid network of Global Education Governance of Digital Transformation (Nimmo, 2011). Through this tracing, the paper aims to uncover how the tool mediates between sociotechnical and educational imaginaries, and how these entanglements are represented and enacted within the global education governance network.

In this context of datafication and digitalisation efforts in close entanglement with marketisation processes in education, as well as technological advances such as generative artificial intelligence (AI), sociotechnical imaginaries appear essential for present futures (Primus, 2025) in general and in education in particular. This paper argues that we, as scholars, can exercise analytical courage by using unconventional approaches to unearth the hidden infrastructures of digital governance. Understanding the tool as an actant invites us to rethink educational agency as relational and entangled in sociotechnical networks that shape what education and learning can become in the digital age.

Rahm, Lina (2019). *Educational imaginaries: A genealogy of the digital citizen* [Doctoral dissertation, Linköping University]. Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press.

Rawat, Bhavna (2025, October 31). Exploring UNESCO's entanglements with big tech through GEC and DTC [Conference presentation abstract]. Digital technology and education: Approaches, industries, practices, Melbourne, Australia. <https://redi.deakin.edu.au/event/digital-technology-and-education-approaches-industries-practice/>

### **Paper 3**

*Lina Rahm*

*KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden*

#### **A Genealogy of Sociotechnical Imaginaries and Lifelong Learning**

This paper develops a genealogical approach to analyzing how sociotechnical imaginaries of AI and automation have shaped lifelong learning policy and practice. Drawing on Foucault's genealogical method, I examine how historically contingent visions of technological futures have transformed education from an emancipatory project into a mechanism of proactive governance, positioning citizens as perpetually in need of updating for an always-imminent technological future.

The analysis combines Jasanoff and Kim's (2015) concept of sociotechnical imaginaries, collectively held, institutionally stabilized visions of desirable futures attainable through technology, with Foucault's (1977) notion of problematisations and Bacchi's (2009) "What's the problem represented to be?" approach. This framework reveals how problem representations co-construct proposed solutions, making them appear not only possible but necessary. I demonstrate how sociotechnical imaginaries exist not only in discourse but as sociomaterial realities embedded in artifacts, systems, and infrastructures.

Following Decuyper and Lewis's (2021) "topological genealogy," the analysis starts "in the middle" of present policy discourse and works both backwards and forwards to trace how imaginaries and problematisations produce desirable subjects. The method emphasizes non-teleological attention to changing relationships and their effects, examining how educational imaginaries about AI and lifelong learning shape power relations through everyday normalization rather than repression.

The study presents two historical cases demonstrating this analytical approach. First, I analyze GUSTAV, a Swedish computer system controlling popular education (folkbildning), examining how risk, transparency, and quality assessment imaginaries materialize in surveillance infrastructure. Second, I trace Union Section 1050's 1974 protest against computerized Taylorism at Swedish State Railways (Ehn, Erlander & Karlsson, 1978), revealing how deskilling/reskilling discourse emerged as compromise between labor and capital, ultimately transforming resistance into demands for continuing education.

The genealogy demonstrates that educational imaginaries precede and enable datafication, not vice versa. Technical innovation is not always "in the driver's seat"; rather, education proactively facilitates technological diffusion by transforming citizens into perpetually updatable subjects. The cases reveal discursive shifts: while 1970s workers could demand the "power to blackbox" knowledge and resist micro-management, contemporary discourse makes such resistance incomprehensible. Current imaginaries position lifelong learning as inevitable response to rapid change, creating circular logic where education simultaneously causes and solves problems created by imagined AI futures, thereby accelerating technological adoption while foreclosing alternatives

### **Paper 4**

*Nelli Piattoeva*

**National sociotechnical imaginaries: the role of digitalizing education and society**

This presentation focuses on the intertwinement of nationhood, digitalization, and education broadly defined (as public pedagogy, schooling, and socialization; see Ninh & Piattoeva, 2025). It examines how different categories of actors—such as lay citizens, educational entrepreneurs, and museums—act as nation-builders. In particular, I explore how they deploy national identity, national temporality, and national spatiality in discourses and practices surrounding the digitalization of society and education. The empirical materials draw on diverse qualitative sources, including interviews, observations at a museum exhibition, and memory fragments.

Nationhood is an imagined bond of cohesion and solidarity among its perceived members, reiterating an image of the world as composed of mutually exclusive nations. The metaphor of nationhood as “grounded” (Malešević, 2019) demonstrates that its success lies not in its visible presence but in its obscurity, which raises the challenge of making this obscurity perceptible. We tend to notice how technologies actually or potentially transform our nationally framed worlds, but we often overlook how they enable these worlds to endure.

I start from the claim of the ongoing nature of nationhood—that is, the nation as evolving and continuing rather than fixed—shaped by and responsive to both deliberate and unintentional actions of various actors and their collectives. Quotidian or banal nationalism (Antonsich 2020; Billig 1995) positions various actors as ethno-political entrepreneurs and mediators of the nation (Mihelj 2023; Mihelj and Jiménez-Martínez 2021), thereby challenging the assumption that only state actors and power elites play key roles in the process.

There are at least three intertwined ways in which the digitalization of society and education reproduces nationhood through these actors’ practices. First, nationhood is a familiar and productive trope to capitalize on when promoting diverse interests. Just as politicians bolster their legitimacy through nationalist discourses—claiming to represent and serve their nation best—other actors also use nationalism to foster legitimacy or assert relevance. They may reproduce nationhood both habitually (because they operate within a nationalist syntax; see Calhoun 2017) and strategically (because they know it resonates). Second, digitalization symbolizes progress. Promoting digitalization—whether of society in general or education in particular—is thus analogous to performing progress and development, both of which are symbols of a thriving modern nation. These performances can be strategic (as in museums) or habitual (as in individuals’ shifting identities). Third, given that education remains heavily national—governed by national authorities, guided by national curricula, and imagined as a vehicle of national socialization—the digitalization of education provides new tools for embedding national literacies across school subjects (Tröhler 2020).

**TFP5**

**Reproducing and Reimagining Comparative and International Education: Teaching Practices Across Contexts**

*Chair: Susanne Kreitz-Sandberg*

This thematically focused panel examines how Comparative and International Education (CIE) is taught, enacted, and reshaped across diverse higher education contexts. In line with the conference theme *Worlds of Learning: Comparative Perspectives on the Future(s) of Education*, the panel shifts attention to the discipline itself: how is CIE reproduced,

transformed, and reimagined through pedagogical practice in a period marked by global mobility, digitalisation, and increasing market pressures in higher education?

Comparative and International Education has long analysed educational change across contexts. Yet less attention has been given to how the field itself is shaped through teaching practices, curriculum design, assessment strategies, and institutional histories. The four papers approach this question from complementary perspectives across Sweden, Spain, England, and a wider nine-country synthesis.

The first paper reflects on the development and pedagogical choices of the International and Comparative Education Master's Programme at Stockholm University, examining how curriculum design, assessment practices, and extracurricular activities shape students' disciplinary identity and sense of belonging within the field. The second paper presents the HEDUCOM podcast initiative at UNED (Spain), exploring how digital and distance-learning innovations contribute to disseminating and revitalising CIE in contemporary higher education. The third paper analyses four interrelated pedagogical principles underpinning a postgraduate module in an English university context. It explores how dialogic questioning, creative assessment, guest speakers, and case-based inquiry are used to cultivate reflexivity, destabilise taken-for-granted national narratives, and sustain the foundational identity of Comparative and International Education in a shifting higher education landscape. The fourth paper offers a comparative synthesis of teaching practices and assessments across nine countries, providing an insider perspective on how educators design meaningful and culturally responsive learning experiences in the field.

Taken together, the panel highlights different “worlds of learning” within CIE and invites reflection on how pedagogical decisions contribute to shaping the future(s) of the discipline. By foregrounding teaching as a site of disciplinary construction, the session creates space for collective dialogue among comparativists about shared challenges, innovations, and responsibilities. Ample time will be reserved for discussion with the audience, fostering an exchange of experiences and strengthening the pedagogical community within CESE.

### **Paper 1**

*Susanne Kreitz-Sandberg  
Stockholm University, Sweden*

#### **Teaching International and Comparative Education at Stockholm University: Experiences and Insights from the ICE Master's Programme**

The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the teaching and learning of International and Comparative Education (ICE) through an analysis of the ICE Master's Programme at Stockholm University. The programme is used as a case for discussing how International and Comparative Education can be taught today and for contributing to a broader exchange with similar courses and programmes in Europe.

The paper is grounded in a comparative education perspective and draws on self-ethnography as an approach to analysing teaching practices and programme development. This perspective allows for a close examination of how pedagogical decisions are made within a specific institutional and historical context, while remaining open to comparison with other European settings.

Methodologically, the paper is based on reflective analysis of teaching a course “International and Comparative Education” and coordination the ICE Master's Programme, whose history dates back to the 1970s. The analysis focuses on decisions related to learning activities, course resources, and collaboration with partner institutions in the Comparative and International Education (CIE) field. Particular attention is paid to how these decisions shape students' experiences of the programme.

The empirical material consists of course and programme documentation, syllabi, assessment tasks, and accumulated teaching experiences. The paper analyses the balance between curriculum-based teaching and extracurricular activities and discusses how this balance influences students' sense of identity and belonging within the programme and the wider CIE field. Further themes include the role of formative assessment and the creation of safe learning spaces, as well as the use of summative assessment in relation to new challenges and opportunities arising from the increasing use of AI in teaching and research. The paper concludes by identifying key challenges and points for discussion that are relevant for further common discussions.

## **Paper 2**

*Alicia Sianes-Bautista*

*National University of Distance Education, Spain*

*Mónica Torres Sánchez*

*University of Málaga, Spain*

### **Teaching International and Comparative Education in distance higher education: The HEDUCOM podcast experience at the UNED (Spain)**

This paper pursues contributing to innovation in International and Comparative Education (ICE) teaching-learning processes in distance higher education. To fulfil this purpose, the experience of the podcast HEDUCOM at the UNED will be presented and discussed with colleagues from other universities. The paper is submitted under the thematically focused area entitled Teaching and Learning in International and Comparative Education.

The creation of HEDUCOM was linked to a project for innovation in distance teaching that continues today and it is rooted in two main ideas: On the one hand, Cowen (2023) used to reflect about the chameleonic idiosyncrasy of Comparative Education, as well as its sensitivity in relation to political and economic changes. Many other authors after him highlight the dynamic nature of International and Comparative Education too, considering it a “living” discipline. On the other hand, Schriewer (2019) states that Comparative Education and History of Education, far from walking different paths, must walk hand in hand and grow together. Other comparatists and historians also defend the view of reconciling both perspectives once and for all.

Methodologically, this paper is based on the idea of analysing the importance of disseminating the International and Comparative Education discipline through podcasts. But why a podcast? The advantages of using them as a didactic resource in higher education learning-teaching processes have been supported by authors like Sacoto Figueroa, et al. (2022), and some of the barriers that enounced Piñeiro Otero (2012) barely exist nowadays. Listening to podcasts is on trend and people are used to it (Guerrero-Navarro et al., 2023). The aims and scope of HEDUCOM are mainly focused on but not limited to contributing to the generation of online open access knowledge that students can use for learning asynchronously. Today, HEDUCOM is the only podcast in Spanish that addresses education topics from international, comparative, and historical perspectives.

Data sources and evidence frameworks are the podcast chapters that have been recorded and emitted so far, during 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 academic years. HEDUCOM is an open access podcast that can be found in CanalUNED, YouTube, iVoox and RNE (Spanish National Radio).

In conclusion, the identification of challenges as well as improvement opportunities within this project as a result of the aforementioned analysis will be presented. In addition, suggestions

related to how to address teaching, learning, and innovation processes in International and Comparative Education in the 21st Century universities will be provided as well.

### **Paper 3**

*William C. Smith*

*University of Edinburgh, UK*

#### **The diverse and evolving selection of activities and assessments in comparative education courses**

What activities and assessments are common in comparative education courses? Comparative education is an evolving field and while attention has been dedicated to the content or topics covered in university courses (for example see Kubow & Blosser, 2016), less attention has been given to how knowledge is transmitted and understood by students. The diversity of contexts, student backgrounds, and range of subjects – some potentially sensitive – covered in comparative education courses can make it challenging to craft meaningful activities that illicit student participation while honoring cultural differences and fostering a critical perspective. This presentation is based on a comparative synthesis of comparative education teacher’s experience and decision-making on what activities and assessment they include in their classroom. Complemented by past research, as part of the upcoming book *Teaching Comparative and International Education: Educator Experiences and Insights*, the synthesis highlights practices from comparative education teachers working in nine countries, with particular attention given to case studies in Sweden, Nigeria, and the USA. Qualitative content analysis is used to identify similar practices across the nine case studies. Results will further speak to how context, student composition, and epistemological orientation of the course shape the decision making around included activities. The synthesis, and associated volume, is designed to provide a ground up, insider perspective for those teaching or preparing to teach in comparative education.

### **TFP6**

#### **Remembrance and Forgetfulness: Memory, education and the contested process of (un)learning the past**

*Chair: Christian Gsandtner*

This panel addresses the pedagogical, performative and historical dimensions of memory as memory politics. While neither memory nor history is equivalent to the past as such, memory politics address how events, people and practices from the past are evoked and reinterpreted in accordance with contemporary cultural sensibilities, ethical dilemmas, and political demands, thereby transforming them into collective representations in the present (Traverso 2007). Through this process, memory is inherently conditioned by practices of forgetting. Conjugated in the political present, memory and forgetfulness shape rationalities emotionalities for institutional and private lives.

In this panel, we aim to discuss how certain historical processes and actors have been represented, recontextualised, and narrated in educational contexts. We will also analyse how memory politics and the practises of remembrance and forgetfulness have been actively questioned and challenged through various educational strategies and narratives by subaltern voices. Engaging with the politics of remembrance and forgetfulness, as well as “subaltern

memories,” we will focus on processes and actors who have been rendered invisible and excluded from official and hegemonic educational narratives.

### **Paper 1**

*Cristina Alarcón López  
University of Vienna, Austria*

#### **Disappeared Memory. The representation of the "desaparecidos" in history textbooks during post-dictatorial Chile (1990-2020)**

This presentation analyzes how enforced disappearances under Chile’s last civic-military dictatorship (1973–1990) are represented in post-dictatorship history textbooks (1990–2020). Textbooks act as a “mirror of the zeitgeist,” shaping identity and conveying official historical narratives (Lässig 2008), reflecting both hegemonic and silenced or invisibilized memories. Understanding these representations is essential for examining the formation of collective memory and historical consciousness after periods of state terror. Drawing on Daniel Feierstein (2011, 2014), the study employs historical discourse analysis (Landwehr 2004) on 21 official history textbooks approved by the Chilean Ministry of Education and used in primary and secondary schools. The analysis identifies discursive continuities and ruptures, deconstructing narratives, omissions, and emphases, and exploring their implications for collective memory. Preliminary results indicate that the disappeared are in general represented as marginal actors, reduced to anonymous victims identified by numbers without history, without biography, without any reference that relates to their entity as citizen. The crime scenes, methods, perpetrators, and the consequences of the forced disappearance are rarely described and remain diffuse. The hegemonic representation of the disappeared as victims not only tends to depoliticize their experiences and erase their acts of resistance against the dictatorship, but also blends the essential political motivation of the crime itself.

### **Paper 2**

*Pablo Andres Toro Blanco  
Alberto Hurtado University, Chile*

#### **Written on Distinct Paper: The Emotional (Popular) Remembrance and the Rational (School-Based) Forgetting of the Trauma of the Civil War. Chile, c.1891–c.1930**

As would occur again 82 years later, during another winter in Santiago de Chile, the body of a president who died by suicide was removed from the site of his death with little regard from those responsible for his overthrow and buried hastily and without public ceremony. The death of José Manuel Balmaceda on 19 September 1891 marked the end of the most devastating civil war Chile has experienced in its history.

Within the educational system, the congressional faction's victory led to the dismissal of teachers who had supported the defeated government. Certain acts of political persecution affected both educators and students. Nevertheless and surprisingly, the intense political polarization that had found expression—during the period of open military confrontation—in forms of hostility and violence unprecedented in the country (Cid & McEvoy, 2021) quickly gave way to a phase of reconciliation encouraged by the State through amnesty laws and reparative measures for the vanquished, as examined, among others, by Lira and Loveman (1999).

Against this backdrop, the aim of this paper is to reflect—through a dialogue between memory and history—on processes of remembrance and forgetting by contrasting two types of sources. The first consists of literary texts, both prose and poetry (e.g. Parnaso Balmacedista, 1897), in which the construction and dissemination of a “Balmacedist memory,” or memory of the

defeated, becomes evident. This memory emerged almost immediately after the conflict ended and the new parliamentary order was established, a period that dominated Chilean politics until the 1920s. The second corpus consists of history textbooks and school manuals used in both primary and secondary education. These materials, from the years immediately following the war onward, address the conflict and Balmaceda through strategies of acknowledgement, explanation, or oblivion that respond simultaneously to curricular frameworks and to affective imperatives underlying the disciplinary rationale of history education.

Among the issues we wish to shed light on are the following: how did the textbooks address (if at all) the vibrant and emotional social memory of Balmaceda and the civil war that poetry and popular literature kept alive? Were there affective or emotional arguments within the narrative of school manuals? To what extent is it possible to notice in these educational devices a discursive policy of oblivion of the bloodiest episode of Chilean history?

### **Paper 3**

*Synne Myrebøe*

*University of Vienna, Austria*

#### **Sentimental values: The practice of historiography as an art of memory**

Late 20th-century critical theory has trained scholars to read the writing of history in terms of exclusion and marginalisation, asking who and what are left out, or silenced from dominant narratives. Attention to the use of history has furthermore exposed how national, denominational and gendered ideologies prevail or change through discursive practices. While this remains important, I suggest that our present – characterised by a proliferation of voices and a highly mediated public sphere – invites a slightly different set of questions. What are the consequences of realising that history is not equivalent to the past? How might we think about the politics of historiography as previously hidden histories are exposed, and when the relationship between past and future appears increasingly uncertain? Furthermore, how does the practice of historiography as an art of memory and forgetfulness foster affective attachments and desires? Approaching historiography as an art of memory, this paper aims to open a space for reflection on its affective and political dimensions. Drawing on literary practices and examples from feminist and decolonial historiography, including work that predated these labels, alongside elements of new materialism, I explore how the writing of history can be reflected today. The aim is not to reveal or resolve tensions of different kinds, but to develop a vocabulary and reflective sensitivity that, even amid turbulence, can stay with the polyphony and sensibilities as well as the open-ended questions that contemporary theory of historiography and historiographical practices bring to the fore.

### **TFP7**

#### **Learning in a Material World: The National and Imperial Politics of Space, Territory and Technologies over the Course of the long 19th Century**

*Chair: Christian Gsandtner*

*Discussant: Josep Simon (University of Valencia).*

This panel explores how ‘the nation’ was imagined, taught, and stabilized through material culture by using education and learning as a vector. Bringing together case studies from Chile’s comprehensive schools, the United States’ land-grant institutions, and the Habsburg empire’s

military and technical schools, the papers examine how technologies and materialities like wall maps, atlases, surveying instruments, and visual-spatial exercises shaped understandings of national and imperial territory, belonging, and progress over the course of the long 19th century.

Rather than opposing discourse and materiality, the panel approaches the entanglement of education and nationalism in the three distinct contexts as materialized intellectual histories. Accordingly, by zooming in on surroundings, teaching devices and technologies the papers strive to reconstruct how the coordinates for the moral and political imagination of pupils and teachers, were embedded into everyday acts of seeing, measuring, and locating.

By tracing how technologies travelled across empires and republics, the panel demonstrates that the spatialization and territorialization of knowledge was not an exclusively European or colonial project but was instead weaved into the very fabric of modern education systems. Accordingly, the overarching hypothesis is that across these contexts, geographic artifacts and routines materialized ideas of order, productivity, and civic virtue while naturalizing distinctions between center and periphery, civilized and backward, developed and undeveloped.

### **Paper 1**

*Christian Gsandtner*  
*University of Vienna, Austria*

#### **Uplifting the Land: The Making of a National Territory & the Land-Grant Movement in the United States at the End of the 19th Century**

In many ways, the 19th century can be perceived as a watershed for US higher education and its politics. Not only did universities and colleges undergo dramatic expansion, but also fundamental ideas about the design, the justification, and the purpose of these institutions, were steadily contested. In 1862, amid a civil war, the passing of the ‘Morill Act’ constitutes one of the landmark legislations in the context of these debates, by introducing a novel form of institutions of higher education, commonly known as the ‘Land-Grant’ universities and colleges.

While the landscape of US higher education at this time was still very much defined by a British tradition of liberal arts universities, the Land-Grant movement positioned universities differently, from the teachers to the learners. It would prominently champion a vision of higher education that would provide the knowledge to transform the countryside and with it the emerging national territory (Harvey, 2023). During this time, a new strand of narratives surged. These narratives would put the focus on how through applied sciences and technologies, the very ‘land’ that was to become the United States could be transformed, modernized, and remapped into national territory (Nye, 2003). Accordingly, these narratives focused predominantly on regional realities but were not confined to this scope, as they were also keen to position themselves in a ‘global’ higher education space.

Aligning with the shared topic of the panel, this paper seeks to shed light on this curious part of US higher education history, by zooming in on the ‘Land-Grant’ movement through a historical-comparative approach. The overall argument proposes that this novel institution of higher education, centered on visions of transforming and developing the land, entailed a particular way of understanding republican nationhood, which was inherently tied to material progress and technological advancement.

### **Paper 2**

*Pablo Toro-Blanco*

**The Nation, the Liceo, the Science: convergences and divergences among concepts and materialities. Chile, c.1850-c.1910.**

The consolidation of the Chilean nation-state during the nineteenth century positioned the establishment of an educational system as a strategic undertaking of the ruling elites. The adoption and adaptation of foreign reference models produced a dual structure with limited internal articulation. Primary education was conceived as moralising and civilising, directed toward non-elite children, while secondary education in the liceos offered a humanistic and cosmopolitan curriculum. The latter sought to prepare cohorts capable of reproducing the State and embodying the values pursued by postcolonial Latin American elites: restricted liberal democracy, order, and economic and social progress. Within this framework, the cultivation of a shared national identity emerged as a central objective, as Felicitas Acosta (2022) has observed in her comparative analysis of Spanish America after independence.

Drawing upon primary sources preserved in national archives, this study examines the interrelation of three rhetorical and material components that converged and diverged during the period under consideration, thereby illuminating the dual character of secondary education as both a nationalising and globalising process. First, attention is directed to the rhetorical dissemination and concrete experience of what Kivimäki, Suodenjoki, and Vahtikari (2021) define as the “lived Nation,” understood as an entanglement of personal, social, and collective dimensions that transcends linear causalities and hierarchical structures. This conception reveals a phenomenon more complex and heterogeneous than nationalism conceived solely as ideology or discourse. In Chile, such experiences were embedded in formative spaces saturated with discourses and propaedeutic practices of public life, notably within the liceos. These institutions functioned as arenas where practices of national belonging were articulated alongside cosmopolitan aspirations, thereby reflecting the constitutive tension of nineteenth-century secondary education.

Third, science emerged as a discontinuous yet significant component. Its presence is approached through the lens of school material culture, with particular emphasis on institutional efforts to define and implement the scientific cabinets (laboratories). These devices represented a local manifestation of a global apparatus of knowledge, linking Chilean education to broader cosmopolitan currents. Following Julian Yates (2022), materiality is interpreted as the intertwining of substance, ideas, belief, design, and form that constitute the built world. In this sense, material culture and ideology intersected within the programmatic space historically embodied by the educational system.

**Paper 3**

*Kevser Muratovic*

*University of Vienna, Austria*

**Engineering Imperial Cohesion: Military Education, Educational Materials and Spatial Order in the 19th century Habsburg Empire**

Research in the history of education has long identified state-led mass schooling as a key instrument of nineteenth-century nation-building, focusing on primary and secondary education (e.g., Boser Hofmann, 2020; Gotling, 2025) and, more recently, on the national entanglements of universities (e.g., Tröhler, Muratović, Myrebøe, & Schildermans, 2025).

Building on the valuable insights of this research, this paper identifies the limits of this national perspective by shifting attention to the imperial context of the late Habsburg Empire. Focusing on the Theresian Military Academy, it argues that military-technical education functioned not

as a vehicle of nationalization, but as a deliberate imperial alternative to it – even though unsuccessful in the long run. Drawing on educational materials, institutional regulations, and the spatial organization of the academy, the paper shows how standardized forms of technical education were mobilized to cultivate a supranational imperial subjectivity among future officers.

Rather than producing a unified national identity, military education promoted a shared professional ethos grounded in technical expertise, bureaucratic rationality, and spatial order. This technocratic educational project sought to stabilize a multi-ethnic empire by embedding cohesion in professional practices and institutional spaces, thereby countering the centrifugal forces of rising nationalisms. In dialogue with the panel's other presentations on the US and Chile, this paper investigates how the Habsburg state employed the same technological and educational devices as contemporary republics, yet mobilized them to maintain a multi-ethnic imperial order.

Methodologically, this study follows the materializing turn in intellectual history by moving beyond a purely textual analysis. Thus, it examines the imperial discourse as an interplay between written regulations and the material application of instruments such as theodolites, topographic maps, and tactical sandtables. By treating these objects as "materialized cosmologies" (Tresch, 2014), the paper analyzes them as concrete manifestations of an imperial way of sense-making that fostered an imperial professional subjectivity and trained the cadets to perceive the Empire's heterogeneous territories not as fractured ethnic zones, but as a cohesive, measurable, and scientifically manageable strategic grid.

## TFP9

### **Divergent theories of progress, perfection and perfectibility in the European Enlightenment**

*Chair: Kevser Muratovic*

Imaginarities of progress and related ideas of perfection and perfectibility circulated as a recurring and highly prominent subject across eighteenth-century Europe, extending well beyond specific state or regional context(s) to form what may broadly be described as a pan-European phenomenon. Neither the Enlightenment movement as such nor ideas developed in this epoch – and therefore qualified as ‘enlightened’ – were, thus, isolated, homogenous or merely local events. Rather, we must assume that there was a lively, multi-layered, reciprocal transnational transfer of concepts, theories and texts. However, as Robert Cowen aptly noted, “as it moves, it morphs” (2009, p. 315): ideas circulating across borders were inevitably reshaped by distinct cultural and discursive realities leading to different receptions, interpretations, adaptations and (attempted) implementations of these ideas, for instance in educational thoughts and programs. The same observation applies as well to the Enlightenment conceptions of progress, perfection and perfectibility, as will be demonstrated in this panel through three case studies. More precisely, the proposed panel will explore and argue the spectrum of meanings attributed to progress, perfection and perfectibility by discussing the works of Christian Wolff (1679-1754), Jean Antoine Nicolas Caritat, the Marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794), and Gaetano Filangieri (1753-1788) alongside Pietro Verri (1728-1797) – in the broader contexts of the German, French, Neapolitan, and Milanese Enlightenment.

In the first contribution, Sophie Pia Stieger will examine Christian Wolff's concept of inner (self-)perfection (Vervollkommnung) in the context of religio-political controversies in the Holy Roman Empire and trace its reverberations in the formation of the ‘typically German’ idea of Bildung at the end 18th century.

In the second presentation, Lukas Boser will first discuss Condorcet's assumption of the possibility of infinite progress and perfectibility (Condorcet, 1796) and, in a second and third step, talk about the implications of these conceptions entailed for educational practice.

The panel's third contribution will deal with the hitherto little-researched understanding(s) of progress and perfection in Italian Enlightenment centers – more precisely in Naples and Milan. Drawing on the results of a discourse-analytical examination of the writings *La Scienza della legislazione* [The Science of Legislation] (1780) by Gaetano Filangieri and *Meditazioni sulla economia politica* [Meditations on Political Economy] (1770) by Pietro Verri, Julia Elisabeth Jocham will reconstruct some key elements of a 'Neapolitan', 'Milanese' – and perhaps even 'Italian' – understanding of the concepts in question; based on the observed articulations of progress and perfection in these and other analyzed works.

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#### Paper 1

*Sophie Pia Stieger*

*University of Zurich, Switzerland*

#### **German Enlightenment Philosophy and Imperative of (Self-)Perfection. On the Formation and Dissemination of Wolffian Ideas of *Vervollkommnung***

Perfection, perfectibility, and progress are, as is well known, central motifs of eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophy. Yet beneath the shared optimism about improvement lay widely differing ideas about what perfection entails and how it is to be realized. Against this backdrop, the present contribution examines the case of Christian Wolff (1679–1754), a key figure in the Early German Enlightenment.

The first and main part of this paper is devoted to reconstructing Wolff's specific conception of (self-) perfection (*Vervollkommnung*) in light of the religio-political context of his time (1). I argue that Wolff's doctrine of perfection developed in response to an intellectual environment shaped by Pietism. While he continued certain tendencies present in this inner-Protestant reform movement – one considerably more receptive to ideas of worldly progress than orthodox Lutheranism – Wolff was also obliged to refine his position to meet Pietist criticism, which regarded aspects of his philosophy, especially the provocative claim that self-perfection would be a binding standard for moral conduct “even if there was no God” (Wolff 1720, §5) as dangerously secularizing (1.1). Wolff's intention, however, was not to undermine the Protestant religion but to secure it. Through philosophy, he sought to safeguard religious norms by grounding them in arguments accessible to all rational human beings. Ironically, the very deviation from Lutheran dogma lamented by Pietists was what Wolff believed would preserve Christianity – and it was this feature that ultimately helped to secure the broad reception of his philosophy within the multi-confessional German Empire (1.2). The success of Wolffianism and the dissemination of its notions of inner self-perfection is examined further in the second part of the paper (2). This section sketches the initial spread of Wolff's ideas about

Vervollkommnung through his Wolffian disciples – whom Schiller would later aptly call ‘the men of perfection’ – as well as their reverberations in later educational ideas such as the neo-humanist concept of Bildung. This goes to show that Wolff’s significance lies not only in having made the idea of self-perfection central to his philosophical system, but also in having produced an ideological vocabulary that would come to shape German educational debates throughout the eighteenth century and beyond.

## **Paper 2**

*Lukas Boser*

*University of Basel, Switzerland*

### **Condorcet’s 1793/1794 Plan to Promote Human Perfection through Science and Education**

In 1793/1794, the French mathematician and political philosopher Jean Antoine Nicolas Caritat, the Marquis de Condorcet, worked on the last two books he would ever write. One of these is the well-known *Outlines of a Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind* (Condorcet, 1796), in which he discusses the continuous development of the human mind. From his knowledge of history, particularly the history of science, Condorcet deduces that there were ten stages for the human mind to pass through. Central to Condorcet’s understanding of progress was the Enlightenment belief that humankind is perfectible without limit. He even ranked the concept of human perfectibility among the general laws of nature (Tröhler, 2014). He believed that the advancement of science and human perfectibility would eventually result in a betterment of the human condition. In *Outlines of a Historical View*, Condorcet explains that Western societies are only one step away from the final stage of human progress. To take this final step, mankind must advance the sciences, and to do so it needs the help of education: “The progress of the sciences secures the progress of the art of instruction, which again accelerates in its turn that of the sciences [...]” (Condorcet, 1796, pp. 291). The second book that Condorcet wrote in 1793/1794, *Moyens d’apprendre à compter sûrement et avec facilité* [Means of Learning to Count Certainly and Easily] (1800), is far lesser-known than his other works. As I will argue in this paper, with this book, Condorcet intended to advance the progress in the art of instruction as mentioned in the *Outlines of a Historical View*. To develop this argument, the paper proceeds in three steps. Firstly, Condorcet’s understanding of progress and perfectibility will be discussed. Secondly, his textbook will be analyzed, focusing on its main intentions and how it differs from other textbooks of the time. Finally, the paper will argue that Condorcet understood mathematics teaching and learning as the key to securing both scientific progress and the improvement of the human condition as a whole.

## **Paper 3**

*Julia Elisabeth Jocham*

*University of Vienna, Austria*

### **Theories of progress, perfection and perfectibility in selected philosophical writings of the Italian Enlightenment**

A review of the secondary literature on the Enlightenment concepts or interpretations of progress, perfection and perfectibility reveals a striking imbalance: with the notable exception of France, Romance-speaking countries have been largely overlooked or simply excluded from this discussion so far. Overall, especially the Italian Enlightenment movement has received little attention in research to date and is hardly considered relevant within the pan-European

Enlightenment discourse (Jung & Kroll 2014). This neglect is all the more surprising given that Italy had been one of Europe's most important centers of intellectual exchange only two centuries earlier – an intellectual vitality which did not simply disappear but continued to contribute to the (European) Enlightenment in distinctive ways. The few, rather vague to superficial scientific debates on the concepts of progress and related ideas of perfection and perfectibility in the Italian Enlightenment were, in any case, a circumstance that surprised and ultimately became the starting point and a central motivation for my master's thesis. More specifically, a discourse-analytical re-lecture of selected writings by renowned Italian philosophers (*filosofi*) was conducted to examine how concepts of progress, perfection and perfectibility were received, interpreted and (practically/theoretically) implemented in various areas of present-day Italy, and how these interpretations differed from discussions in other countries. The proposed paper will present key findings of this research. It begins by concisely reconstructing the social and discursive contexts of Naples and Milan, what served as fundamental theoretical background against which the writings were interpreted. The second and third sections subsequently focus on the understandings of progress, perfection and perfectibility developed by Gaetano Filangieri in his work *Scienza della legislazione* [The Science of Legislation] (1780/1783) and Pietro Verri in his writing *Meditazioni sulla economia politica* [Meditations on Political Economy] (1770/1835). In the concluding overview, the observations are brought into dialogue with one another and, through the brief inclusion of further works from the Italian Enlightenment, condensed into presumed characteristic features of the 'Neapolitan', 'Milanese', or even 'Italian', understanding of progress, perfection and perfectibility. The concept of *felicità pubblica* [public happiness] will be central in this discussion.

TFP11

**School Food in the Anthropocene:  
Comparing Alternative Learning(s), Experiments in Regenerating the World**

*Chair: Jeremy Rapple*  
*The University of Hong Kong, China*

Isabelle Stengers, in a recent piece celebrating Bruno Latour, issues the call for more pragmatic, praxis oriented approaches to scholarship, one less focused on dismantling and more focused on regenerating:

Could living together a sense of precariousness, that affects each and every one of us today, open up a pathway towards the practical commonplace that we have been made to lose? In any case, it's experiments like these that we need, even if they are laborious, because while it's easy enough to poison or destroy, re-engendering, or re-generating, is an entirely different story (Stengers, 2024, 55).

As the Anthropocene challenge unfolds, the field of comparative education remains aloof (Rapple & Komatsu, 2020), and stuck in these older lines of inquiry – theoretical over practical; deconstruction over reconstruction. At its deepest level, this panel thus aims to showcase a topic and an approach that is different: pragmatic experimentation, bound by shared precariousness, and aimed at 're-generating' the world. School food is, despite its seemingly innocent and inconsequential nature, an 'entirely different story', indeed.

Specifically, the panel features working papers that will be published in a Special Issue of The Oxford Review of Education (forthcoming Spring 2027). The Panel/Special Issue breaks new ground by challenging the taken-for-granted assumption that schooling is primarily about the

mind (cognition, knowledge, and text). It argues that this assumption has long-prevented educational research in the English-speaking world from recognizing food as an integral part of education. In turn, this lacuna has prevented educational researchers from making the rather obvious links between sustainability, well-being, and education, centered on school food. Potentially, school food is the category that severs ‘education’ from its exclusive focus on symbolic mastery, and (re)balances it with somatic interdependence. It is an unexplored - *even forgotten* - focus for research that could reconnect education with the embodied subject. This rebalancing and reconnection are necessary prerequisites for developing new educational thinking and practice attuned to a post-human Anthropocene. Moreover, despite deep philosophical potential, a focus on school food is simultaneously highly tangible and operationalizable: policies can be changed, new pedagogical menus developed, and curricular categories remade. School food thus provides myriad possibilities, across all levels of research, policy, and practice.

This panel seeks to pursue these themes comparatively and empirically, featuring a collection of 7 papers from ‘leading’ school food systems within Europe and East Asia that are already grappling with the aforementioned issues: Finland, France, Italy (or Denmark), South Korea, China, Japan, and Taiwan. Comparisons center on five core questions:

- I. What is the current state of ‘school food’ within this educational context? What are the specific pedagogical lessons that students are taught in ‘school lunch’, beyond changes in actual menus? Are there any significant curricular or assessment dimensions linked to this?
- II. To what extent are explicit connections between school food and the challenges of sustainability (environmental) and well-being (obesity and/or mental-psychological)?
- III. What configurations of philosophy, history, religion, politics, or pragmatic concerns underpin the value placed on school food in this context, and/or explicit connections to sustainability and well-being? How does political hegemony (neoliberal or otherwise) affect these things?
- IV. What lessons might other contexts worldwide draw from these philosophies, policies, and practices?
- V. What does the lens of ‘school food’ tell us about contemporary forms of comparative education?

The fourth question gestures toward the importance of global comparisons: these catalyze self-questioning within mainstream research circles; provide an external reference point that helps direct critical, yet constructive, attention to existing philosophies, policy, and practice (see Rappleye, Komatsu, and Nishiyama, 2025). The final question brings home the implications for the field. Concretely, in featuring three ‘leading’ school food systems from the European space, and three ‘leading’ systems in East Asia, the panel seeks to extend Bereday’s (1965, p.5) view of Comparative Education:

Comparative education seeks to make sense out of the similarities and differences among education systems. It catalogues educational methods across national frontiers; and in this catalogue each country appears as one variant of the total store of mankind’s educational experience. If well set off, the like and contrasting colors of the world perspectives will make each country a potential beneficiary of the lessons thus received.

But the panel also pushes Bereday’s vision – and thus the current field - to explicitly face the future: how the Anthropocene will fundamentally challenge existing foci of research; how we can avoid the trap of theory vs. empirical, and instead learn to experiment with new topics in comparative education, in our collective search for ways to ‘re-generate the world’.

### **Paper 1: Finland**

*Talvia Sanna*

*University of Helsinki, Finland*

*Kaljonen Minna  
Finnish Environmental Institute, Finland*

*Lindblom Taru  
University of Helsinki, Finland*

### **Commensality of school meals: Re-bonding bodies, minds, and planet**

The Finnish welfare state has seen school meals central in supporting equal access to good nutrition and education. The right to daily warm meal was established in the School Act already in 1943. Later in 21st century these goals have been accompanied by pedagogical and sustainability goals, emphasizing how school meals should also be seen as means to learn and practice sustainable eating (NNR 2017; 2024). Also, with the help of public procurement, reduction of food waste, plant-based meals and menus, the very material bases of food provisioning should shift into a more sustainable stage (Pastorino et al. 2024).

Despite these high-level policy priorities, the attendance to school meals has been decreasing during the last decades, especially amongst the older students in urban areas (Helenius et al. 2023). In the present study we investigate how a better appreciation of commensality in school meals could serve as a way for reconnecting bodies, minds and planet in school meals. In short, by commensality we mean eating at the same table, with other people. Fischler (2011) has reminded how “sharing of food involves the very structure of social organization” (p.529), i.e., whilst we share food, we also bond culturally. Fischler states that simply because commensality creates bonds and cements sociality, it does not mean it would be devoid of any risk or pain. Commensality may involve many dangers and inconveniences, and its ambivalent manner needs further scrutiny.

We study the ambivalences of shared school meals as lived and imagined by students. The paper builds on results gained from two data sets, the first focused on good or bad school lunch experiences of pupils (aged 10, N=19, 2013-2014), and the second on the students’ (aged 9 to 17, N=141, 2020-21) understandings and development proposals for sustainable school meals. The results highlight the social meaning of school lunch for the students, as well as the importance of food-related pleasure. On the basis of students’ lived experiences we re-evaluate school meals as pedagogical places, and ask how commensality should be strengthened in order to re-bond bodies, minds and planet in the pedagogical practice of school meals.

### **Paper 2: Denmark**

**Mikkel Jacobsen**

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### **Beyond Nutrition: Eating in Schools as Formative and Participatory Arenas in Educational Practice**

School meals are commonly framed within educational and public health discourse as instruments for improving nutrition, health, and learning outcomes. While such perspectives dominate policy agendas, they tend to marginalize the broader formative and pedagogical dimensions of eating in school. Drawing on qualitative studies conducted in Danish educational settings, this paper argues that school meals and eating practices in schools have the potential to function as central arenas of formation (Bildung) and cultural and social literacy, embedded in everyday institutional practice. This perspective resonates with Rappleye et al.’s analysis of

shokuiku in Japan, where school food is conceptualized as a holistic educational project integrating moral, social, and civic formation (Rappleye et al., 2023).

The theoretical framework integrates sociological perspectives on commensality and sociality (Simmel, 1998; Fischler, 2011) with contemporary theories of formation and participation in educational contexts (Aabro, 2022; Jacobsen, 2021). Formation is conceptualized as a social and relational process unfolding in everyday institutional arenas rather than as an individualized or purely cognitive achievement. In line with Aabro's tripartite understanding of formation—subjectification, qualification, and socialization (Aabro, 2022)—school meals are analyzed as spaces where these dimensions intersect. The meal enables subjectification through children's agencies and self-expression, qualification through the acquisition of knowledge, social, cultural, and practical competencies, and socialization through participation in shared norms, rhythms, and practices.

Furthermore, the analysis draws on Bae's work on children's right to participation and everyday interactions (Bae, 2009), highlighting how meals can function as participatory spaces that support dialogue, recognition, and mutual orientation between children and adults. When teachers eat with students and allow conversations to unfold, the meal becomes a pedagogical situation characterized by co-learning and informal or unintended learning. In line with Rappleye et al., this underscores how school meals may operate as a form of implicit moral and civic education, where values such as responsibility, care, and community are enacted rather than taught explicitly.

Empirically, the paper builds on ethnographic fieldwork and qualitative interviews with teachers, focusing on their understandings of school meals and their role in educational practice. The findings identify three dominant discourses surrounding school food: (1) diet and learning; (2) sociality and meals; and (3) food formation and food literacy (Jacobsen, 2020; 2021). The paper concludes that recognizing school meals as formative and participatory arenas requires a shift from functional nutrition toward an understanding of meals as recurring social practices that foster formation, belonging, and democratic sensibilities.

### **Paper 3: Japan**

*Jeremy Rappleye*

*The University of Hong Kong, China*

*Hikaru Komatsu*

*Doshisha University, Japan*

*Suzuka Nishiyama*

*formerly Suzaku Daichi Elementary School, Kyoto, Japan*

#### **School Food, Sustainability, and Interdependence: Learning from Japan's *Shokuiku*?**

As the sustainability imperative looms, mainstream educational research in the English-speaking world continues a long tradition of failing to see food as integral to education. Japan's tradition of *shokuiku* (food education) stands in stark contrast, providing an external reference point to direct critical attention on Anglo-American school food philosophies, policy, and practice. The first half of this presentation analyses Japan's *shokuiku*, tracing the genealogy of Japan's 2005 Basic Law on *Shokuiku*, a landmark education policy that shifted the 1954 School Lunch Act away from the scientific and nutritional discourses of the mid-20 century and back to Japan's school food cultural traditions. While still teaching nutrition, Japan's *shokuiku* emerges as distinctive in its broader goals of interdependence, gratitude towards nature, emphasis on culture, and awareness of relations between production, consumption, and

sustainability. From a pragmatic perspective, *shokuiku* may offer new ways to combat rising obesity worldwide, lessen meat consumption, and reduce humanity's unsustainable ecological footprint (Rappleye, Komatsu, and Nishiyama, 2025).

The second half of the presentation then turns to focus specifically on a 'new kind of teacher' laid out by the 2005 Basic Law on *Shokuiku*: School Food Educators (*eiyo kyoyu*). Today, these School Food Educators play a leading role in strengthening Japan's long-standing tradition of *shokuiku*, and transitioning the system toward environmental sustainability. In detailing the role School Food Educators play in schools, we highlight the menus and explicit pedagogical materials they produce, revealing deep coherence and polish. We analyze the curriculum and content of School Food Educators, finding it is much more cultural, educational, and aesthetic than scientific. We then draw comparisons with the 'leading' school food education systems in Europe (Finland, France, Italy), showing how Japan's School Food Educators and their efforts to explicitly teach about food stands as suggestively salutary. Even if these features of the Japanese system is not replicable in other contexts worldwide, the Japanese contrast may help us unlearn our 'usual' ways of thinking about what teachers do, how they are trained, and perhaps even the mode of 'being' human we seek to educate.

## TFP12

### **Bildung in Scandinavia: The Cultivation of National Character and Social Democracy**

*Chair: Synne Myrebøe*

While attention has been given to educational institutions as significant to the development of Scandinavian societies in various ways, less emphasis has been placed on how ideas about cultivating a distinct social imaginary of social-democratic national citizens were generative in the history of political thought and practice. This panel provides a new dimension of Scandinavian Social Democracy—its past, present, and possible future – by deliberately focusing on the political history of an educational idea. More specifically, “*Bildung* in Scandinavia: The Cultivation of National Character and Social Democracy” explores how translations and interpretations of the German concept *Bildung* came to play a significant role in shaping a distinctly Scandinavian national character, imagined as a middle way between Western capitalism and Eastern communism. In this way, *Bildung* helped legitimise and implement the expansion of democratic and egalitarian welfare states.

Once recontextualised in Scandinavia, *Bildung*, originally associated with a highly stratified society in nineteenth-century Germany, was transformed into a foundation for social organisations that proclaimed equality, liberty, diversity, and the protection of the least advantaged. Yet questions remain. How did Scandinavia adopt and adapt a concept so historically entangled with German national identity? How was *Bildung* democratised, made egalitarian, and endowed with a Scandinavian cultural identity that signalled a path of unique social progress, distinct from the individualist liberalisms and neo-liberalisms of other parts of the West? Finally, considering the condition of the Scandinavian welfare states in the early twenty-first century, how do these reinterpretations of *Bildung* relate to contemporary educational ideas and institutions, and what bearing do they have on contemporary political thought?

These questions are addressed in this panel, which brings together scholars to illuminate a topic of far-reaching significance within the history of political thought. The various historical and historiographical examples of the panel expose diverse ways in which *Bildung* has been received and translated to and within Scandinavian intellectual history. From this perspective, the Scandinavian reception history of *Bildung* invites reflection on the historical and political contingency of educational concepts more broadly.

### **Paper 1**

*Daniel Tröhler*

*University of Vienna, Austria*

#### **Humboldt's Idea of *Bildung* or the German Longing for National Meaning**

This presentation starts by using four contextual aspects to analyse how the concept of *Bildung* was configured around 1800, particularly by Wilhelm von Humboldt: the political framework of the Holy Roman Empire, the cultural problem of the German nation, the predicament of the German intelligentsia, and the dominant Lutheran religion. Then, the founding of so-called Humboldt University is reconstructed. Finally, with a view to Germany and Scandinavia, the temporal and spatial migrations of the concept of *Bildung* are touched upon, and the question is posed as to what we can still do with this concept today.

### **Paper 2**

*Jenny Gustafsson*

*Södertörn University, Sweden*

#### **The Northern Cosmopolite: Bildung and Education in Postwar Mondialism, from the 1950s into the 1960s**

This presentation examines how the postwar cosmopolitan movement known as *Världsborgarrörelsen* (the World Citizen Movement) reappropriated the concept of *Bildung* to construct an emancipatory model of *bildning* and mondialist citizenship. Grounded in a critical interpretation of World War II and the emerging nuclear threat, mondialists mobilized transnational networks—publishing literature, organizing study circles, and promoting peace research—to cultivate morally autonomous, critically engaged individuals committed to pacifism, human rights, and world peace. Situated between utopian aspiration and dystopian crisis, they conceptualized *bildning* as both a personal and collective process of self-formation capable of transforming passive subjects into active world citizens. Moreover, they transcended traditional Swedish and Scandinavian "people's-home" welfare ideals by advocating a cosmopolitan "world home" that challenged nationalism, militarism, and the prevailing East–West ideological divide.

### **Paper 3**

*Anna Victoria Hallberg*

*Södertörn University, Sweden*

#### **Canon formation in Scandinavia**

In recent years, Scandinavian politicians advocating for a "cultural canon" are moving towards a more instrumental view on national culture and its various expressions. The motivation behind reinstating an official cultural canon is often presented as deriving from integration

policy or national unity rather than culture's abilities to provide wonder, beauty, questions, or a point of view that art is not necessarily "useful".

The different meanings and logics of interests attached to the concept of a "cultural canon" are mirrored in how the debates in Scandinavia have progressed. Political proposals concerning the canon are met with suspicion by many, for different reasons, and are applauded too, with varying arguments. These aspects and conflicts will be addressed as well. A point of this presentation is to underline the value of an exchange of opinions on "the canon" between humanist scholars and the public. This applies both in terms of added knowledge for both parties on literature, culture, and taste in general, but also how society can proceed when making qualitative assessments. I will suggest that scholars from the humanities as well as public institutions have a lot to gain from engaging in these discussions rather than end them.

#### **Paper 4**

*Synne Myrebøe*

*University of Vienna, Austria*

#### **Bringing *Bildung* into the history of political thought: Revisiting the historiography of the Scandinavian citizen**

This presentation displays how the German concept of *Bildung* – and its Scandinavian translations, *bildning*, *danning* and *dannelse* – has shaped, and continues to shape, the history of political thought in the Scandinavian (post-)welfare states. Rather than treating these concepts solely as educational doctrines, it approaches them as political ideas in action that have shaped visions of the ideal citizen and the just society from the nineteenth century to the present.

Reconstructing shifting regimes of subject formation and social engineering under social democracy, I show how contemporary debates over *bildning*, *danning* and *dannelse* unfold within a force field structured by emblematic political agencies. Thus, today, the concept is alternately sacralised, economised, or instrumentalised as a resource for national ethos, neoliberal subjectivity, and neo-conservative populist revisionism. By conceptualising interpretations of German *Bildung* as multi-temporal, affect-laden and contested formations, I propose a future-oriented historiography capable of illuminating how ideas of subject formation organise present struggles over democracy, welfare and collective life.

#### TFP13

#### **School Food in the Anthropocene: Comparing Alternative Learning(s), Experiments in Regenerating the World**

*Chair: Yoko Mochizuki*

*The Education University of Hong Kong, China & Université Paris Cité, France*

Isabelle Stengers, in a recent piece celebrating Bruno Latour, issues the call for more pragmatic, praxis oriented approaches to scholarship, one less focused on dismantling and more focused on regenerating:

Could living together a sense of precariousness, that affects each and every one of us today, open up a pathway towards the practical commonplace that we have been made to lose? In

any case, it's experiments like these that we need, even if they are laborious, because while it's easy enough to poison or destroy, re-engendering, or re-generating, is an entirely different story (Stengers, 2024, 55).

As the Anthropocene challenge unfolds, the field of comparative education remains aloof (Rappleye & Komatsu, 2020), and stuck in these older lines of inquiry – theoretical over practical; deconstruction over reconstruction. At its deepest level, this panel thus aims to showcase a topic and an approach that is different: pragmatic experimentation, bound by shared precariousness, and aimed at 're-generating' the world. School food is, despite its seemingly innocent and inconsequential nature, an 'entirely different story', indeed.

Specifically, the panel features working papers that will be published in a Special Issue of The Oxford Review of Education (forthcoming Spring 2027). The Panel/Special Issue breaks new ground by challenging the taken-for-granted assumption that schooling is primarily about the mind (cognition, knowledge, and text). It argues that this assumption has long-prevented educational research in the English-speaking world from recognizing food as an integral part of education. In turn, this lacuna has prevented educational researchers from making the rather obvious links between sustainability, well-being, and education, centered on school food. Potentially, school food is the category that severs 'education' from its exclusive focus on symbolic mastery, and (re)balances it with somatic interdependence. It is an unexplored - *even forgotten* - focus for research that could reconnect education with the embodied subject. This rebalancing and reconnection are necessary prerequisites for developing new educational thinking and practice attuned to a post-human Anthropocene. Moreover, despite deep philosophical potential, a focus on school food is simultaneously highly tangible and operationalizable: policies can be changed, new pedagogical menus developed, and curricular categories remade. School food thus provides myriad possibilities, across all levels of research, policy, and practice.

This panel seeks to pursue these themes comparatively and empirically, featuring a collection of 7 papers from 'leading' school food systems within Europe and East Asia that are already grappling with the aforementioned issues: Finland, France, Italy (or Denmark), South Korea, China, Japan, and Taiwan. Comparisons center on five core questions:

- I. What is the current state of 'school food' within this educational context? What are the specific pedagogical lessons that students are taught in 'school lunch', beyond changes in actual menus? Are there any significant curricular or assessment dimensions linked to this?
- II. To what extent are explicit connections between school food and the challenges of sustainability (environmental) and well-being (obesity and/or mental-psychological)?
- III. What configurations of philosophy, history, religion, politics, or pragmatic concerns underpin the value placed on school food in this context, and/or explicit connections to sustainability and well-being? How does political hegemony (neoliberal or otherwise) affect these things?
- IV. What lessons might other contexts worldwide draw from these philosophies, policies, and practices?
- V. What does the lens of 'school food' tell us about contemporary forms of comparative education?

The fourth question gestures toward the importance of global comparisons: these catalyze self-questioning within mainstream research circles; provide an external reference point that helps direct critical, yet constructive, attention to existing philosophies, policy, and practice (see Rappleye, Komatsu, and Nishiyama, 2025). The final question brings home the implications for the field. Concretely, in featuring three 'leading' school food systems from the European space, and three 'leading' systems in East Asia, the panel seeks to extend Bereday's (1965, p.5) view of Comparative Education:

Comparative education seeks to make sense out of the similarities and differences among education systems. It catalogues educational methods across national frontiers; and in this

catalogue each country appears as one variant of the total store of mankind's educational experience. If well set off, the like and contrasting colors of the world perspectives will make each country a potential beneficiary of the lessons thus received.

But the panel also pushes Bereday's vision – and thus the current field - to explicitly face the future: how the Anthropocene will fundamentally challenge existing focii of research; how we can avoid the trap of theory vs. empirical, and instead learn to experiment with new topics in comparative education, in our collective search for ways to 're-generate the world'.

### **Paper 1: China**

*Yun You*

*East China Normal University, China*

*Chang Liu*

*Zhejiang University, China*

*Liang Cheng*

*East China Normal University, China*

*Qi Li*

*East China Normal University, China*

#### **Nourishing life (*yangsheng*) and dietary rituals (*shili*): School lunch and food education in a Shanghai primary school**

Despite that the concept of 'food education' (食育, *shiyu*) was introduced to China from Japan in the mid-2000s, the ideas and practices related to food education have existed in ancient China and have profoundly shaped the daily lives of Chinese people. Over the last two decades, food education has gained increasing attention from Chinese policymakers, scholars, and educators to address the health issues facing the youth and children and to cultivate their moral characters. Taking a primary school in Shanghai as an illustrative example, this article investigates the arrangement of school lunch and the practice of food education in China and the perceptions of Chinese teachers on *what has been done*. The method is based on video-cued ethnography. In December 2024, we recorded a day of lunch and a desert-making lesson at this school. The videos were both reviewed to raise semi-structured interview questions and used as a rich visual cue to stimulate the voices of teachers. This method enables us to obtain their beliefs and understandings shaped by a dynamic socio-political, economic and cultural context.

Furthermore, drawing upon Daoism and Confucianism, we reflect on their practices and perceptions to probe *what should or could be done* to promote planetary sustainability and student wellbeing through school lunch and food education in China and beyond. Inspired by (pre-Qin) Daoism and Confucianism, this paper focuses on the notions of *yangsheng* (養生, lit. nourishing life) and *shili* (食禮, lit. dietary rituals). The former refers to a harmonious way of life which enhances longevity. By preserving and boosting *Qi* (氣, breath-energy), one is supposed to be consistent with natural rhythms and maintain the balance between self and other beings to nourish one's own life. The latter views eating as a social and ethical practice which cultivates one's virtue. As exemplified by Sages, dietary rituals underline what and how to (not) eat, so as to form harmonious and balanced relationships in family and society. Despite of diverse emphases, Daoism and Confucianism commonly value the mediate role that food

and eating play in unifying *shen* (身, body) and *xin* (心, heart-mind), self and other, and ultimately *Tian* (天, lit. Heaven/Nature) and human in daily life.

## **Paper 2: France**

*Yoko Mochizuki*

*The Education University of Hong Kong, China & Université Paris Cité, France*

### **School food for *liberté, égalité, fraternité*: Rethinking education through French school meals policies and practices**

Every year in France, more than a billion meals are served in canteens to students in primary and secondary schools, at a total cost of around €12 billion. France was the first country to integrate health, agricultural and cultural policies, institutionalizing ‘taste education’ to overcome the limits of traditional nutrition-centred food education and to teach the ‘totality’ of food to children and youth. While food education in France is considered as serving as a ‘prototype’ for neighbouring countries, the question of its linkages to environmental sustainability has been under-explored.

First, this paper briefly traces the development of policies and practices related to food education in France since the 1970s and analyzes recent documents released by the French government and a civil society organization to improve school meals policies and arrangements at national and local levels. This first part highlights both philosophical and theoretical considerations underpinning ‘taste education’ and major concerns and preoccupations of education stakeholders and policymakers about school meals (e.g. right to school meals for all children). The notion of ‘laïcité’—the principle of removing religion from the public sphere and replacing it with ‘secular’ values of liberty, equality, and fraternity—is central to many educational debates in France. The first part of the paper foregrounds how the values of ‘liberty, equality, fraternity’ shape the policies and practices of school meals, as manifested, for example, in the decentralized and democratic ways of determining school lunch menus.

The second part highlights the onto-epistemic assumptions underpinning food education in France. How is school food shaped by (i) the French ideas about school as the secular sanctuary for human emancipation, and (ii) the Cartesian dualisms (object-subject, body-mind, nature-culture) and various efforts to overcome them to address the totality of food? We unpack French school meals vis-à-vis (a) the education debate around laïcité and (b) the philosophical and gastronomic debate on food, drawing on Haruka Ueda’s (2022) attempts to theorize food education and proposing an alternative to his theorization that essentially conceptualizes ‘good eaters’ as humanistic, rational independent agents, rather than as interdependent beings embedded in the web of human and more-than-human beings. If Ueda’s project is to theorize ‘humanistic’ eating and translate it into concrete pedagogies, this paper explores food education as an entry point to rethink ‘humanistic education’ itself and inquire what it means to be human and what it means to be educated in the ‘Anthropocene’ marked by ecological crisis.

## **Paper 3: Taiwan**

*Hikaru Komatsu*

*Doshisha University, Japan*

*Jeremy Rappleye*

*The University of Hong Kong, China*

*Suzuka Nishiyama*

*formerly Suzaku Daichi Elementary School, Kyoto, Japan*

### **Taiwan's Green School Food: Ecofamilism in Action**

Taiwan has emerged as a global leader in school food, yet remains virtually invisible to educational researchers worldwide. Two recent national policies, most prominently The Food and Agriculture Education Act (2022), have codified what is arguably the most 'green' and democratic school food education program anywhere in the world: most school food is organic, locally sourced, and each ingredient traceable to the exact farm it originated; GMOs are banned; pedagogical lessons explicitly discuss 'low carbon diets', seasonality, and so on. After describing this policy-practice nexus, our piece turns to trace the origins of Taiwan's world-leading program to a powerful civil society organization: Housemakers United Foundation. This grassroots, social movement was driven by what Ho's (2016) describes as "Ecofamilism": an extension and recrafting of Western Ecofeminism in the East Asian context of Confucian views of families, politics, and cosmology. From this, Taiwan's Green Food Education carries myriad lesson for the wider world: (i) a viable model linking school food and environmental sustainability, (ii) a political strategy for realizing reform, and (iii) illustration of how 'Green School Food' will likely arise more from imaginative, creative experimental linking and thinking across worlds, rather than from recovering some purportedly 'lost' traditions or drawing on 'expert' knowledge. The ordinary mothers of Taiwan who brought about this world-leading practice, as opposed to 'expert' scholars, enlightened policymakers or celebrity chefs, thus emerge as pedagogues for the rest of the world: masters in both pragmatic experimentation and political realization.

TFP14

### **Past Futures of Learning Technologies.**

#### **Historical Trajectories of Pedagogical and Educational Hopes and Fears**

*Dr. Rebekka Horlacher, University of Zurich*

*Chair: Prof. Dr. Lilli Riettiens, University of Mainz*

Since the Early Modern Times at the latest, ideas and concepts about learning have been linked to the use of certain tools (Le Cam 2020, 145). Well-known examples include the Nuremberg Funnel, imagined to more efficiently transfer of knowledge into the minds of students. Less controversially discussed were study plans, textbooks, hodogetics, or catechisms, designed to support the structured acquisition of knowledge. In the second half of the 18th century, the design and material form of these pedagogical aids received increased attention (Horlacher 2020, 139) as part of the broader educationalization of social problems (Smeyers and Depaepe 2008) and as part of the rising importance of compulsory schooling, not least for shaping future citizens of the emerging nation-states (Tröhler, Popkewitz and Labaree 2011). While the expansion of the public schooling dominated 19th century educational policy, around 1900 attention increasingly turned to the design of textbooks, including the extended use of images enabled by new printing techniques. In the 1950's however, material support for learning took yet another turn. Programmed instruction promised more efficient teaching, but also raised fears

that teachers, as authority figures responsible for imparting knowledge, would become superfluous. Shortly thereafter, it became clear that neither the hopes nor the fears attached to programmed instruction had come true in any way (Cuban 1986; Horlacher 2015).

Similar hopes and fears can be observed in current debates on AI in education (Kristandl

2025; Garcia, Rosak-Szyrocka and Bozkurt 2025, 102). Yet today's educational policy debates tend to proceed in impressively un-historical ways, as if the challenges associated with digitization were completely new (Garz and Riettiens 2025). The panel does not seek to downplay possible differences between AI and programmed instruction or (former) learning tools. Rather, it adopts a historical-comparative perspective to trace how pedagogical and educational hopes and fears toward (learning) technologies have repeatedly shaped understandings of learning, education, and the learner over time (Tröhler 2021). The comparative dimension emerges through contributions that examine different presents, analyzing how those hopes and fears were and are negotiated in relation to imagined futures and shifting educational visions. In doing so, the panel situates learning within broader educational, curricular, socio-material, and ecological contexts that exceed technical provision or measurable outcomes.

*Lilli Riettiens, University of Mainz*

**Paper 1: The Future Was Always at Stake. On the Political and Anthropological Foundations of Educational Hope and Fear. An Introduction**

Debates surrounding new learning technologies in educational contexts, both past and present, have consistently been shaped by powerful hopes and fears. Taking this recurring emotionalization as its point of departure, this introduction addresses a guiding question that underpins the panel as a whole: Why is education, and particularly the introduction of new learning technologies in this context, such a deeply contested and affectively charged terrain? To explore this question, the paper turns to Hannah Arendt's essay *The Crisis in Education* ([1958] 1961) as both an anthropological and political-theoretical point of reference, because, as this introduction argues, debates about education are connected to broader questions concerning the human condition, generational continuity, and the future. Learning technologies, in this perspective, are never merely technical instruments; they are bound up with competing visions of what it means to be human, how societies imagine their futures, and what kinds of subjects education is expected to produce (Loudoun/Van Ruyskensvelde 2026; Schildermans 2024). By foregrounding these tensions, the introduction is an invitation to reflect collectively on the *past futures of learning technologies* and on the enduring hopes and fears that continue to shape discourses around education and learning.

*Magnus Hultén, Linköping University*

**Paper 2: Technotopia: Edtech and the shaping of the Swedish school system, c. 1920–1980**

This contribution explores how audiovisual technologies (film, slide projectors, television and radio) were introduced and adapted by teachers, market forces and policymakers in the development of Sweden's modern comprehensive school system between 1920 and 1980. This period encompasses the formative years of the new comprehensive school, during which educational technology played a pivotal role in its institutional development.

The period 1920–1980 was a time of drastic change in education systems around the world, triggered by technological development, economic and population growth and the absence of war, as well as by democratic and egalitarian movements (Levin, 1978). The Nordic countries, and Sweden in particular, were notable for their ambitious efforts to establish inclusive school systems in collaboration with business organizations and industry (Telhaug et al., 2006).

Preliminary findings competing hopes and fears: teachers anticipated greater equality through technological dissemination of knowledge and expected improvements in rural education. There was also hope that ‘authentic’ knowledge from different parts of the world could be introduced in a way that would engage students. Nevertheless, there were fears that media technologies risked creating passive and uncritical citizens, and concerns were raised about unequal access to technology. Meanwhile, ed-tech became a gateway for commercial actors into schools, as the state navigated visions for the new school system alongside the imperfections of the market, teachers’ interests, and economic and material resources. State-of-the-art educational technologies became pivotal to Sweden’s modern school structures in ways that had not existed before.

*Rebekka Horlacher, University of Zurich, Switzerland*

**Paper 3: Psychological theories of learning as the fulfillment of pedagogical promises: The case of Programmed Instruction in the 1960’s**

There is a recurring debate in education around whether teaching is more of a technology or an art (Simpson, Jackson, & Aycock, 2005; Paniagua, & Istance, 2018, 13; Biesta, 2023). This question was intensely discussed during the progressive era, when teachers emphasized the experimental and problem-solving aspects of learning in contrast to the traditional understanding of the curriculum. Another peak occurred in the 1950s and 1960s, when B. F. Skinner’s behavioral psychology spread around the globe (Boretska, 2019). Skinner’s theory promised a predictable and controllable way of learning. This resulted in programmed instruction entering the classroom (Hoffmann-Ocon & Horlacher, 2015; Horlacher, 2021). Teachers received this new method ambivalently. Some teachers welcomed programmed instruction hoping for learning success, while others feared losing their methodological autonomy and the personal contact with their students. The paper examines arguments for and against losing pedagogical autonomy, using the case of German-speaking Switzerland. It asks how these hopes and fears were negotiated in relation to imagined futures and associated educational visions. In doing so, the paper refers to the long tradition of ideas about teaching as an art or a technology.

TFP15

**A Critical Historization of Comparative Education and its entanglements with geopolitics**

*Chair: Iveta Silova  
University of Arizona, USA*

The aim of this panel is to promote a critical historicization of comparative education. We start from the premise that the history of comparative education is still in its infancy (Cowen, 2009) and has mostly been concentrated on academic centres in the US and the UK (Manzon, 2010; Tröhler, 2023), while the history of the field in other regions remains largely “invisible.” We understand the development of comparative education not only as an academic project, but also as a “political project” (Brehm 2023) that was and is subject to geopolitical and “epistemological power games” (Tröhler 2023). From a decolonial perspective, recent

contributions have emphasised the imperialist and colonial logics of the field, that, given its rather Western and Eurocentric rationalities, would need to be epistemically expanded and rethought. (Silova 2025; Takayama et al. 2017). In contrast, others see this move as part of “dogmatic decolonialism” (Vickers & Epstein, 2024).

In this panel we consider this debate and other contributions that seek to analyse the histories of comparative education in different regions (Epstein, 2021, Phillips, 2022) as a welcome resurgence of the interest in the history of the field. The panel aims to analyze and problematize the history and historical narrative of comparative education with its intertwined political, epistemological, and ethical assumptions, principles and implications in relation to power relations, transnational entanglements, specific world orders, local resistance movements and invisible voices.

Four papers will approach this aim from different perspectives and emphasis. One contribution (Silova) focuses on the international history of one of the discipline's most important institutions, the emergence and development of CIES from its founding to the present, while the paper by Ydesen and that of Beech and Alarcón López trace regional developments, with the former focusing on European education programs and the latter on the history of the discipline in Latin America. Tröhler's contribution, on the other hand, undertakes a diachronic analysis of the motif of nationalism in the epistemology of modern comparative education.

### **Paper 1**

*Iveta Silova*

*University of Arizona, USA*

#### **Comparative Education as Safeguard or Complicity? A Critical History of CIES in Geopolitical Perspective**

Comparative education has increasingly been understood not only as an academic field but as a political project, entangled with geopolitical interests, epistemological power relations, and shifting global orders (Brehm, 2023; Tröhler, 2022). Building on these debates, this paper offers a critical historicization of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) as a key institutional site through which the field itself has been governed, contested, and ethically negotiated.

The paper traces the emergence and evolution of CIES from its post–World War II formation to the present, situating the society within broader geopolitical transformations. Drawing on institutional histories, archival traces, and biographical fragments—particularly the legacy of William W. Brickman, CIES's first president—the paper examines how early comparative educators understood their work not merely as scholarly inquiry, but as a political and ethical response to the catastrophic failures of education under fascist and totalitarian regimes (Silova, 2025).

Yet, commitments to intellectual freedom, neutrality, and international dialogue frequently coexisted with liberal, colonial, and geopolitical assumptions that shaped what could be compared, how, and to what ends. Across successive historical moments, CIES functioned both as a space for critical engagement and as an institution marked by strategic silences—particularly when geopolitical pressures rendered certain forms of critique professionally risky. Notably, periods of intensified critique within comparative education—including recent debates surrounding coloniality and decoloniality—have often been accompanied by renewed appeals to disciplinary restraint, historical rigor, and epistemic balance. While frequently framed as safeguards against dogmatism or presentism, such appeals also operate as institutional boundary-making practices, shaping which forms of critique are recognized as legitimate, timely, or professionally acceptable.

By examining internal debates within CIES around neutrality, academic freedom, and the role of comparative scholarship, the paper argues that the history of comparative education cannot be written solely as an academic endeavor. It is also a history of institutional and professional responsibility, in which decisions to speak, defer, or remain silent carried material and moral consequences (Silova, 2025). In an era marked by renewed authoritarian pressures on universities and professional associations, revisiting these histories is a necessary condition for rethinking the responsibilities of comparative education today. The paper concludes by suggesting that a critical institutional history of CIES helps reopen comparative education as a negotiable political and epistemic project—not only to its geopolitical entanglements, but also to the ethical conditions under which the field itself becomes a safeguard against, or an accomplice to, broader regimes of power.

## **Paper 2**

*Daniel Tröhler*

*University of Vienna, Austria*

### **Nationalism as an Inscribed Motif in the Epistemology of Modern Comparative Education – A Historical Reconstruction**

Comparisons in the field of education have existed for centuries. Sometimes they were explicit, sometimes implicit, as in the curious travel accounts of Jean de Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil* (1578) or the fictional narratives of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). While these works were undoubtedly meant to entertain, they also sought to hold up a mirror to European life and education with the moral aim of reforming it.

With this moral impetus, such publications joined a long-standing tradition of explicit comparative reflection on education. Early examples include Roman comparisons with Greek education. Whereas proponents of the Roman Republic, such as Cicero or Seneca, frequently expressed admiration for the comprehensiveness of Greek *paideia*, the ideologues of the Roman Empire, such as Tacitus—ironically—celebrated the military and disciplinary education of the now-defunct Roman Republic.

For much of its history, this tradition of comparative education was predominantly temporal in nature, distinguishing between an “earlier” and a “later” period and employing narratives of decline or progress. Well-known examples include Machiavelli and Lipsius during the Renaissance, as well as Montesquieu and, most prominently, Rousseau in the eighteenth century, who typically upheld educational principles of the Roman Republic as a model.

Rousseau's antiquarian educational patriotism coincided with the rise of European nationalism, within which early traces of today's dominant epistemology of comparative education can be found. This epistemology assumed a remarkably stable form following the global consolidation of nation-states around and after 1900 and continues to shape comparative education to this day. It is characterized by interpreting economically, politically, and militarily successful nation-states in educationalized terms, stylizing their school systems as models to be emulated—or, in an imperial gesture, imposed on others.

This form of comparative education is no longer primarily temporal but territorial. Nationalism is so deeply inscribed into its epistemology that it often goes unrecognized. National imitation, suspicion, and instruction increasingly shape the discourse in such a way that comparisons no longer even need to be comparative to count as such (Wohlhuter, 2008). As a result, comparative education risks losing not only its own historicity and historical consciousness, but also uncritically subscribing to the immanent normative system of nationalism—with its overt rivalries and latent imperialism—while neglecting fundamental questions concerning the relationship between education and ethical ways of political life.

### **Paper 3**

*Christian Ydesen*

*Universität Zürich, Switzerland*

#### **Erase and Rewind: Reconstructing the Comparative Epistemologies of European Education Programmes across the Twentieth Century**

Current debates on coloniality and decoloniality in comparative education have brought much-needed attention to questions of epistemic violence, power, and exclusion. At the same time, the increasingly acrimonious tone of these debates risks reproducing binary and dichotomous logics that foreclose historically grounded analysis and hinder constructive re-thinking of education in a period marked by geopolitical instability, institutional fragmentation, and multiple overlapping crises. Responding to recent calls to move beyond such binaries, this paper proposes a historical “erase-and-rewind” exercise that revisits the epistemic design of comparability itself within three influential European-based comparative education programmes.

The paper reconstructs the formation, rationales, and epistemological assumptions of: (1) the International Examination Inquiry (1931–1938), (2) UNESCO’s Mediterranean Regional Project (1959–1965), and (3) the OECD’s International Educational Indicators (INES) programme, launched in 1988 after a prolonged gestation period. Rather than treating these initiatives merely as vehicles of diffusion or domination, the paper opens their “engine rooms” to examine how specific comparative architectures were assembled through particular constellations of actors, political imaginaries, technical instruments, and moral vocabularies.

Across these three cases, the paper shows how comparability was never a neutral methodological choice but a historically contingent epistemic accomplishment. Each programme articulated distinctive ways of rendering education comparable, intelligible, and governable, shaped by interwar internationalism, Cold War developmentalism, and late twentieth-century neoliberal technocracy respectively. Yet a common denominator was their global reach: the comparative epistemologies forged in these European contexts travelled widely, shaping subsequent education programmes, policy instruments, and taken-for-granted understandings of what education is and should be.

By situating contemporary decolonial debates within this longer historical trajectory, the paper argues that revisiting the construction of comparative designs is a necessary condition for reopening education as a negotiable political and epistemic project. As the Education 2030 agenda approaches its end amidst polycrisis and multipolarity, the question is not simply how to reject past comparative frameworks, but how to understand their historical conditions of possibility, internal tensions, and enduring effects. Such a historically reflexive stance, the paper suggests, offers a more productive basis for reimagining comparative education beyond both epistemic innocence and epistemic purism.

### **Paper 4**

*Jason Beech*

*University of Melbourne, Australia*

*Cristina Alarcón-López*

*University of Vienna, Austria*

#### **The political matrix of the development of comparative education in Latin America: between Imperial/colonial forces and self-determination**

Our aim in this presentation is to contribute to a comparative history of the history of comparative education (Cowen 2009), on the basic assumption that there are ‘multiple comparative educations’. The configuration of the field in Latin America was built on exchanges, entanglements, and interdependencies with other regions such as Europe and North America. Thus, the history of the field in Latin America is marked its transnational matrix, shaped by the region’s geopolitical position in the world system, as a peripheral region connected to the imperial and colonial legacy of the field (Manzon 2010, Takayama, Sriprakash and Connell 2017).

Based on the biographical analysis of eminent scholars of the field and of a wide range of historical sources that span from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we argue that the field has developed within an essentially *political matrix*. This implies not only that comparative education research was policy-oriented and interventionist, but also that the research itself was seen within a moral mission as a catalyst for social change and/or emancipation and for the reduction of poverty, marginality and inequality. Most of the comparativists that participated in the construction of the field, where not only intellectuals, but also active politicians who held public positions and openly identified with certain parties or political tendencies, which in almost all cases can be defined as liberal or progressive (in terms of the time and contexts in which they lived and worked). Comparison thus served the explicit and ultimate goal of constructing ‘a better society’.

The *regional* matrix of comparative education in Latin American seems also evident. Many researchers focused on Latin America as the main reference and unit of analysis. This regional and non-nationalist focus contrasts with their European counterparts, whose countries were mired in rivalries, conflicts and wars at least until the end of Second War II. The regional construct of ‘Latin America’ was already taken up by early 19<sup>th</sup> century comparativists such as Simón Rodríguez and remained present as a transcendental spatial reference, giving rise to a multitude of comparative studies within the region that made noteworthy contributions to the idea of a ‘Latin American Education’.

In this historical overview of the trajectory of comparative education in Latin America we problematise two parallel research logics visible from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day: the logic of Western-civilising-progress; and the logic that seeks to enhance indigenist, decolonial, Latin Americanist and self-determined categories.

## TFP16

### **Educational Psychologies of the Early 20th Century – Comparative Demarcations, Local Particularities and Historical Conditions of Possibility**

*Chair: Daniel Tröhler  
University of Vienna, Austria*

When, around 1900, psychology emerged as an independent discipline on an international scale, it did not crystallize as a unified field but rather as a constellation of distinct *psychologies*. Behind the shared label actually hid a variety of fundamentally different projects – many of which were invested with educational aspirations. Thus, in the wake of psychology’s internationalization, competing schools of educational thought took shape: from *Experimentelle Pädagogik* and *Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik* in Germany (Meumann 1907, Spranger 1922) and *Psychoanalytische Pädagogik* in Austria (Freud 1933) to the *Geneva School* of educational psychology in Switzerland (Claparède 1905) and *Pragmatist* and *Behaviourist Learning Theories* in the United States (Dewey 1938, Thorndike 1913-1914).

While united by a shared belief that through psychological knowledge, learning would finally become ‘scientific’, these *educational psychologies* were anchored in markedly different ideological, epistemological, and institutional frameworks.

This panel explores the historical *conditions of possibility* that enabled the development of distinct psychological approaches and their adaptation to education. By interrogating the specific ideological, institutional, and socio-political conditions in which different kinds of psychological knowledge were produced, circulated, and mobilized, we aim to contribute to an understanding of how and why early *educational psychologies* – their objects, methods, epistemological ambitions, and learning theories – were configured in so markedly distinct ways.

Drawing on the history of ideas and the history of knowledge, this panel juxtaposes four case studies, each situated in a different local, national, and institutional context. The first case explores the emergence of educational psychology in the United States as a technoscientific approach to learning within its broader Progressive Era context and specific religio-intellectual frameworks.

The second paper investigates Viennese psychoanalytically oriented education as an alternative to the then academically dominant currents of educational psychology, drawing out the religious-cultural dimension of early psychoanalysis’ marginalization, as well as the epistemological power-political contexts within which debates around ‘the right kind of psychology and education’ were situated.

The third paper focuses on Geneva, where educational psychology was conceived as a positive science closely aligned with medicine and biology, arguing that this orientation might have been facilitated by a largely forgotten zoological tradition of reasoning.

The fourth case study looks at Swiss special education in the interwar years and aims to reconstruct how the respective experts in Zurich and Geneva mobilized psychological knowledge, arguing that practical problems and financial concerns outweighed ideological purity, allowing multiple forms of psychological knowledge to coexist.

Taking up a process-oriented, multi-sited, and multi-scalar approach to comparison (Vavrus & Bartlett 2023), each contribution follows a different set of conditions of possibility – ranging from ideological and cultural traditions to institutional arrangements, political power struggles, and epistemic norms – to make visible that the consolidation of educational psychology was marked by a plurality of knowledge formations and modes of educational reasoning with profoundly different genealogies.

## **Paper 1**

*Veronika Maričić*

*University of Vienna, Austria*

### **From Classroom Experiments to Governing Social Order. Educational Psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University**

This paper examines the emergence of educational psychology in the United States around 1900 through the case of Edward L. Thorndike and his institutional anchoring at Teachers College, Columbia University. It asks how a particular understanding of education – grounded in scientific knowledge and psychological knowledge in particular – came to be established within the context of Progressive Era reform. In this setting, educational psychology developed in multiple, competing directions, most notably John Dewey’s *pragmatism* and Edward L. Thorndike’s *positivism* (Hilgard, 1987), of which the latter is commonly acknowledged as leaving a more practical mark on the U.S. school system (Labaree, 2005).

Existing historiography has highlighted the intellectual inheritances that shaped early U.S. American educational psychology, including German experimental psychology, Darwinian evolutionary theory and British associationism, as well as the broader Progressive Era context in which education was increasingly mobilized as a means of social management (Kliebard, 1986; Tyack, 1974; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2003). Taking these accounts as a starting point, the paper shifts attention to systems of reasoning that made this quantitative, hierarchical and administratively oriented approach to educational psychology plausible and intuitively effective (Tröhler, 2011).

Focusing on Teachers College as a central site in the professionalization of educational psychology, the paper reconstructs the conditions under which Thorndike's learning theory, measurement practices and administrative orientation were developed. Methodologically situated in the history of ideas, the analysis explores a denominationally inflected system of reasoning shaped by Presbyterian traditions of governance, accountability, and record-keeping. Rather than treating religion as a residual cultural influence, the paper considers how such traditions structured assumptions about expertise, hierarchy and evaluation within the emerging field of educational psychology. In doing so, it contributes to the panel's broader effort to elucidate the ideological, institutional, and epistemological conditions through which distinct educational psychologies emerged at the turn of the twentieth century.

## **Paper 2**

*Elisabeth Jahn*

*University of Vienna, Austria*

### **An Alternative Educational Psychology Outside the University: Epistemological Power Struggles of Viennese Psychoanalytically Oriented Education, 1900 to 1938**

Unlike most currents of educational psychology in the early 20th century, psychoanalysis developed largely outside the university. Since the beginnings of its institutionalization in Vienna after the turn of the century, psychoanalysts (e.g., Ferenczi, 1908) considered their ideas highly relevant to education and learning, which led to the emergence of the movement of *Psychoanalytische Pädagogik* after the First World War. Despite its central claim to be a scientific psychological discipline with great significance for education, psychoanalysis found little acceptance in academic psychology and education until 1938 (e.g., Tenorth, 1992). During the Nazi regime, it was devalued by the racist, antisemitic label of "Jewish doctrine" (Watson, 1934); most of its representatives were expelled, deported, or murdered (Mühlleitner & Reichmayr, 1997).

This paper examines the historical conditions of (im-)possibility within which Viennese psychoanalytically oriented education developed between 1900 and 1938, focusing particularly on epistemological struggles and the socio-political power relations that shaped them. Drawing on approaches in political and intellectual history as well as decolonial research (e.g., Zhao et al., 2022), it investigates how Viennese psychoanalysis epistemologically challenged the ways in which the then academically, religiously, and politically dominant currents constructed the human being, education, and learning. For this purpose, this paper examines the epistemological power processes (e.g., translation, othering, institutional in/exclusion, and physical violence) that shaped how Viennese psychoanalysis interacted, competed, and conflicted with academically prevailing currents of educational psychology, and how it was violently expelled and oppressed during National Socialism. By situating Viennese psychoanalytically oriented education within its epistemological power-political contexts, this paper shows how scientific disputes over psychology, education, and learning were entangled with broader power struggles between cultural, religious, and political groups.

### Paper 3

Sophie Pia Stieger  
University of Zurich, Switzerland

#### **From Bonnet to Flournoy. Mapping A Forgotten Zoological Tradition in Early Genevan Psychology**

Initially predominantly used within Protestant German intellectual milieus to denote the philosophical *science of the soul*, during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries *psychology* came to function as a shared label across different national and local contexts. In the process of its internationalization, however, the idea of a science of the soul did not fall on ideologically neutral ground but encountered existing traditions of thought that would shape its arrival, further trajectory, disciplinary constitution and relation to the educational field: In one context *psychology* became a biological science of an organism's behaviour that configured learning as environmental adaptation, while in another the same name designated a philosophical inquiry into the spiritual soul to facilitate its inner self-transformation (*Bildung*), and in yet another an empirical moral science aimed at ethical character formation.

This paper aims to contribute to our understanding of how and why different *educational psychologies* emerging at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were configured so differently by approaching the topic through the case of Geneva that departed significantly from the dominant German model. While elsewhere psychology remained tied to philosophy well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Geneva established the very first chair of psychology within the natural sciences already in 1891, with Genevan psychologists explicitly pursuing it as a positive science independent from philosophy but closely aligned with medicine, physiology and biology (see e.g. Flournoy 1890; Claparède 1901, 1909; Piaget 1967).

Rather than focusing on the well-researched history of Geneva psychology following the establishment of Flournoy's chair in the 1890s, I take a view back into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Genevan naturalist Charles Bonnet authored one of the very few works on psychology (1755) that was published outside of Germany. In doing so, the paper advances the argument that between Bonnet and Flournoy there existed a specific zoological tradition of reasoning about the soul and its perfection that resurfaces in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Genevan psychology, suggesting a certain continuity between 18<sup>th</sup> century naturalistic soul-debates and the early configuration of Genevan psychology as a natural science.

### Paper 4

Ina Hasenöhr  
University of Zurich, Switzerland

#### **Educational Problems, Psychological Solutions? Funding Special Education Expertise in Zurich and Geneva, 1920-1940**

In the interwar period in Switzerland, calls for professionalization and state involvement in special education materialized in entanglement, exemplified by the federal subsidization of training institutions for special education professionals (Wolfisberg, 2002). While the *Special Education Seminar* in Zurich was closely linked with the interests of professional organizations concerned with disabled people, the *Institute Jean-Jacques Rousseau* in Geneva did not distinguish between students engaging with special educational needs and other students of educational science, understood as an experimental psycho-pedagogy (Schriber, 1994; Hofstetter, 2010; Lussi Borer, 2011). While there are studies of the professionalization of special education in Switzerland, there is a lack of understanding of the political and material basis of state involvement.

This paper asks what educational problems the training institutions in Zurich and Geneva posed solutions to, and how these solutions were linked to the flow of federal funds. It follows historians of social security in arguing that scientific expertise contributed to the translation of vague problems into calculatable risks, and that the scientization of these problems was entangled with their bureaucratization (Lengwiler, 2006). Methodologically, the paper builds on a history of knowledge that understands knowledge as medially and materially inscribed (Sarasin, 2011), and it turns to administrative and financial debates to study the proposal of psychological solutions to educational problems. It argues that this process was reliant on tools to calculate educational risks, and that psychological knowledge offered such tools. Instead of contributing to clear demarcations, however, the educational problems at hand rather allowed for various psychological knowledges to coexist. By exploring the case of interwar special education in Switzerland, the paper thus aims to contribute to an understanding of the political and material conditions of possibility of educational psychologies.

## TFP 17

### **Sino-European Transnational Higher Education in a Fragmented World: Geopolitics and the Politics of Knowledge**

*Chairs:*

*Yingyan Li*

*University of Groningen, Netherlands*

*Lourens van Haften*

*University of Groningen, Netherlands*

Shifting geopolitical conditions are reshaping how transnational higher education is organised, governed, and understood (Kotake et al., 2025; Rizvi, 2026). Relations that were long framed through the language of internationalisation, exchange, and cooperation are increasingly interpreted through concerns over strategic influence, security, and competing visions of global order (Moscovitz & Sabzalieva, 2023). For European higher education, relations with China have become a particularly salient arena in which these broader transformations are negotiated and contested. Recent debates on Sino-European higher education cooperation suggest not only a shift in policy priorities but also growing analytical tensions over how geopolitics, knowledge security, and academic collaboration should be conceptualised, revealing paradoxes and misalignments within existing frameworks (Cai et al., 2025).

Against this background, this panel brings together empirical research on Sino-European transnational higher education, including international branch campuses, cross-border research collaborations, student mobility, and educational assistance initiatives. While Sino-European

relations form the primary focus, selected contributions draw on comparative cases beyond Europe to situate these developments within wider patterns of China's transnational higher education engagements.

The panel brings into dialogue perspectives grounded in diverse theoretical frameworks, including international relations approaches to soft power and knowledge security, as well as scholarship informed by the ontological turn and alternative imaginaries of global order. By juxtaposing these perspectives, the panel opens a conversation about the theoretical vocabularies currently used to analyse Sino-European relations in higher education, and about the assumptions they carry regarding sovereignty, universality, and the politics of knowledge. By anchoring this theoretical dialogue in empirically grounded studies, the panel aims to discuss how different analytical frameworks shape interpretations of contemporary geopolitical change in higher education, and what they foreground—or obscure—when analysing Sino-European relations and their wider implications.

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#### **Paper 1**

*Stella Huili Si*

*University of Manchester, UK*

## **Organizational Governance and Leadership of Transnational Partnerships in Higher Education: Study of Sino-foreign Joint Institutes for Sustainability**

In an era of intensified global disruption—including geopolitical tensions, economic volatility, public health crises, and climate change—transnational higher education (TNHE) has gained renewed significance as a governance mechanism for sustainable development beyond national boundaries. Among various TNHE forms in China, Sino-foreign joint institutes represent the most established mode of physical institutional presence. Despite their rapid expansion, the organisational governance and leadership of these institutes remain insufficiently theorised.

This study examines how China's evolving TNHE governance framework reshapes organisational governance, leadership structures, and power distribution within Sino-foreign joint institutes, and how international partner universities adapt to these changes. Drawing on organisational theory, the research explores the interaction between state regulation, institutional autonomy, and transnational stakeholder interests, addressing broader questions of sustainability and equity in cross-border higher education partnerships.

Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative, multi-level research design combining policy analysis and semi-structured interviews. Thirteen official Chinese policy documents issued between 2003 and 2020 were analysed to trace macro-level governance reforms, alongside interviews with sixteen senior stakeholders from Chinese host universities and UK/US partner institutions. This approach enables an integrated analysis of policy design, institutional implementation, and leadership practice.

The findings indicate that the autonomy of Sino-foreign joint institutes is frequently overstated. Governance remains predominantly centralised, with strengthened hierarchical leadership exercised by Chinese host universities. In response to global market pressures, China's TNHE governance displays a pattern conceptualised as economy-driven centralisation, whereby economic priorities increasingly influence governance arrangements and decision-making structures. While limited convergence with international governance norms is observable, collegial decision-making is often weakened, and the governance influence of international partner universities is marginalised, particularly in financial and structural domains. These dynamics generate persistent tensions within transnational partnerships and pose challenges to long-term sustainability.

The study contributes to the under-developed literature on TNHE governance by offering empirical evidence on leadership and power reconfiguration in Sino-foreign joint institutes, and provides policy-relevant insights for designing more equitable and sustainable transnational higher education partnerships.

## **Paper 2**

*Xiaona Wang*

*University of Oxford, UK*

### **Ripples in the Water: Sino-Swiss Scientific Collaboration in Times of Upheaval**

As geopolitical competition increasingly shapes global science (Marginson, 2026; Shih & Cooney-O'Donoghue, 2024; Lee & Li, 2021), this research examines the growing tension between the practice of open scientific exchange and the reality of national science systems shaped by strategic rivalry. Sino-Swiss scientific collaboration offers a site for investigating this tension as it illustrates how external geopolitical forces influence the choices and experiences of scientists working in a neutral state. This research first examines Sino-Swiss scientific collaboration through the Sino-Swiss Scientific and Technological Cooperation (SSSTC) program. Drawing on policy analysis and institutional data, the research traces the development of Joint Research Projects (JRPs) under the SSSTC framework and identifies key institutional patterns shaping bilateral cooperation. Then, drawing on 40 in-depth interviews conducted as part of the author's doctoral research (Wang, forthcoming), the findings suggest that Sino-Swiss scientific collaboration is indirectly shaped by third-party geopolitical forces through two principal channels. U.S.-China strategic competition generates both material and psychological pressures, while Switzerland's structural entanglement with the EU transmits evolving European policy recalibrations toward China.

## **Paper 3**

*Cristina Pinna*

*University of Groningen, Netherlands*

### **Reframing Cooperation: Research Security and the Changing Vocabulary of EU–China Higher Education**

This paper examines how shifting geopolitical conditions have reshaped EU approaches to academic cooperation with China from 2013 to 2025, focusing on research security and the evolving vocabulary of internationalisation. Drawing on comparative analysis of EU policy documents and interviews with policymakers and university administrators, the paper traces a gradual transformation from earlier frameworks centred on openness, exchange, and global

engagement toward concepts such as responsible internationalisation, de-risking, and the principle of being “as open as possible, as closed as necessary.”

Rather than treating research security as a narrowly technical or defensive response, the paper analyses it as a broader governance process through which cooperation with China is reframed in normative and institutional terms. While policy documents in the early 2010s emphasized partnership and reciprocity, more recent frameworks increasingly foreground risk management, strategic autonomy, and conditional collaboration. This shift redistributes responsibility across universities, funding agencies, and researchers, reshaping expectations around trust, academic autonomy, and institutional accountability.

By tracing these changes over time, the paper shows how evolving policy vocabularies actively reorganise Sino-European transnational higher education. It argues that language itself has become a key instrument of geopolitical ordering—preserving the rhetoric of engagement while introducing new boundaries of cooperation—with significant implications for research cultures and collaboration practices in a fragmented global landscape.

#### **Paper 4**

*Ge Lan*

*King's College London, UK*

#### **China’s Higher Education Internationalization Policies under a Dual Logic: The Case of Sino-Philippine Higher Education Cooperation**

This study examines the underlying logic of China’s higher education internationalization policies between 2015 and 2025 through Sino–Philippine cooperation in higher education. Situated within the context of shifting geopolitical dynamics in Southeast Asia, Sino–Philippine higher education cooperation constitutes a key site for analyzing how China’s higher education internationalization policies are formulated and operationalized. Drawing on a systematic analysis of central government policy documents on higher education internationalization issued between 2015 and 2025, together with relevant bilateral and multilateral cooperation frameworks, and informed by the analytical perspectives of Tianxia and neo-tributary perspective, the study explores how higher education has been institutionally mobilized to serve national development strategies while being discursively embedded in a normative imagination.

The findings indicate that China’s higher education internationalization policies exhibit a dual structure in which state-led normative imagination and strategy-driven policy practice operate

in parallel. On the one hand, policy texts construct an ethical logic emphasizing cooperation beyond zero-sum competition, mutual benefit, and shared development. Through instruments such as scholarship programs, transnational education initiatives, and cross-cultural exchange mechanisms, higher education is discursively framed as a key domain for enacting idealized forms of educational cooperation. On the other hand, higher education is institutionally integrated into China's broader external development agenda, functioning as a strategic policy instrument for enhancing geopolitical influence, recalibrating diplomatic relations, and facilitating regional economic coordination.

## **Paper 5**

*Yingyan Li*

*University of Groningen, Netherlands*

*Lourens van Haafden*

*University of Groningen, Netherlands*

### **“The Yan Garden of Britain”: Tianxia and Neoliberal Imaginaries behind the Peking University UK Campus in Oxford**

This paper examines the Peking University HSBC Business School UK Campus (PHBS UK) as a case of Chinese international branch campuses established abroad, situating it within the evolving landscape of China–Europe relations. Rather than treating PHBS UK as a straightforward institutional extension, the paper adopts a social-imaginary perspective to explore how the campus is imagined and articulated as a transnational higher education space. Drawing on institutional narratives and symbolic representations, we analyse how PHBS UK is framed through metaphors such as platforms, bridges, windows, and gardens. These metaphors reveal the entanglement of neoliberal higher education logics—such as international competitiveness, entrepreneurialism, and mobility—with tianxia-inspired civilisational imaginaries that emphasise harmony, cultural rootedness, and moral responsibility.

We argue that these elements come together to produce a hybrid institutional imaginary, in which the campus is positioned simultaneously as an economic node within the global knowledge economy and as a culturally grounded educational project. By focusing on this hybridisation, the paper contributes to broader discussions on how Chinese universities imagine their institutional futures abroad and how transnational higher education is being reconfigured in an increasingly fragmented and multipolar world.

## **Cross-thematic sessions**

### **CTS: ‘Global knowledge’ and its discontents**

*Chair: To be confirmed*

#### **Paper 1**

*Charlene Song*

*University College London*

#### **“Reading the Global” Through Area Studies: A Comparative Perspective on the Field in British, American, and Chinese Universities**

Building on Cowen’s idea of “reading the global”, this article analyzes the emergences of Area Studies (AS) in British, American, and Chinese universities from the rises of great powers in international politics. Area Studies, such as Southeast Asian Studies, is an interdisciplinary field of scholarship that aims to study other cultures and societies and its agenda, during the 1960s, shaped the field of Comparative Education. Drawing on relevant literature, I first demonstrate the metamorphosis of this field over time from classical AS during colonial times, to contemporary AS during the Cold War, and currently toward more critical perspectives.

Subsequently through an analysis of key policies and institutions, I identified the realist, the liberal internationalist, and the academic rationales for the development of this field. I traced the trans-Atlantic mobilities of AS policies and practices in British and American universities. While AS in Europe and North America experienced a drastic decline since the 1990s, the field has gained increasing importance in China since its Belt and Road Initiative in 2013. In 2022 and 2025 respectively, China’s Ministry of Education (MOE) designated AS as a “first-level” postgraduate discipline and an undergraduate major.

To understand this expansion, I conducted thematic analysis on China’s AS policies issued by MOE during 2011-2025 and on semi-structured interviews with AS students and scholars in Chinese universities. Findings highlight several features of AS in China: first, there is a shift in the conceptualization of AS in MOE policies from an aspect of the “internationalization of higher education (IoHE)” to an instrument to build China’s soft power; second, existing “borders” in China’s AS that favor policy research marginalize humanities and critical scholarship; third, the rapid expansion of policy studies in China’s AS “silently borrowed” from American practices in the 1960s-70s, whilst Western AS was selectively interpreted and criticized; fourth, there has been increasing popularity for framing AS through a Chinese epistemology (known literally as “China’s autonomous knowledge system”).

While serving the nation remains the primary rationale for AS in China, the country’s critical stance towards and intentional distancing from the Western AS suggest a silent and negative form of policy referencing due to the US-China rivalry and China’s ambition to rise as the leader of the Global South. This further substantiates my argument on the dominant influence of great power politics on AS in universities.

#### **Paper 2**

*Nitya Timsina*

*University of Pittsburgh*

## **International education and spiritual emptiness: A reflection from Europe**

### **Abstract/Introduction**

Drawing upon personal narrative and recent scholarship (Timsina, 2025), this paper critiques the dominant paradigm of “internationalization” in higher education with its primacy in the Western thought which reduces all the people and places into a Platonic absolute. It does so by rendering different views of the world into nothing and those who fall outside the scientific realm of thinking and technological bubble as uncontemporary or backward in time. This paper calls into question this absolute sphere of influence, power and mastery of the thinker and a sense of space and authority it enjoys to make others impossible in the world.

### **Method/theory and aim**

This paper was written during my visiting scholar program at the University of Pittsburgh, USA. It is based on massive review of sociological and philosophical literatures. I am presenting it with few more additions and subtractions. The aim is to develop it into a book for which your feedback will be critical. The other aim is to inspire the young graduates and researchers from my own therapeutic that happiness or joy of life come not necessarily from translating our educational degrees and diplomas into a career or employment. They are societal values and social conventions that we imagine all educated persons should share in common. Real joy lies in doing something new, novel, and beautiful by overcoming such societal pressures.

### **Result/conclusion**

This paper is irritated and sickened by the prevailing discourses of international education which emphasizes material enrichment as the ultimate value and primary metrics of a successful life. The paper exposes this “epistemological monism” (Massey, 2005, p. 34), one, which renders non-Western knowledge systems as invalid or irrational other, distant apart or “poor”. By valorizing what Nietzsche calls “monumental history” (see Wood & Hahn, 2012), internationalization excludes the philosophical contributions of the Global South—such as the teachings of Buddha, Gandhi and Vedic traditions subsuming them under a singular, Eurocentric gold standard of education policy knowledge. The paper advocates for including a spiritual dimension into learning—a synthesis of Western existentialism and Eastern spirituality—as a necessary response to the systemic intellectual tyranny and nihilism inherent in modern scientific education and globalized academic structures.

### **Paper 3**

*Margarita Kiryushina*

*Technion - Israel Institute of Technology, Israel*

*Amos Lagziel*

*Technion - Israel Institute of Technology, Israel*

*Miri Yemini*

*Technion - Israel Institute of Technology, Israel*

## **A Systematic Literature Review of Research on Policies in School-Level STEM Education**

Over the past two decades, STEM education has evolved from an emerging interdisciplinary niche into a strategic national priority, viewed globally as a primary driver of human capital and economic competitiveness (Li, 2025; Xie et al., 2015). This shift has elevated STEM from a pedagogical concern to a high-stakes policy issue, triggering systemic reforms worldwide. However, a striking disconnect persists between the strategic weight assigned to STEM and

our analytical understanding of its policy. While existing literature has mapped publication trends, the field lacks a rigorous meta-critique of how policy research itself is constructed. Current syntheses often overlook the methodological foundations and the power dynamics of stakeholder representation, leaving a gap in our understanding of whose interests these policies truly serve. This study addresses this pressing need by conducting a systematic examination of school-level STEM policy research, interrogating how studies are designed, which actors dominate the narrative, and how equity is integrated into the analytical framework.

This study conducts a systematic examination of research literature, extracted from WoS, EBSCO and Scopus in 2025 and scanned using automatic and manual procedures, using the PRISMA protocol (N of extracted records = 41,053, N of articles included in the review = 52). Our analysis of 52 studies reveals a field characterized by ‘descriptive pluralism,’ largely recapitulating policy debates that general education studies navigated decades ago (Ozga, 1990, 1999). While STEM education research is expanding rapidly, it remains theoretically fragmented and heavily skewed toward US-centric cases, risking the adoption of decontextualized, ‘universalist’ models that ignore local socio-political nuances. A critical disconnect emerges between the strategic economic weight assigned to STEM and the depth of its policy analysis: research remains predominantly instrumental and technocratic, focusing on performance metrics rather than interrogating power relations. Although the corpus demonstrates a sustained commitment to examining inequalities using emerging intersectional perspectives, marginalized groups often remain framed through a ‘deficit’ lens. Furthermore, stakeholder dynamics reveal a profound power imbalance: while industry and government actors increasingly dictate agendas, students, families, teachers and communities are positioned as passive recipients. We claim that without a shift toward shared theoretical frameworks and more rigid research designs, STEM policy research risks remaining reactive to political trends, perpetuating the very systemic inequalities it seeks to resolve.

#### **Paper 4**

*Marianne Larsen*

*Western University, Canada*

#### **Navigating Epistemic Tensions in Developing an Internationalization Strategic Plan in a Global South Context**

**Purpose:** This paper is about an Academics Without Borders project that involved the author working in partnership with a team at Karatina University (KU) in Kenya to develop an internationalization strategic plan (ISP). The purpose of the paper is to explore the tensions that developed through the partnership based on different conceptions of the internationalization of higher education (IoHE) is, rationales for pursuing it, and hopes and possibilities associated with it. The paper interrogates the tensions emerging through the project between decolonial, critical epistemologies and colonial, Eurocentric epistemologies.

**Theoretical framework:** This paper draws from decolonial and post-colonial theory to unpack this partnership and illustrate the ways in which dominant Eurocentric epistemologies continue to shape thinking within and outside of the West; and how such a project, despite the partners commitment to decolonizing their work, remained embedded within the enduring logic of coloniality and dominant, Western conceptions of whose knowledge counts.

**Methods and data sources:** This is qualitative instrumental case study as developing the ISP at the KU provides insights into the broader processes of how regional Global South HEIs engage with internationalisation. KU provided a fitting case for this study as a public chartered medium-sized university located in central Kenya. The data sources for the study include summary notes from team meetings; reflective journals, notes, and email correspondence;

university and ISP policy documents. That data was used to carry out situational analyses of the institutional, regional, and continental landscapes shaping the development of the ISP. Data also included results from a voluntary online ISP stakeholder survey, and individual and focus group interviews with 12 individuals in leadership positions.

Findings: The findings revealed the existence of several tensions through the process of developing the ISP. The first concerned the length of the document; the second, the conflation of internationalization with Westernization. The third was about KU's desire to be considered 'world-class'. KU stakeholders, considered internationalization a vehicle to realizing the university's vision to be a "university of global excellence." The IoHE was viewed as a tool to enhance the university's institutional visibility and prestige, increase research capacity through Global North partnerships and the university's capacity to recruit more international students as a form of revenue generation and status-building. All in all, the KU leadership viewed internationalization through an instrumental, Western lens. These perspectives, in contrast to the decolonial framing the AWB volunteers brought to the project, illustrated epistemic differences and dependencies, which the ISP team was forced to navigate through. The paper explores the productive nature of these tensions and the final ISP that emerged through this process.

Post-script: In line with the theme of this conference, the post-script to the paper explores the continued complexities of the relationship between the author and her Kenyan partners who are proposing they partner to infuse competency based learning, from the West, across Karatina University in alignment with Kenya's shift to the competency-based curriculum (CBC) in all K-12 schools. From a comparative perspective, my post-script will interrogate the challenges in the transfer of learning systems such as CBC from abroad into a Global South setting, and epistemic challenges of working in partnership with Global South institutions.

## **CTS: Discourse, disengagement and exclusion in education**

*Chair: To be confirmed*

### **Paper 1**

*Linxiao Zhang*

*Lancaster University, UK*

### **Exploring Intersectional Patterns of Bullying and Violence against Sexual and Gender Minorities in UK Higher Education**

Despite growing institutional commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion, bullying and violence directed at sexual and gender minorities (SGMs) remain persistent features of everyday life within UK higher education institutions (HEIs). Existing research has documented the prevalence of such experiences, yet less attention has been paid to how bullying and violence are differentially produced and experienced through intersecting social positions, and how these processes are embedded within the learning environments and governance structures of universities. This study addresses this gap by examining the intersectional dynamics of bullying and violence against SGMs in UK HEIs, with particular attention to their implications for learning, academic participation, and institutional belonging. Drawing on intersectionality theory and a social justice-oriented analytical framework, the study conceptualises bullying and violence not merely as interpersonal misconduct, but as phenomena shaped by institutional norms, power relations, and implicit expectations embedded in university learning spaces. Intersectionality is employed to examine how multiple

social locations, such as gender identity, sexual orientation, race, nationality, and socio-economic background, interact to structure differential exposure to harm and uneven access to support. The social justice framework further situates these experiences within broader questions of institutional responsibility, legitimacy, and the conditions under which education can meaningfully promote equity.

Methodologically, the research adopts a sequential mixed-methods design informed by a transformative paradigm. The quantitative phase consists of a cross-institutional survey of students in UK HEIs, examining patterns, forms, and perceived impacts of bullying and violence across different learning and social contexts. Multivariate analyses are used to explore associations between intersecting identity positions and reported experiences, as well as perceived academic and psychosocial consequences. The qualitative phase involves semi-structured interviews with a purposively selected sub-sample of SGM participants, enabling in-depth exploration of lived experiences, meaning-making processes, and interactions with institutional policies and support mechanisms. Qualitative analysis focuses on how participants navigate visibility, safety, and belonging within formal and informal learning environments.

The study is expected to demonstrate that experiences of bullying and violence are unevenly distributed across SGM populations, with particular configurations of gender identity, racialisation, and student status intensifying vulnerability. Findings are also anticipated to reveal tensions between formal institutional commitments to inclusion and the everyday practices through which learning spaces are regulated and experienced. By linking intersectional experiences of harm to the organisation and governance of learning in universities, the study contributes to comparative debates on higher education, social justice, and the limits of policy-driven inclusion. It concludes by identifying institutionally grounded points of intervention aimed at fostering safer and more equitable learning environments in UK HEIs, with relevance for broader European and international higher education contexts.

## **Paper 2**

*Yasmin Abd El Qader*  
*Bar Ilan University, Israel*

*Pascale Benoliel*  
*Bar Ilan University, Israel*

### **Principal leadership styles and school violence in the Israeli Arab Educational System: The mediating role of professional commitment**

The study suggests investigating the mediating role of teacher professional commitment in the relationship between transformational leadership, transactional leadership to School violence. The data was collected from two sources: senior management team members and teachers to avoid same source and common method bias. Overall, 426 participants from 71 high schools in the Israeli Arab educational system answered validated questionnaires. The results from the structural equation model indicated that teachers' PC mediates the relationship between transformational leadership, transactional leadership to school violence. Teachers' PC facilitates school principals' leadership styles, building leadership capacity and promoting a positive and safe school learning environment.

This investigation is important because school violence is a persistent challenge that undermines students' well-being, learning, and sense of safety, and because understanding how leadership shapes teachers' professional attitudes is essential for developing effective prevention strategies. At the same time, while prior research in Arab schools has largely emphasized participative, paternalistic, and democratic leadership, the article notes that less empirical attention has been given to transformational and transactional leaderships specifically

in relation to school violence, especially with a clear mediating mechanism. By incorporating teachers' professional commitment as the explanatory pathway, the study helps clarify how leadership may influence school violence indirectly through teachers' role-related commitment and day-to-day professional functioning, and it offers practical guidance for leadership development in Arab schools by highlighting strategies that strengthen teachers' commitment as a route toward safer and more effective school climates.

### **Paper 3**

*Frank Shooster*

*No Forgotten Kids & Blueprint Learning Systems, USA*

#### **Governing Learning Through Community Ownership: Integrative Systems Design for Self-Financing Education in Fragile States**

##### **Purpose/Objectives:**

This paper examines how learning systems can be governed to achieve both quality educational outcomes and financial self-sufficiency in fragile-state contexts. Addressing the governance challenge of perpetual aid dependency, the Blueprint for Universal Education demonstrates an alternative organizational model where community-controlled entities govern schools through elected School Management Committees while market-based financing instruments enable scale. The study investigates whether integrative systems design- optimizing 62 interventions simultaneously, can transform education economics from donor-dependent (\$500/child annually) to self-financing (\$125/child cost, \$248/child revenue, \$123/child surplus).

##### **Perspective/Theoretical Framework:**

The governance architecture integrates Elinor Ostrom's common pool resource management principles (community ownership with clear boundaries, collective decision-making, nested governance through hub-and-spoke clusters), Donella Meadows' systems dynamics (optimizing feedback loops rather than isolated interventions), and Amory Lovins' whole-system design methodology (simultaneous multi-objective optimization). This pluralist framework positions education governance as neither pure-state nor pure-market, but rather hybrid institutions using revenue-generating mechanisms to fund democratically-governed community goods. The no-extraction covenant ensures financial actors (DIB investors, microfinance lenders) exit after loan repayment, with permanent ownership vesting in community cooperatives.

##### **Methods/Techniques:**

Phase II evaluation employs cluster-randomized controlled trial design: 20 treatment clusters and 20 control clusters (~36,000 students), achieving 80% statistical power to detect 0.15 standard deviation learning gains. Primary outcomes use EGRA (literacy) and EGMA (numeracy); secondary outcomes measure enrollment, attendance, cost per child, and gender parity. Independent evaluation by IAI-Haiti ensures methodological rigor. Phase I (currently underway near Milot, Haiti) serves as proof-of-concept with one hub cluster serving 900 children.

##### **Data Sources/Evidence Framework:**

Cost modeling derives from bottom-up cluster analysis validated against Academie Lead Haiti expenditure data. The 62 interventions span: 23 cost-reduction mechanisms (multi-grade teaching, community construction, hub-spoke shared resources), 17 revenue streams (agricultural programs, water kiosks, declining tuition model, WFP feeding contracts), and 8 quality interventions (structured pedagogy, mother-tongue instruction, school feeding). Financing architecture includes Development Impact Bonds, microloans secured by Social Benefit Payment assignments, and sovereign wealth fund participation.

Results/Implications:

The governance model demonstrates that community ownership and market financing instruments need not be contradictory. Communities govern educational content and operations through democratic School Management Committees, while capital markets provide construction financing under strict no-extraction covenants. This challenges dominant governance paradigms in fragile-state education by redistributing control from external donors and NGOs to local communities, while maintaining rigorous accountability through independent evaluation. Implications extend to 270 million out-of-school children globally.

## **CTS: Pedagogy and learning: a perspective from Denmark**

*Chair: Stephen Carney*

### **Paper 1**

*Bjorn Frithiof Hamre  
University of Copenhagen, Denmark*

#### **Pedagogy as a Scientific Discipline: Contemporary Challenges and Future Perspectives – The Danish Case**

This proposal reconceptualises pedagogy as a scientific discipline by rejecting essentialist definitions and advancing a genealogical, practice oriented account. Instead of locating a fixed method, object, or disciplinary essence, pedagogy is treated as historically, culturally, and socially produced, shaped by normative and normalising dynamics and by the interplay between ideas and practices (Foucault, 2007; Durkheim, 1956).

A classical Danish reference is the opposition between the two former professors of pedagogy at the University of Copenhagen, K.E. Grue Sørensen and Staf Callewaert. Grue Sørensen, trained in philosophy and psychology, argued that pedagogy lacks its own distinctive method and object and must therefore rely on auxiliary sciences—an implicitly essentialist attempt to define “what pedagogy is” or “lacks,” often culminating in a humanistic orientation (Grue Sørensen, 1965). Callewaert, instead argued for a social scientific foundation centred on social structures (Callewaert, 2017).

More recent discussions, notably by Jens Erik Kristensen, diagnose a crisis in Danish pedagogy linked to alignment with education policy agendas and the institutionalisation of “educational science,” exemplified by university programmes. This development, Kristensen argues, narrows pedagogy by subsuming it under policy driven educational research. He reopens the distinction between science and research: whereas research denotes transdisciplinary, policy steered, application oriented knowledge production, science refers to a discipline anchored, historically reflective practice that preserves pedagogy’s epistemic specificity (Kristensen, 2022).

Building on this diagnosis, I propose a historically informed redefinition structured by two analytical distinctions through a genealogical, practice oriented approach (Hamre & Bjerre, 2023; Hamre, 2026). First, following Michel Foucault, the distinction between normativity (setting ideals and standards) and normalisation (regulating conduct) illuminates how pedagogical theories and practices both set agendas—e.g., in education policy—and respond to emergent social problems, for example special education (Foucault, 2007). Second, drawing on Émile Durkheim, a distinction between theoretical conceptions of education and education

as practice enables analysis of the material, institutional, and context embedded forms through which educational activity is enacted (Durkheim, 1956).

This framework is transdisciplinary without being derivative: it neither collapses pedagogy into auxiliary sciences nor posits an intrinsic essence. Instead, it conceptualises pedagogy as a field with its own historically developed epistemic logics, shaped socio culturally (Hofstetter & Schneuwly, 2002). Empirically, the project analyses scholarly texts addressing pedagogy's scientific status, using critical textual analysis of programmatic writings and foundational textbooks to trace how assumptions have shaped the field—and how a genealogical, practice near alternative can reopen its conceptual scope.

## **Paper 2**

*Steen Baagøe Nielsen*  
*Roskilde University, Denmark*

*Kevin Mogensen*  
*Roskilde University, Denmark*

### **Reframing Learning for the University Student: A Critical Analysis of the reshaping of Roskilde University's Problem-oriented Project Learning (PPL) in the era of Employability**

This paper critically examines how reconceptualization of project work at Roskilde University (RUC) is reshaping students' learning experiences. I focus on the implications along three dimensions of perceived educational purpose: Subjectification, inclusion, and employability and the ways these are given new focus as part of student-directed project work.

Central to the current discussion of project work and/or Problem-oriented Project Learning (PPL) is the concept of learning. Here I will argue that we have seen major shifts reflecting broader ideological, technocratic, and pragmatic transformations in university policy and pedagogy, influencing both didactic planning and educational practice driving the purpose towards employability as central goal.

My analysis centres on RUC's PPL-model, exploring how its purpose is reconceptualized toward technification - a move that risks undermining its original, experience-based foundations. I focus on three key trends shaping current education at RUC, analysing three core texts:

- *The 7 Principles of PPL*. Introducing "RUC's educational model."
- *The Group Project: How to Do It!* A handbook for students on project collaboration.
- *Strategi for employability. Roskilde Universitet 2023-2030*

On this basis I will first show how RUC's current strategical documents affirm PPL as a way of 'learning problem solving-skills'. I will then discuss how this notion of learning omits the historical emphasis on the importance of experience-based learning (Ulriksen 1997, 1998). The omission is critical as Project work draws on what Kampmann (2017) names a long tradition of 'critical pedagogy' and the role of experiential pedagogy in fostering active, motivated, student centred teaching and learning. Kampmann refers to the traditions of experience-based learning drawing on Dewey's pragmatism in combination with the critical, progressive educational thinkers such as Freire (Braz) and Giroux (US), as well as the pedagogical traditions informed by Frankfurt school of Critical theory of Negt & Kluge, and Ziehe, all of which have been highly influential in Denmark in their emphasis on relating the educational content to student's life worlds and experiences as the foundation for meaningful engagement (Kampmann (2017).

While looking into this tradition I will discuss what happens when RUC promotes a model of PPL that neglects the cornerstone of RUC's project work pedagogy: the commitment to support student's experiential learning?

In doing so I will apply basic understandings from Biesta's (1997; 2003) educational theories. The point here is to not only critique the omission of experiential learning but also to look into further consequences of the instrumentalization of learning 'employability' through PPL. With Biesta (1997; 2010) I will instead underline the central challenge of balancing the founding dimension of education, termed *qualification*, *socialisation*, and *subjectification*. Biesta argues that educational practices should always include all these dimensions and purposes intertwined to avoid a narrow, technocratic understanding of learning.

Following Biesta in his critique of narrow understanding of "learning" linked primarily to measurable goals for qualification and employability this paper will discuss the implications for students and educators of the tendency towards applying functionalist and instrumental approach to experience.

In my discussion I will draw briefly on previous research on project work to argue that PPL as it is promoted seems to contribute to a view of education and learning, which is not only detached from the transformative and critical potential of the practices of experiential learning, fundamental to the ways project work is still practices all over RUC. I will further argue that the promoted technocratic understandings themselves lead to extra 'work' (Smith 2005) for students as well as educators. Based on institutional ethnography I will point to the ways the adoption of the dominant understandings of PPL as simply 'the learning of problem solving-skills' – neglects 'work knowledge' and 'workarounds' to dela with the necessary inclusive, collective, socialising and subjectivising dimensions of group work.

### **Paper 3**

*Henning Salling Olesen  
Roskilde University, Denmark*

#### **Is formal Schooling coming to an End: Higher Education and Lifelong Learning?**

The well known pattern of higher education careers is in dissolution – the long and relatively free academic education in early career is becoming reduced and "schoolified". The close connection with research has since long been broken. Standard labor market careers are becoming less standard and the link between specific education and employment is becoming weaker – in some areas very slowly, though.

Instead we will see different forms of continuing education and short term adapted courses develop. People will work, participate in training adapted to their present or desired job. It will be increasingly difficult to identify not to mention qualify the core content of these studies.

The chapter will outline the possible developments of these types of continuing academic education and particularly discuss the potentials in the Roskilde model of higher education in this emerging situation.

RUC was a social innovation meant to create an open space for new generations of students for whom the obvious path to relevant knowledge was not to tap into classical institutions and cumulated knowledge of former generations.

It was provoked and enabled by a strong societal pressure on the university institution from policy makers, business and industry, mainly bearing forward a utilitarian expectation, but also a demand for knowledge democracy.

The Roskilde model with Problem oriented studies, project organization and student self governance were the structural frameworks for a reconstruction of academic work within a rationale of societal relevance and subjective engagement. The format also had the idea of

transferring some of the virtues of the Humboldt University and the British college universities into a new era.

As it turned out that this university model was highly contested – but the students took advantage and were appreciated in the labor market. But the main university politics of the last 50 years have been on of reducing freedom of study, of bureaucratizing research, and installing a heavily utilitaristic ethos. Their importance as innovative and critical corrective to societal development is fading.

The question the paper will raise is not about the dire directions of university education in general, but the question if the ideas once applied on youth education can find a corresponding relevance for continuing education.

The core of the question will be of the experiential nature of learning, and the role practice experiences can play in adult students learnings in continuing education. But the case will tap into a wider discussion of transformation of formal education.

#### **Paper 4**

#### **‘Processes of belonging and transition amongst international students in Denmark’.**

*Stephen Carney  
Roskilde University, Denmark*

International student mobility to Denmark is a policy priority, but little is known about the conditions of study and subjective experiences of full-degree international students, especially those with the right to study with state support. This group makes a substantial commitment to Denmark through compulsory paid work and are thus well-placed for longer-term integration into labor markets and Danish society. Nevertheless, data suggest that the majority of international students leave Denmark within 5 years of graduation, presenting policy makers at least with a political challenge to justify large educational expenditures. The focus in the project is on the sense-making processes of such students as they encounter culturally-unique educational practices and attempt to balance these with the demands of low-skill paid work that is often unrelated if not counterproductive to study. Two literatures frame the study:

Learning and the higher education study environment: Brooks et. al. (2022), considers the Danish case to show how systems governed by study progression frameworks foster passive learning and restrict student engagement. Compressed and anticipatory regimes of control (Rappleye & Komatsu 2016) create intense pressures to complete educational tasks within timeframes shaped by system needs rather than student learning styles or capacities. Here, the international student is often constructed as *the* ‘problem’: struggling linguistically, failing to embrace ‘progressive’ pedagogies, and prone to lapses in academic integrity via plagiarism. As such, the classroom and campus are sites of contest about what constitutes the ‘good’ student, ‘right’ pedagogy and ‘legitimate’ knowledge (Spangler & Adriansen 2021).

Higher education and the geo-politics of belonging: A certain intellectual archive frames international education programs, marginalizing minor knowledges and languages as part of hidden curricula that reinforce the position of the Northern centers of knowledge production. Students from the Global South and Central and Eastern Europe in particular carry a stigma of poverty and dependence (Wilken & Dahlberg 2017) and live with a persistent external orientalizing. Understanding the particular geopolitics of belonging (Shahjahan 2019) across the Danish university system is thus essential to conceptualizing the space of possibility for thinking and acting differently.

Empirically, the paper draws on interviews with international students at one ‘reform’ university in Denmark. Here, students talked about the difficulty of adapting to student-directed educational processes where basic pedagogical values and obligations were unclear or implicit. Whilst celebrating the opportunities to draw on their own experiences and be recognized in the various settings of the Danish university, ‘reform’ pedagogy nevertheless embodies hierarchies and power relations that are difficult to recognize and negotiate. As importantly, the necessity to undertake paid labor alongside study was described by many as a challenging burden that impacted on the quality of study experiences as well more general feelings of marginalization and exclusion in Danish society. For many, study (and work) in Denmark made them rethink their sense of self from student to migrant worker. This issue provides insight into the changing context of study in Denmark, as well as the appropriation of Danish universities and the aims of education itself into the logics of market capitalism.

## **CTS: Educational work in the classroom and beyond**

*Chair: Karen Parish*

### **Paper 1**

*Mitsuko Maeda*

*Osaka Jogakuin University, Japan*

#### **Teachers as Multi-Role Workers: Beyond the Classroom**

This study explores teachers’ engagement in secondary employment focusing on a case study of teachers in Indonesia. While private tutoring as a teacher’s side job has been widely documented, less attention has been paid to the diversity of teachers’ additional work and how it relates to both their professional and private lives. This study addresses this gap by focusing on the broader range of work teachers undertake beyond their primary teaching roles.

Drawing on a questionnaire survey of teachers and semi-structured interviews, along with observations of teachers engaged in side jobs in an urban area of Indonesia, this study analyzes the types of secondary employment teachers hold, their motivations, and the perceived impacts on their professional and personal lives.

The findings show that teachers’ secondary employment is highly diverse. Although private tutoring remains the most common activity, many teachers engage in a wide variety of other work, including online businesses and family-run businesses. Some teachers also participate in creative or knowledge-based work such as digital content production and academic support services. These patterns suggest that teachers’ work roles increasingly extend beyond traditional education-related activities.

Motivations for engaging in additional work are not limited to financial necessity. While economic considerations remain important, teachers also pursue secondary employment for personal interest, skill utilization, social networking, and opportunities for professional development.

In terms of perceived effects, most teachers report that their additional work does not interfere with their teaching duties. Some even identify positive influences, such as applying skills, experiences, and new perspectives gained from side jobs to classroom practice. However, these findings are based on teachers’ perceptions, and the actual effects of secondary employment on their primary roles require further empirical investigation.

Overall, this study extends existing knowledge by highlighting the complex and multifaceted ways teachers manage multiple roles and engage in work beyond the classroom.

## **Paper 2**

*Karen Parish*

*University of Inland Norway, Norway*

### **An interdisciplinary framework for the intervention of Extended Reality Technologies into teacher education – A case study from teacher education in Norway**

Teacher education programs aim to cultivate high-quality educators who derive satisfaction and longevity from their careers, however, despite entering the profession with altruistic motivations and aspirations to impact student learning and society, many novice teachers face significant challenges that lead to a disparity between their expectations and the realities of teaching. Notably, a substantial portion of newly graduated pre-service teachers (PSTs) never transition into the teaching profession, often struggling with the shift from academic to professional settings (Falch, 2022). This adjustment can provoke strong affective responses such as anxiety and a sense of incompetence, although some view this cognitive dissonance as a necessary phase for developing professional maturity (Treacy & Leavy, 2023). In the context of Norway, the attrition rate is particularly high, with one-third of new teachers leaving within five years, highlighting the critical issue of recruitment and retention (Falch, 2022). To address this, practical experiences such as practice placements are incorporated into teacher education to better integrate theoretical learning with practical skills, however, consistency across placements is difficult to achieve.

In teacher education, extended realities (XR) are becoming an increasingly utilised tool to support learning when opportunities in the real-world are not available (Yee, Dorner, Bowdon, & Quintero-Jackson, 2024). Virtual reality (VR) has been utilised as a training enhancement tool in combination with real-life practicum experiences. Furthermore, simulation sessions can be made available to all PSTs allowing for the delivery of training to remain consistent both in content of training lessons and frequency, as opposed to practice placements of varying quality. VR has also been found to be beneficial as a way to train in niche areas such as parent-teacher consultations that are difficult to gain experience of in real-life (Parish, Warnatsch, Torgersen, & Lugo, 2024).

Research interest in the use of XR in educational contexts has also soared. Huang, Richter, Kleickmann, & Richter (2023) found, in their review of studies of simulators in teacher education contexts published between 2010-2020, that 56.5% of the studies they analysed were published in the final two years of the period. This increased interest also reveals a heterogeneity in the research base as different simulators are developed and tested in different ways, however, recent reviews have found positive outcomes for classroom simulation experiences in a wide range of research studies (Ersozlu, Ledger, Ersozlu, Mayne, & Wildy, 2023; Huang et al, 2023). Research into the impact and efficacy of these interventions is in its infancy and as with any technological advancements, the application of XR in teacher education programmes should not be advanced without a critical consideration of the impact and effect of that technology.

Frameworks for the implementation of XR are also on the increase. Buchner & Zumbach (2020) suggest a framework for teachers for the implementation of VR/Augmented reality (AR) in the classroom. Mbonye (2022) presents a framework for incorporating VR into teacher education as a way to prepare teachers to use VR in their teaching. These frameworks focus on how VR should be implemented in educational contexts, however, the Education Participatory

Design Research model presented here focusses on researching both the development and the implementation of XR technology interventions in teacher education with the aim to facilitate a critical consideration of the application from an interdisciplinary standpoint.

This theoretical framework has been developed in Norway and is situated in the context of Europe where there has been an increase in the development of and application of XR technology into teacher education as a way to bridge the theory-practice divide to support the transition into the teaching profession and reduce attrition. The intention is that this framework can assist researchers to consider how they can approach research from an interdisciplinary standpoint to facilitate the incorporation of structure into research design and tools in such a way as to gain a more holistic understanding of the efficacy of XR technology in teacher training. To date the author is not aware of such a research-focussed framework that is specifically focussed on the development and implementation of XR in teacher training. Therefore it is hoped that this theoretically grounded research framework, that has been applied in the context of Norway, offers researchers in the context of Europe and beyond with a starting point from which to explore the efficacy of XR interventions.

### **Paper 3**

*Aline Lupa*

*Free University of Bolzano, Italy*

*Anna Schwermann*

*Free University of Bolzano, Italy*

*Marielouise Schild*

*Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg, Germany*

*Séneca Jurado van Bürck*

*Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg, Germany*

### **Achievement and Differences in Achievement within political Discourses: Reflections on a Cross-National Discourse Analysis from Italy and Germany**

Achievement can be understood as a historically evolved, transcultural phenomenon produced in “discourse-practice formations” (Ricken & Reh 2018) and is furthermore a crucial element of educational scientific research (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Agrusti, 2021; Piscozzo & Stefanel, 2022). Starting from here, this contribution addresses the question of which ideas of achievement and achievement differences are conveyed through educational policy documents. In a sub-study of a cross-national research project, discourse analyses on educational policy documents (2001-2020) from Italy and Germany were conducted (APrA: “Achievement: A social practice in Primary School. An International Comparative Analysis on Germany and Italy” DFG-JOINT, 2025–2027; Free University of Bolzano; Carl von Ossietzky University Oldenburg).

Based on the sociology-of-knowledge approach to discourse (SKAD; Keller 2013), in our study we problematize the phenomenon “achievement” as a discursive construct that is historically shaped within intertwined complexes of power and knowledge (Foucault, 2002). The sampling process followed a unified design in both countries, combining deductive and inductive procedures, that led to a data corpus of 20 analyzed documents regarding Italy and the Autonomous Province of Bozen-Bolzano as well as 39 documents regarding Germany and the

State of Lower Saxony, valid or issued between 2001-2020. The analysis was conducted by adapting coding strategies of Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2017) to the requirements of SKAD and the specific knowledge interests of this study (Keller, 2013).

The reconstruction of the discourses related to both, Italy and Germany, uncovered diverse central overlapping topics, such as concepts of individualization being closely linked to ideas of achievement.

Regarding the analyses of documents from Italy, it became apparent that strong emphasis is put onto individualized competence development embedded in both logics of meritocracy and inclusive schooling. As assessment translates learning processes into visible and measurable forms, achievement functions as a societal contribution. This manifests itself in the subjectification of all students as autonomous achieving subjects and future contributors to society, while the institutional structures foster personality development by valuing, on the one hand diversity and on the other hand, deserving behavior and merit.

Related to Germany, the discourse analysis shows that individualization regards both, teaching content on the part of teachers, and it is also mentioned on the part of students who are expected to position themselves as high-achieving individuals. The different types of individualization concepts place high demands on the role of a student in primary school, emphasizing the major role of the students' habitus to be in harmony with the habitus of the institution of school, and the ability to succeed in school as a student.

Based on these findings, in our presentation we critically reflect how related subject positionings of students imply social orders as well as (de-)privileged social positionings of individuals.

## Paper 4

*Annegrethe Ahrenkiel  
Roskilde University, Denmark*

### **From Jumping to Read-Aloud: Children's linguistic practices prior to and during their participation in the language-learning programme Dialogic Reading**

This presentation compares children's participation in a programme designed to increase and intensify (standardise and accelerate) children's language learning to their linguistic interactions with each other before the activity begins. The presentation adopts a place-theoretical perspective on children's language, understanding language and places as entangled. The empirical material derives from a video-ethnographic fieldwork in a Danish early childhood setting that used Dialogic Reading as a specific language-pedagogical initiative, alongside inspiration from NEST pedagogy. Through a detailed empirical example, the presentation will demonstrate how children transform a space designed with the intention of immersion and predictability into an intense and unpredictable linguistic interaction involving unconventional uses of objects. At the same time, the paper shows how children's participation in Dialogic Reading requires the educator to deviate from the instructions, placing her in a dilemma between following the children's interests and adhering to the guidelines. The presentation questions the program's ability to standardize and increase children's language learning and argues for creating spaces with flexible layouts and structures, rather than standardized ones, to create better opportunities for children's linguistic and multimodal interaction.

# **CTS: Who Thinks, Writes, and Knows? Reimagining Curriculum and Epistemologies in the age of AI**

*Chair: Anselmo Paolone*

## **Paper 1**

*Solomon Arulraj David  
The British University in Dubai, United Arab Emirates*

### **Forward learning curriculum and instruction for education 5.0 and beyond: a potential design for artificial and human intelligences to flourish together**

The post-pandemic world has geared up for an aggressive shift as we are moving away from 4th industrial revolution (IR) to 5IR. The 4IR and education 4.0 was heavily technology focused, while the 5IR and education 5.0 is expected to meaningfully integrate artificial and human intelligences. It is argued that a futuristic forward learning curriculum and instruction is critical for education to comply with the demands of 5IR and education 5.0. This study therefore aims to explore the ways forward learning curriculum and instruction to support education 5.0 and highlight how it is potential for artificial and human intelligences to flourish, co-exist and complement each other. Mixed method data will be gathered using structured and semi-structured questionnaire from diverse stakeholders in selected higher educational institutions. Descriptive statistical analysis will be used to analyse the quantitative data while thematic analysis will be used to analyse the qualitative data. Data integration will be helpful to arrive at a comprehensive understanding from the findings. The study is still progressing and is expected to help academics, researchers, educational leaders and policy makers. The study argues that if forward learning curriculum and instruction is designed and delivered with its true potential through humane approach, there is a greater chance for both artificial and human intelligences to flourish.

## **Paper 2**

*Anselmo Roberto Paolone  
University of Udine, Italy*

### **Artificial Imagination and Schematism: Rethinking Learning, Writing, and Authorship in the Age of AI**

This presentation explores the concept of imagination as a key category for understanding the transformations currently affecting academic learning, writing, and authorship in the age of artificial intelligence. It offers a preliminary exploration of these issues, which will later be developed in a broader research project.

The notion of imagination is addressed here in a double sense. On the one hand, it is discussed as a foundation of authorship, recalling Roland Barthes' reflections on the shifting position of the author (1967). On the other hand, imagination is examined as a cognitive source of the mental categorizations that enable knowledge and learning.

Drawing on Immanuel Kant, and on the interpretation proposed by Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1947), schematism can be understood as a function of imagination: it does not produce particular images but rather generates procedures that connect perceptions and meanings. Jerome Bruner (1986) later reformulated this insight, building on the work of Nelson

Goodman, by arguing that human cognition organizes perception through culturally transmitted systems of categories.

The presentation argues that cultural industries since the twentieth century, as described by Adorno and Horkheimer, and artificial intelligence today, increasingly perform part of this schematizing function. AI systems process vast amounts of data in order to model behaviors and anticipate possible futures, thereby influencing how individuals interpret and/or imagine reality. This raises several questions: Can AI participate in the imaginative processes traditionally associated with authorship? Can it contribute to anticipating and shaping human futures? And why is it crucial to analyze AI in terms of imagination rather than intelligence alone? (Yuk Hui 2016)

The paper develops two main hypotheses. The first concerns the possible emergence of artificial imagination, understood as the predictive and generative capacity of algorithmic systems to simulate and anticipate patterns of human behavior. In this perspective, AI is not treated simply as a substitute for the human author, but rather as an actant: a technical agent that enters into interaction with the author within a shared process of production, interpretation, and projection (Latour 2005). Writing and research thus become hybrid practices in which human and artificial forms of schematization intersect and influence one another.

The second hypothesis proposes the need for a counter-schematism, inspired by the philosophy of technics developed by Bernard Stiegler (1998). Rather than rejecting technological mediation, this approach distinguishes between a reproductive imagination (associated with predictive and pattern-reinforcing AI) and a “negative imagination” capable of interrupting existing schemata and opening new possible worlds (Bruner 1986). Such counter-schematism may represent a crucial resource for preserving creative learning, critical thought, and intellectual autonomy in contemporary higher education.

### **Paper 3**

*Daniel Boccacci*

*University of Ferrara, Italy*

#### **Review with AI: Epistemic Reflections on doctoral practices and identities**

AI systems, conceived as pervasive symbols of technological power, influence the contemporary educational reflections inside a rich network of meanings between feelings of governance, ethical beliefs, and cultural expectations. Higher Education is crossed by this flow of symbolic practices that they interact in the development of identity and knowledge (Lindgren 2023; Floridi, 2025). While a growing literature underlines the revolutionary scope and the pedagogical and operational potential of these technologies, there is a lack of adequate reflection on the epistemic perspectives that these tools open in university education (Mustafa et. al., 2024).

In particular, a necessary field to explore is that concerning doctoral writing because of its intimate connection with the expression and production of human knowledge (Han et al., 2024). Within this practice, the contribution aims to explore the different conceptions of source review, ideas that guide academic education on different trajectories of knowledge (Escalante et. al., 2023).

Drawing on the notion of epistemic cultures (Knorr-Cetina, 1999) and on an actantial reading of writing inspired by Actor-Network Theory (Latour, 2005), this paper reflects on the symbolic-cultural components that develop within the relationship between AI and the doctoral subject in the revision process. The active presence of machines, that check and guide bibliographical contents, intervenes in the distribution of cognitive, cultural and emotional

resources, reconfiguring the conception and quality of the subject in education (critical-reflective, creative, conservative, efficiency-oriented).

Based on the content of semi-structured interviews with professors and experts from Italian doctoral schools, the reflection will highlight a network of different conceptions of source views, understood as: a moment of meta-verification of technological action; a critical activity of knowledge (reliability, authority, artificiality); epistemological-comparative opportunity (mapping, openness and cross-referencing of knowledge); an expression of conservative or creative will to human governance; and a horizon of functionalist tensions (efficiency and optimization).

This practical-semantic complexity represents a great resource and a challenge of comprehension among doctoral communities.

## **CTS: Learning, policy and governance**

*Chair: Marcella Milana*

### **Paper 1**

*Qi Hu*

*Shanghai Normal University, China*

### **Learning as Governance: How PISA Shapes Legitimate Knowledge in Global Education Policy**

Over the past two decades, “learning” has become a central category in global education discourse, increasingly defined through measurable outcomes and comparative indicators. Among international assessments, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, has played a particularly influential role in shaping how learning is conceptualized, measured, and discussed in policy debates. While existing research has widely examined the policy impact of PISA, less attention has been paid to how international assessments contribute to the construction of legitimate knowledge about learning in global education governance. This paper examines how PISA participates in the governance of learning by defining authoritative forms of educational knowledge. The analysis draws on perspectives from global governance and the sociology of knowledge, which emphasize the role of international organizations in shaping policy agendas through expertise and comparative indicators. Methodologically, the study adopts qualitative document analysis, examining key PISA assessment frameworks, policy reports, and institutional narratives produced by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. The analysis shows that PISA functions not only as a technical assessment tool but also as a governance mechanism that stabilizes particular understandings of learning and promotes them as internationally comparable policy references. Through the production and circulation of indicators and expertise, PISA contributes to the standardization of educational knowledge and reinforces the authority of international organizations in global education policymaking. By highlighting the epistemic and political dimensions of international assessments, the study contributes to comparative education research on how learning becomes an object of governance in contemporary global education policy.

### **Paper 2**

*Tore Bernt Sorensen*

*University of Glasgow, UK*

*Marcella Milana  
University of Verona, Italy*

### **Policy Learning and Education Policy: A Scoping Review of the Research Literature**

Emerging in the 1960s, the policy learning literature today constitutes a ‘family tree’ with multiple ontologies and epistemologies (Dunlop et al., 2018). Among numerous definitions, policy learning has been generally understood as “the updating of beliefs based on lived or witnessed experiences, analysis or social interaction” (Dunlop & Radaelli, 2013, p.599). Implying a broad understanding of policy processes, the ontology of policy learning suggests a world of ambiguity and uncertainty in which actors puzzle over solving policy problems as well as about gaining power (Dunlop et al., 2024). Several reviews on policy learning have been conducted (Dunlop & Radaelli, 2013; Moyson et al., 2017; Zaki et al., 2022), yet none of them with a focus on education policy.

Addressing this gap, our paper presents findings from an ongoing scoping review (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005) of the peer-reviewed anglophone literature about policy learning in education globally. In particular, the paper discusses ontological and epistemological features of the literature, guided by three research questions:

1. How is policy learning conceptualised in the anglophone research literature on education policy?
2. What are the dynamics and drivers of policy learning in education?
3. What methodologies have been used to study policy learning in education?

We developed a scoping review protocol (Tricco et al., 2018) and conducted database searches in Scopus, Web of Science, and a subset of the ProQuest platform. Our search yielded 316 studies. The screening process reduced this number to 98, published between 1997 and 2025. We created a codebook, updated iteratively, to capture each study’s theoretical understanding of policy learning, methods and analytical approaches, empirical focus, and main findings.

In terms of epistemologies, we find that most studies are empirical (n=65), using qualitative methods (n=58). The majority focuses on Europe, including single country studies, comparative studies and European Union policy, followed by East Asia and North America.

Considering ontological features, we identify five clusters in the literature, each encompassing multiple ‘branches’ defined by their different understandings of policy learning and analytical focus: i) the Knowledge Cluster concentrates on the knowledge-policy nexus; ii) the Change Cluster examines how policy learning drives organisational and coalition change; iii) the Governance Cluster highlights learning as a lever to mobilise actors in policymaking; iv) the Policy Transfer Cluster analyses the role of learning in policy diffusion and transfer; and v) the Critical Approaches to Policy Transfer Cluster emphasises context and broader effects of policy mobilities.

### **Paper 3**

*Margarita Kiryushina  
Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, Israel*

*Miri Yemini  
Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, Israel*

### **STEM Education Policy as a Strategy for National Defense in Contemporary Israel and Russia**

In recent decades, international organisations’ initiatives, such as large-scale international assessments, have become common drivers of epistemic and governance changes in

educational systems (Addey et al., 2025). However, for nations entrenched in protracted geopolitical conflict, these global trends are reshaped by security imperatives. This paper explores how wartime needs reshape STEM education policy in Israel and Russia. Although both countries are currently participating in military conflicts and share a socialist educational legacy, they differ dramatically in size, economic alliances, and political regimes. Israel has long leveraged its STEM prowess as a geopolitical shield (Getz et al., 2024); yet by 2025, the state was forced to declare a ‘National Emergency’ in science education (Government Secretariat, 2025). Conversely, since 2012, Russia has initiated a gradual pivot away from Western educational projects to pursue ‘educational sovereignty’ to reach technological security (Kiryushina et al., 2025).

The study investigates the mechanisms by which the discourse of securitisation transforms science education policy, asking: (1) How does the securitisation of state discourse reshape the stated objectives, curricula, and governance of school-level STEM education in Israel and Russia? and (2) How do these political regimes differ in their strategies for translating security exigencies into educational practice? To address these questions, we employ the concept of ‘policy landing’ (Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012) as a theoretical framework to examine how global models of STEM education circulate and are selectively adopted under conditions of acute geopolitical tension. The data corpus is constructed through systematic searches of government databases, parliamentary archives, and ministerial websites, prioritising documents that explicitly address STEM education policies for the period 2014-2025. 50 primary texts are triangulated with 15 semi-structured interviews conducted with current and former policy-makers and educational advisors in both countries. Following an abductive coding strategy, the data is analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis (Lester et al., 2016), which reveals how political power operates through language, transforming educational aims from pedagogical/economical to geopolitical. The analysis suggests that while both nations instrumentalise STEM education for survival, their strategies diverge sharply. Israel pursues a strategy of ‘global survival’: the emergency discourse is used to bypass traditional pedagogical bureaucracy, enforcing a market-driven, globalised STEM curriculum. Conversely, Russia pursues ‘sovereign survival’: the security discourse is used to insulate the system, prioritising ideological loyalty and domestic industrial needs over global narrative of STEM education. We argue that in existential crises, STEM education policies hybridise neoliberal rationality with security imperatives.

## **CTS: Policy challenges in context**

*Chair: Aristotelis Zmas*

### **Paper 1**

*Aristotelis Zmas*

*Aristotle University of Thessaloniki*

*Ioannis Gennadios*

*Aristotle University of Thessaloniki*

## **Oscillating between school autonomy and state centralism: paradoxes and perspectives in Greek context**

In our article, we explore the views of teachers and school principals in Greece regarding the possibility of expanding school autonomy within a highly centralized educational system. Our research data was collected through questionnaires distributed to teachers, as well as through semi-structured interviews conducted with school principals.

The findings demonstrate that centralization is experienced as a dominant feature of the Greek education system, limiting the ability of schools to respond to the educational needs of local communities. Teachers and principals recognize, at the same time, that strengthening school autonomy can improve relations between schools and local communities. However, this positive attitude of the research participants regarding the strengthening of school autonomy is accompanied by strong reservations regarding the risk of widening social inequalities, the transfer of the cost of education to local communities and the lack of trust in the state apparatus. The paradox, therefore, that emerges in the views of teachers and school principals concerns their desire on the one hand to gain greater professional autonomy, but also their insistence on the other hand to maintain the existing centralized structures of the state that will guarantee social and not only equality. School autonomy is perceived, in other words, not simply as a technocratic reform, but as a profound institutional and cultural project that presupposes trust and a clear division of responsibilities between those involved, as well as coherent planning by the bodies of state power.

### **Paper 2**

*Kin Cheung Adrian Yan*

*The Education University of Hong Kong, China*

## **Policy entrepreneurship, borrowing, and change: Insights from the case of career and life planning education in Hong Kong**

The recent decade has been marked by a burgeoning interest in policy entrepreneurship, which involves actors leveraging resources, networks and expertise to actively promote and shape new policy ideas within an education system. This line of enquiry departs from the traditional approach that sees policymaking as largely a rational and linear process. Against this backdrop, this paper analyses the development of career and life planning (CLP) education in Hong Kong since the mid-2010s and argues that actors from the non-governmental sector have played a pivotal role in bridging the gap between policy ideas and practice. This study is guided by the following research question: How do policy entrepreneurs promote and shape career and life planning education in Hong Kong? To answer this question, I adopt Kingdon's (2010) multiple streams framework, which draw on qualitative methods, including documentary analysis of policy documents and semi-structured interviews with twenty career teachers.

Regarding the 'problem' stream, analysis showed that the Hong Kong Government's enactment of CLP education in 2014 largely served a symbolic purpose, creating a 'window of opportunity' for the policy entrepreneur Gatsby Foundation in the UK to promote their CLP benchmarks across and beyond the European region. Given Hong Kong's long history of borrowing and referencing UK practices, it allows the Foundation to define the 'problem' of CLP education favourably in terms of the need for cultivating 'career-readiness' among secondary school students. As for the 'policy stream', Gatsby Foundation adopted the strategy of policy borrowing to develop a localised version of CLP benchmarks that is compatible with the local secondary school contexts in Hong Kong. Perhaps more importantly, in the 'political' stream, Gatsby Foundation collaborated with the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, a

reputable non-governmental organization which has a long history of providing welfare and youth services. This generated a salutary effect on the school sector in agreeing to participate in the adoption of the CLP benchmarks from 2020 to 2025. Such an effect was evident in the interview data that the localised CLP benchmarks provided a practical and measurable framework for career teachers to leverage curriculum standing of CLP education in routine teaching. Subsequently, given the pilot scheme of adopting CLP benchmarks, the Hong Kong educational authorities decided to incorporate the localised CLP benchmarks into the CLP guidance framework from 2025 onwards. The implications of such dynamics policy entrepreneurship for the Hong Kong context and beyond will be discussed.

### **Paper 3**

*Josep Simon*

*University of Valencia, Spain*

#### **Now and Then, Back and Forth: The American Physical Science Study Committee and the Making of European Science Education in the 1960s**

This paper develops a micro-historical analysis of a case study (a science teacher training course organized by American, Euro-American and international organizations), to produce a guiding sketch for a macro-historical perspective on science education in Europe in the 1960s. I use inter-national comparison as a dynamic method reshaping the boundaries and substance of physics teaching in different national traditions of science education and their historiographies. My research is based on archival work at MIT, OECD and UNESCO. I also use cross-national perspectives, in studying the circulation of teachers, pedagogical materials and educational administrators across countries and competing international organizations.

In 1961, The Physical Science Study Committee (PSSC) held a summer institute at the University of Cambridge, with science teachers from 18 European countries. It had begun its involvement in Europe at the request of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) and the (US) National Science Foundation (NSF). In 1960, OEEC had organized a conference on physics education with the support of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics, producing a report and plan for science education in Europe. Established in 1948 to manage the Marshall Plan aid, OEEC was now convinced that economic recovery should involve the reform of school science education.

PSSC had developed in the late 1950s as a major project of educational reform for American high schools, with grants from NSF, and the Sloan and Ford foundations, and headquarters at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Its pedagogical package comprised a variety of teaching materials including textbooks, laboratory manuals, science kits, popular science books and films. Originally a national endeavour, it soon established an international program, with summer institutes and conferences in more than a dozen countries across the world, between 1960 and 1964. Foreign editions of its main textbook were published in Denmark, Italy, Israel, Japan, Brazil, India, Sweden, Colombia, Canada, Spain, Norway, Turkey, (French) Canada, and France.

The Cambridge PSSC summer institute had the aim of acculturating European science teachers into the use of this American pedagogical package. By analysing this institute, I expect to be able to understand not only the nature of contemporary physics teaching in several European countries, but vice versa in the US as well. Comparison fuses both as a contemporary tool for educational policy and a historical tool for science education research, able to reveal major

features in past and current educational phenomena through a dynamic and multidirectional application.

#### **Paper 4**

*William C. Smith*

*University of Edinburgh, UK*

#### **Reversal or Reinforcement: Student Testing and the COVID-19 Pandemic in Singapore and Hong Kong**

The COVID-19 pandemic led to student testing being postponed or canceled in most countries (UNESCO, 2021). Countries scrambled to replace test scores and the media highlighted discussions on whether exams should be scrapped altogether (Financial Times, 2021). This study takes advantage of this moment – where tests are called into question – to explore how embedded the testing culture is in society. Smith (2016) has suggested that a ‘Global Testing Culture’ exists. Drawing from core assumptions around the value of numbers and individualism, the culture delineates models or scripts for all stakeholders to follow. In a more embedded culture, the belief that test scores are the measure of education quality leads to behaviours that value and work to improve such scores.

Through a qualitative comparative study of news media in Singapore and Hong Kong, this research explores what happens when tests are cancelled or delayed and test scores are unavailable? Given this opportunity for change, is the importance of testing in these countries likely to be reinforced or do we see a reversal away from the testing culture? Singapore and Hong Kong are selected following a most-similar systems approach (Meckstroth, 1975). Students in both countries are heavily tested, with high stakes linked to student test scores placed on both students and educators (Smith et al., 2025). However, despite the similar emphasis and use of test scores, their early response to the COVID-19 pandemic was different. Singapore initially moved forward as planned with exams while Hong Kong decided to postpone their exams (UNESCO, 2021).

To compare country responses to the pandemic and explore how testing is seen and felt in each country, this study reviews publicly available news media in each country between 2020 and 2022. Using relevant search terms and examining news media published in English and Mandarin, 189 excerpts from 20 articles from Hong Kong and 289 excerpts from 53 articles from Singapore were identified. Following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phases for thematic analysis and identifying themes through a process of cutting and sorting (Bernard & Ryan, 2009), preliminary results indicate that individuals and governments in both countries clung to their testing culture – reinforcing the importance and perceived value of student testing for their education system and future. While alternatives were initially discussed, test scores were understood to be the only objective measure of education quality, trusted by the community, and necessary for those looking for a better life.

#### **CTS: Belonging and exclusion**

*Chair: to be confirmed*

## **Paper 1**

*Juliette Torabian*

*University of Lausanne, Switzerland*

### **The use of evidence to reduce educational inequalities: A European comparative analysis**

Educational inequalities remain a persistent challenge across Europe, despite long-standing commitments to equity at both national and EU levels. This paper examines how evidence is mobilised within education systems in the United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, Romania, and Italy. These countries represent contrasting governance traditions, data infrastructures, and research-policy ecosystems, offering a rich basis for comparative analysis within Europe.

The study is grounded in the growing literature on evidence-informed policymaking and equity in education, and explores how political, institutional, and cultural factors shape the use- or non-use- of evidence in efforts to reduce disparities linked to socio-economic background, migration, gender, and regional divides. While evidence is increasingly valued across Europe, its impact on equity remains uneven, often constrained by fragmented governance, limited capacity, or competing policy priorities.

The paper addresses two central research questions:

- 1- How do the UK, Germany, Finland, Romania, and Italy use evidence to identify and address educational inequalities?
- 2- Which institutional, political, and cultural factors shape the use -or non-use- of evidence in policymaking and practice?

The analysis draws on comparative document review and interview data from the EU-funded LEARN project (longitudinal study of educational inequalities), focusing on national strategies, data systems, intermediary organisations, and the relationships between researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. A cross-case comparison highlights both convergences such as the growing role of monitoring tools and international assessments and divergences, including differences in political commitment, institutional capacity, and the integration of evidence into classroom-level practice.

The paper contributes to debates on how European education systems can strengthen the role of evidence in promoting fairness and inclusion. It offers a set of conditions under which evidence use is most likely to support meaningful reductions in educational inequalities, with implications for EU-level cooperation and national reform agendas.

## **Paper 2**

*Trine Wulf-Andersen*

*Roskilde University, Denmark*

### **Student belonging in higher education: A theoretical model for critical reflection**

I would suggest a thematically focused panel with the title "Student Perspectives and (Challenged) Student Identities". I would be happy to chair.

My own contribution to the panel introduces a theoretically grounded and practice-oriented reflection model designed to foster critical conversations about how we invite and facilitate students' sense of belonging within academic communities — and how we may unintentionally hinder it. The model serves as a tangible tool for engaging educators in critical reflection on inclusion and exclusion dynamics in higher education.

The model is developed from insights gained in the longitudinal qualitative research project The Student Life Project (Wulf-Andersen et al., 2022), conducted in Danish higher education. The project followed 47 students experiencing various psychosocial challenges, most of them over a period of 6 to 18 months. Through multiple rounds of in-depth interviews and visits to significant places, the research explored students' perspectives on and experiences with educational contexts (past and present), their everyday lives, social networks, and self-understandings.

The project is informed by critical educational research and critical disability studies, drawing on concepts of belonging and learning as situated practices within politicized educational landscapes. The theoretical foundation includes contributions from among others Wenger (1998), Burke (2017), and Gravett & Ajjawi (2021), emphasizing how educational norms shape students' opportunities for participation.

Based on these theoretical inspirations and students' perspectives on study life, norms, and belonging in higher education, we developed a reflection model that has since been applied in numerous workshops across Danish universities. The model encourages educators to reflect not on individual or "difficult" students, but on their own practices of invitation and the inclusion/exclusion dynamics embedded within them. It aims to open up possibilities for designing educational spaces that better support diverse students in accessing, participating in, and benefiting from higher education.

This work contributes to European educational research by offering a concrete, theoretically informed tool for engaging with questions of belonging, inclusion, and pedagogical courage. It aligns with broader commitments to equity and democratic education, and it invites educators to critically examine how institutional practices shape students' lived experiences and learning opportunities.

### **Paper 3**

*Noopur Verma*

*Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Bihar University, India*

*Sudipta Sen*

*O.P. Jindal Global University, India*

### **Closing the Gender Gap in Indian Higher Education: Three Decades of Convergence and Persistent Inequalities**

This paper examines three decades of change in gender parity in Indian higher education (1991-92 to 2020-21), analysing state-level panel data to document progress, identify correlates of improvement, and derive implications for implementing India's National Education Policy 2020. The analysis addresses a challenge central to education policymakers: ensuring equitable access to higher education for women and marginalised communities amid rapid enrolment expansion.

Key Takeaways:

- India has achieved near gender parity in higher education enrolment. The national women-to-men ratio rose from 0.59 in 1991-92 to 0.97 in 2020-21—a 38-percentage-point gain that transformed a male-dominated system into one approaching balance.
- States that started furthest behind improved fastest. Strong convergence across states ( $\beta = -0.66$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) indicates that gender gaps are not immutable; lagging states can catch up with sustained effort and appropriate conditions.

- Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe women achieved remarkable gains. These historically marginalised groups improved from ratios of 0.40 and 0.37 to 0.96 and 1.04, respectively— matching or exceeding the general population and demonstrating the effectiveness of reservation policies.
- Substantial interstate disparities persist despite aggregate progress. The 2021 ratio ranges from 0.76 in Bihar to 1.22 in Meghalaya, indicating that targeted interventions remain necessary in lagging states with large populations.
- Economic development correlates more strongly with gender parity than with direct education spending. State-level prosperity (GSDP per capita) explains more variation in gender parity than revenue expenditure or scholarship allocations, suggesting that demand-side factors—labour-market opportunities, family incomes, and changing social norms—drive women’s enrolment decisions.

#### **Paper 4**

*Masako Shibata*

*University of Tsukuba, Japan*

#### **Reconstructing Medical Ethics in Post-WWII Germany: A tentative research scheme**

The purpose of this presentation is not to demonstrate research results yet, but – if possible – to draw ideas for a newly developing and somewhat ambitious research scheme: Reconstructing Medical Ethics in Post-WWII Germany to Overcome the Past of Nazi Human Experimentation and Forced Euthanasia. This research aims to investigate the processes of postwar Germany’s reconstruction of medical ethics in higher education institutions, following the human experimentation and forced euthanasia conducted under the Nazi regime and the subsequent Nuremberg Medical Trial.

The method adopted in this research focuses on the curriculum related to medical ethics at Charité, the largest medical educational institution in the country and arguably one of the most closely related ones to the regime during the war. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of textbooks used for medical ethics will also be conducted. To complement these findings, a historical survey of seminars and symposia hosted by the institution is planned. The analysis of the curricular employs a model consisting of six distinct perspectives: 1. Problem Identification and General Needs Assessment; 2. Targeted Needs Assessment; 3. Goals and Objectives; 4. Educational Strategies; 5. Implementation; and 6. Evaluation and Feedback.

While there are extensive research results which clarified why and how the doctors in the country with world fame for medical advancement had crossed the boundaries of medical ethics, research on the postwar educational efforts for overcoming such past wrong doings remains sparse. This study attempts to verify empirically and analyse the historical experience of medical ethics reconstruction in postwar medical training through the transition of practical educational activities.

Perspectives and ideologies for interpreting the past have evolved alongside shifts in the international political contexts. Guided by the historical outlook and grounded in field research, this study attempts to reconsider postwar settlements related to the war within the field of pedagogy.

During World War II, Japan also committed aggressions and war crimes driven by ultranationalism rooted in militarism, totalitarianism and racial discrimination. Thus, this research is expected to have some implications on the case of Japan whose Unit 731 of the Imperial Japanese Army also committed human experimentation in China during the war.

## **Documentary: The Republic’s High Schools: A Lost Legacy – Bergama, R. Nazlı Somel & Şirin Ural**

*R. Nazlı Somel  
Boğaziçi University, Turkey*

*Şirin Ural  
Teacher, State Employee, Turkey*

The Republic’s High Schools: A Lost Legacy – Bergama is an approximately 45-minute amateur documentary that explores the transformation of public secondary education in a small district of western Türkiye over the past seventy years. Focusing on two long-established institutions, Bergama High School and Bergama Industrial Vocational High School, the documentary traces how schools that once played a central role in the social and cultural life of the town have gradually lost their integrative character.

Drawing on archival photographs and interviews with former students and teachers (n = 16), the documentary reconstructs a period when public high schools functioned as shared spaces that brought young people together. In the 1960s and 1970s, both academic and vocational schools in Bergama offered not only education but also a rich cultural environment. Theatre performances, music activities, and close ties with local industries and institutions connected schooling to the broader social life of the town.

Rather than presenting a purely nostalgic narrative, the documentary situates these memories in relation to the contemporary educational landscape and broader transformations in the economy and political life. Through the microhistory of Bergama, The Republic’s High Schools: A Lost Legacy raises broader questions about the transformation of education in Türkiye. What happens when public schools that once embodied the aspirations of the Republic become increasingly divided and stratified? Bergama’s story, while local and intimate, reflects wider national debates about equality and the public character of schooling.

### **CTS: Global frameworks in education**

*Chair: Meeri Hellsten*

#### **Paper 1**

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#### **Education for global citizenship in the European Education Area**

The proposal for a development and global citizenship education, put forward by UNESCO (1974) in the last century, with the aim of resolving global problems of inequality and injustice through international cooperation, highlights the importance of orienting education with greater emphasis on “equipping people from an early age and throughout their lives with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors needed to be informed, engaged, and caring citizens” (UNESCO 2016, p. 12). In this way, global citizenship education has become a hot but controversial topic in political and academic discourses, especially since the United Nations' Global Education First (GEFI) initiative (2012) and its inclusion in the 2030 Agenda

for Sustainable Development with its explicit mention in goal 4.7, having a major impact on the global political agenda.

Despite its transnational circulation, the concept of Education for Global Citizenship (EGC) exhibits significant variability in its connotation and takes diverse forms. EGC, along with other relevant disciplines mentioned above by UNESCO (e.g., education for sustainable development, human rights education, etc.), are now considered the “global dimensions of Citizenship Education,” characterized by pedagogical approaches based on social justice, human rights, and sustainable development (UNESCO, 2022). Furthermore, the meaning of EGC in contemporary societies serves as a point of reference for studying the various policies promoted by national and supranational institutions in this area (Ancheta-Arrabal & Preckler, 2025).

Within the European Union, various European policy initiatives, such as the EU Youth Strategy and the Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education and the European dimension in education, urge Member States to promote competencies for Global and Community Education (EACEA/YouthWiki, 2021). Similarly, in the European Declaration on Global Education to 2050 (Dublin Declaration) of November 2022, European countries acknowledge the need for increased and improved coordinated approaches, including in the formal education sector within the framework of school curriculum reform, teacher training, student assessment, and non-formal education across various sectors (GENE 2022, p. 3). Beyond the study of the structural and institutional factors that establish the framework for EGC in the European Education Area (European Commission, 2018), the challenge lies in monitoring and comparing this key issue for its success in formal education, as well as the suitability of its critical approach to promoting teacher training as an agent of social change and as a promoter of global social justice (Pashby & Sund, 2019).

Within this European context, the case of Spain is analyzed with regard to EGC, which encompasses a continuous process through the development of knowledge, attitudes, and values (Ancheta-Arrabal & Preckler, 2025) from an approach that promotes ethical lifestyle changes as part of citizenship education (EACEA, 2023, p. 42). Hence, it includes aspects related to knowledge, participation, and the exercise of civic rights and responsibilities (Tarozzi & Inguaggiato, 2016). Currently, the LOMLOE Law (2020) establishes that education for sustainable development and global citizenship must be incorporated into the educational plans and programs of all compulsory education, incorporating the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that all people need to live a fruitful life, make informed decisions and take an active role at the local and global level when facing and solving problems common to all citizens.

Both the United Nations (2012) and UNESCO (2015) identify the following as crucial factors for the successful implementation of EGC: (1) integration into policies with broad acceptance by stakeholders; (2) being part of sustainable, long-term action; and (3) provide prior and ongoing in-service teacher training. From this perspective, Goyal et al. (2023) argue that educational institutions can significantly contribute to building a more resilient, sustainable, and just world by shaping the ethical, responsible, and sustainable awareness of future generations. Thus, in recent decades, higher education institutions have shown increasing support and dedication to addressing the challenges of sustainability and Community Engagement (CE) within the university curriculum (Bosio, 2021), recognizing them as essential environments for disseminating their principles by reorienting their educational, research, social outreach, and community engagement activities. Therefore, new research and educational practices for EGC are expected to guide the role and training of teachers, here is presented part of the work developed from the Project Education for Global Citizenship and Teacher Training (EDCIMU, PID2023-151908NB-I00) funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities and the teaching innovation project entitled Global Action

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## **Paper 2**

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### **The Great Retraction and the New Educational World Order**

Global higher education is entering what may be described as the Great Retraction: a systemic transition reshaping universities and redefining the purposes of education in a fragmented world. The expansive globalisation that once framed universities as a borderless commons (e.g. The Observatory of Borderless Higher Education) is giving way to selective connectivity, geopolitical knowledge-security constraints, and AI-mediated systems of research and learning. Universities are increasingly repositioned as strategic national assets, academic exchange is contracting, and research cultures are strained by metric-driven productivity pressures.

This retraction is not only structural; it is philosophical and demographic. Policy discourses have narrowed education to forms of ‘learnification,’ reducing its broad social, ethical, and ecological purposes to individualised outcomes and technical competencies. Teachers become providers, students recipients, and knowledge a quantifiable product. At the same time, the labour force itself is retracting in many regions of the world due to demographic decline, automation, and the rapid reconfiguration of work through artificial intelligence. The long-standing assumption that a university degree leads to stable, lifelong employment can no longer be taken for granted. This may be the last generation for whom higher education reliably functions as a linear pathway into a defined career.

Such instrumentalism resembles a square peg forced into the round hole of a world marked by planetary fragility, cultural pluralism, inequality, and employment volatility. Education framed primarily as skills training for predetermined roles risks preparing students for economic structures already in retreat. The Great Retraction therefore reveals a growing misalignment between the inherited degree-to-career model and emerging realities of fluid, hybrid, and technologically mediated livelihoods.

In response, this paper introduces quantum thinking as a conceptual orientation for reimagining education beyond linear and mechanistic paradigms. Rather than treating knowledge as fixed and transferable, quantum thinking foregrounds relationality, uncertainty, entanglement, and plurality as defining features of contemporary learning ecologies. Using comparative education methods, the paper maps three eras of educational organisation—analogue, AI, and quantum—to illustrate and map how technological and geopolitical shifts reshape educational purposes. This framework offers a way to anticipate what the new educational world order may look like in the foreseeable future.

## **Paper 3**

*Peter Kelly*

**Collectivist educational practice as a restorative response to social and political uncertainty**

Bourdieu (1998) identifies how political neoliberalism changes social relations towards those of competitive individualism, thereby privileging independent over interdependent activity. This hyper-individualism (Wacquant, 2010; 2012), which also underpins meritocracy, provides scant support for those facing late modern turbulence and uncertainty, although the confidence and security of academic achievement can, to some extent offset this. The need for social interaction became obvious during the coronavirus pandemic when many were isolated from each other and dependent on technology for communication. Those children, young people, and teachers who were able to maintain links with others often through online communities fared better than those who could not (Kelly et al., 2021).

Hyper-individualism also underpins meritocracy, the political wing of neoliberalism (Wacquant, 2010; 2012). Meritocracy articulates a benign economic argument promoting the flourishing of all whilst providing the means for reproducing inherited privilege, for blaming and punishing the vulnerable and marginalised and for presenting the successful and dominant as virtuous and deserving (Bourdieu, 1998; Wacquant, 2009). The collective suffering and alienation that results (Bourdieu, 1993) can bring a solidarity that feeds into authoritarian populism (Cohen, 2019). Reducing the isolation and dissent of disaffected student groups is therefore both a moral and political imperative.

This presentation reports the findings of a comparative study, funded by the European Federation of Education Employers, which set out to explore how educational institutions were responding to the social and political challenges and uncertainties of a post-Covid-19 era. Case study events involving school leaders and administrators were conducted in Belgium, Norway, Portugal and Slovenia. These were supplemented by a survey of education employers from across the European Union. Thematic analyses revealed community building to be a common focus and identified strategies for overcoming barriers to achieve this. Strong communities afford resilience amongst students, parents and practitioners, whilst community development in schools and neighbourhoods improves the mental health and wellbeing of all and allows people to thrive in challenging circumstances.

Wacquant (2010) suggests that hyper-individualism has effectively silenced collectivist worldviews and their expression in analytic or organisational frames. However, 'to change the world, one has to change the ways of world-making, that is, the vision of the world and practical operations by which groups are produced and reproduced' (Bourdieu, 1989: 23). In this paper I argue that a more inclusive, moderate and resilient future is possible if we rediscover collective educational analyses and focus our educational endeavours on repurposing schools as community builders, whether of interdependent learners and teachers or of supportive neighbourhoods. These should be neither authoritarian nor technocratic but democratic in nature. Whilst the context is contemporary, I also identify research on this topic that is much older, illustrating how collective frames bring not only a beneficial perspective, but also one that is long-established.