

# CONJECTURES AROUND THE COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

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## Abstract

The central premises and objectives that encourage this proposal to reflect around the conjectures of comparative education (CE) are specific, in first place, by the need applies even in the current record CHANGE and their implications for public policies on education, accelerate changes, with more emphasis in the first decade of the twenty-first century, where the prudency requires the constant prevalence of the Comparative Education by the decisions takers in every education systems recognizing that is required to ADAPT and not only to adopt the <<recommendations>> of the International organisms, in an era where the knowledge has been globalized. Every change needs in advance an analysis of CE.

In second place, the requirement to adapt in a harmonic form the changes in the precise context of the <<educational situations>> based in each and every one of the constitutive elements of every education system. Inasmuch as, the <<educational fact>> is the same in the whole world because there will always be a teacher, students and educational content, while the <<educational situation>> is the educational fact plus its economic, politic and social context that makes it unique and unrepeatable.

In third place, is necessary to recognize that today's CE first of all is a METHODOLOGICAL ALTERNATIVE to perform educational innovation, reform or revolution changes as well as the adaptions that actual social reality imposes. In this context there are many and varied conjectures that epistemological and methodologically involves the CE development.

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**Keywords:** Education, comparison, methodological alternative, change, adaptation

## Introduction

In a first approximation we make an historical regression about the development of the CE, in order to rescue its theoretical foundations. In a second step, we analyze the constant of change in this new era full of it, to which the CE, through comparative work, provides the how to adapt from the permanent, the perennial of education to the today's new dynamics. In a third step we analyze the six constitutive elements of any educational system in its social context, to conclude the fourth time with the relational analysis of the education system alive.

## Fundamentos teóricos de la educación comparada

Before the French known as the CE, Marc-Antoine Jullien of Paris (1775-1848), <<who was interested in educational problems and perspectives in a rapidly changing world>>, the great appeal among ancient villages were the travelers, whom were expected back from their travels forward to be heard and to know the ways and varied practices among peoples, they were asked about what did they do and did they, which allowed comparison

between educational institutions. In the fifth century before our era, the Greek historian Thucydides described and compared the customs and ways of making education in Athens and Sparta, Plato also incorporated the ideal Republic Spartan education traits, Xenophon described in *Cyropaedia* what was practiced in Persia, which identifies it as warrior and moral education confronting it with Athens education which adjective as physical and aesthetic.

Later, in the Roman Empire, consisting of different peoples and cultures, corporations were generated naturally described by Cicero in differences regarding education in Greece and Rome, Julius Caesar described the Gauls, Tacitus was devoted to the description of the Germans and Jews.

We can not find something similar in the Europe of the Middle Ages. It is the comparative analysis specialist, M. Lê Thành Khôi, who quotes a Chinese traveler Yi-Tsing describing education in a Buddhist center in India. And an Arab Suleiman who was a merchant, used to describe what he saw in China.

With the contacts of Christian, Arab and Jewish culture, in the eleventh century, more systematic comparisons appeared as the Catalan Ramon Lull "Doctor Illuminatus" (1235-1315) and Tunisian Arabic or Khaldun Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406). Some specialized in CE authors claimed that was Catalan Lulio I who though the concept of educational comparativism while the Tunisian wrote in his *Chronicle Prolegomena Universal* a conception of cultural and educational comparativism in terms remarkably modern, even suggested socio-historical "laws" developing a theory of the emergence, splendor and fall of civilizations.

Most modern concerns about EC were comparisons between different educational forms in different civilizations and obviously with strong religious overtones. Already in the Renaissance, with the split of Christianity and the emergence of modern nationalism, originates comparisons were made between nations and states whose basic aspects generate comparisons or competitions.

Erasmus of Rotterdam (1467-1536), recognized as an expert traveler through England, France, Switzerland, Italy and his native Netherlands, was instrumental in the Protestant Reformation that arised and described it in his *Enchiridion* (or *Manual Caballero Cristiano*) in which he promoted a cultural ideal that, for more than a century, had much influence among the leaders of the teaching, according to Holmes, thereby designing a universal model that finds expression today in the work of some international organizations.

In the subsequent generation, the Spanish humanist Juan Vives (1492-1540) is who will provide a modern comprehensive approach to EC, where he confronted different forms and practices that had found in his travels, supported in his studies in Paris and in Leuven.

It is in the Baroque period and based on international comparisons the Czech, acknowledged didactic's father Jan Amos Komensky, known as Comenius (1592-1670) was invited to England to create a pansophic school, although unsuccessful, Comenius is recognized to propose a comparative approach for education and in order to develop postulated the creation of an international center.

It is the Jesuit Baltasar Gracian (1601-1658) who encourages the abandonment of Greco-Roman models to found an educational ideal based on "the Spanish concept of human perfection." It is in his novel *The Critic* where he shows how to exercise his disciple in the practice of critical comparative educational approach. So far the proposals were mainly normative, based on an ideal of society and culture they sought to evaluate comparative systems.

It is even after a century, when the comparative approach is generated, based on the observation of the reality and not with previously established conceptions, primarily from philosophical or religious cutting. And until the 18th century in its second half Europe lived a

true intellectual revolution, through the analysis of scientific knowledge based obviously on the comparison, and in 1817 Marc-Antoine Jullien of Paris contribute with his work **Sketches and preliminary views of a work on comparative education**, where it poses clearly the concept of a "Science of education". This is how the comparativism emerged as a heuristic basis for the establishment of the science of education. In this way is achieved to realize at this time, that the CE organize knowledge concerning education that can be based on the comparison and this is to find differences, similarities and perhaps relationships between two or more objects. This first approach to the concept of CE is reductionist and limited, having no answer to how to conceptualize education, likewise comparison, what is its material object and what is its formal object.

The historical regression that has been built so far is due to the need to recognize that the EC has existed since the beginning of civilizations and that today, in the second decade of the 21st century, is vital to its formation as a theoretical-methodological reference to permanent constant **change** as a fundamental characteristic of a new epoch, not full of changes but is characterized by the same switch.

Therefore, the CE is constituted in the education as an object of study of Pedagogy and the comparison on "make concrete" in where they review systems, forms, practices in which education takes place. Identifying the rules that govern as well as the ideas or principles that underlie these standards and practices. The substantive education and comparative adjective and its combination have been subjective for all scholars of this area of knowledge, since each one offers a very personal interpretation: you have own object, does not own object, is a science noetikos, is a science, it is a discipline, is one technique, among others. (VILLALOBOS, 2002).

Against these epistemological ruptures on the conception of CE the vital thing is to focus on what until now has been formed in nature as well as its principles which constitute it as such.

The aspiration of the CE is to reach scientific knowledge and not to sit in the first motivation of "curiosity" as it was designated to the principle in the case of the travellers of antiquity, or for the "simple pleasure of knowing" as it was the case of Jullien of Paris, or by simple "Scholarship" or "wisdom" as in the case of Rotterdam or live. CE since its inception has sought **practical purposes**, this is vital and important in the know and in the work of the professional in education, since that it is required today to the maelstrom of changes that live permanently, since that the CE is a source of ideas, solutions or educational innovations in order to adapt to the diversity of educational situations and not just adopt them. Since the CE itself stimulates the emergence of ideas, learning from the experience of the other, experimentation is not applicable, the benchmark for the other is required to come up with original solutions, educational interventions that are required. The CE helps, encourages and promotes international understanding, helping to know and understand other peoples.

Each country responds to different motivations to develop their educational practices, from the teaching of basic algorithms to the generation of public policies in education from recognizing a problem such as public, is at this juncture where identifies the axiological orientation, which are the aims that have inspired the objectives of the study as well as the motivation of the student to arrange the object or subject of the investigation its delimitation, its methodology, as well as the validity of its results.

Until today there is no consensus in which the EC is a science, with an object, direction, methodology and own techniques.

Until here two relevant aspects to highlight: firstly, it is necessary to recognize that not every home is creative, not every relationship is beneficial, not all process is orderly and not every result is productive, therefore it is imperative to keep building the CE; and secondly the CE becomes relevant in a context as the current so that from the comparative work we

form alternatives of improvement and upgrading of systems, forms and educational practices and interventions.

In 1981 M. Le Thanh Khoi defines the CE as part of the theory of education concerning the analysis and interpretations of different practices and policies in the field of education in different countries and different cultures.

Our proposal is that the CE is the study and analysis of practices and educational policies in terms of their differences and similarities, as well as its relationship with the social environment, in order to achieve the perfection thereof.

From the Aristotelian distinction between "material object" or the reality itself, and "formal object" aspect or dimension that we are interested in. The material object of the CE is the educational phenomenon and its object formal are relationships or links between such educational phenomena, - relationships that are expressed as differences and similarities - is the comparison of facts and educational phenomena and relations between them and their environment. The key is to understand the network of relationships that offers comparative work as the "relations between relations group", as well as interactions that establish and maintain in their social environment.

In essence and before reaching a level of specificity, the EC is an area of knowledge that allows the formation, which allows you to create awareness of where is, where it is going, knowing the reasons of the because it is where it is and choose informed the objective towards which it is thought that education should be directed.

The epistemological confusion of the comparative work requires specificity in terms of the objective, the aim, the purpose and the usefulness of the EC where the UNESCO's Thesaurus (1977) has contributed to the generation of correct meanings.

Both, the **finality** and the **objective** are aims to achieve, but are differentiated among themselves by the following: the finality is of a general nature and long-term. The objective is specific, concrete and immediate. The finality is done by the objectives. Order, a primarily aims to provide a set of general principles which help the reformers to predict the possible consequences of the measures proposed. CE is **not normative**, does not prescribe rules for the smooth running of the educational systems, try to only understand what I do and because it is made as well. CE as an alternative methodology, may not, at any time, make rules or laws to follow. If so, it wouldn't understand that each country, to each person, is unique and unrepeatable. Secondly, the CE aims to propose alternatives for change that are oriented to the improvement of the educational system that is interested in or study.

The EC **objective** is to collect and classify all quantitative descriptive information concerning to education systems, schools, administration and finance, teachers and students, programmes and teaching methods, legal provisions, among others. Based on that, is tried to explain the reason for the situations and education facts by analyzing collected data in the light of the historical evolution of the different systems (forms of organisation) or showing what has been the influence of social, economic, technological and philosophical phenomena, as well as the racial or national prejudice.

The **purpose** of the CE, since the beginning, is eminently practical: collect information of forms and practices of education in different places to satisfy intellectual curiosity. Over time, this initial purpose was modified since it was looking for in addition to know, establish connections between education and society. A second purpose was thus discovered: that each country will benefit from others experiences. This purpose is still valid since the CE is currently considered as a work prior to any reform or education planning. Among its specific **purposes** are the following:

- To promote the interest in knowing other educational systems
- Contribute to innovations, reforms, progress and planning of educational systems
- Promote the ongoing process of revision of the educational systems

- Promote a better understanding and cooperation of international educational processes

Each of the instances of all social reality: economic, political and social, play a determinant, dominant or decisive role according to the purpose that establishes the comparative work. The purpose of the CE is in essence, contribute to the knowledge and understanding of educational phenomena as well as enrich the processes of making decisions and their improvement.

The **usefulness** of the CE is to contribute in the study of systems and educational institutions and support the economic, political and social development of countries. Also study the recurrent problems in education and know the constituent elements of any educational system.

The background and the historical development of the CE are conforming the theoretical foundations of what is today understood as comparative work.

### **Comparative education: change and adaptation**

Today's new era is characterized by changes in all social levels, and education plays a decisive role in them. Changes that allowed live historical moments of great significance as a witness of the split of the USSR; the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989; the emergence of the European Union, constituted with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992; the establishment of the 'euro' single currency in 2000 and, with it, the opening of borders; the Bologna Declaration that by means of the Tuning project is intended to achieve academic convergence, creating a culture of competence-based learning (this transcendent fact is given in the 27 countries of the European Union in 2010); the creation of supranational blocks such as the Pacific Rim, the free trade agreement, among others. The rise of emerging economies, as the countries that make up the BRICS (this acronym was created by the English economist Jim O'Neill), as well and above all the rapid advance of technologies of information and communication (technology ICT) have established radical changes in the digital age.

All these changes modify the social reality and necessarily imposed the development of adaptations; it is at this juncture that the CE has a decisive role in how to resolve the social relationship with the educational relationship.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, Mexico had experienced constant and cluttered changes in the educational system, which since 1974 with signed agreements of Chetumal and educational reform, followed by the agreement of educational modernization of May 1992, had ran decades without changes, while in 2004 the preschool program (PEP) was developed, in 2006 the reform of the secondary education (RES), in 2009 the integral reform of the basic education (RIEB), and in 2008 the integral reform of the superior education (RIEMS). All those changes are specified in the RIEB-2011, "schizophrenic" document that summarizes all agreements made over the first decade and in August 2012 takes the form of the agreement 648 allusive to the whole process of evaluation and the involvement of its changes, which with the current Secretary of education are already being questioned – for the moment in three amending agreements that will need to confirm the Federal regulatory improvement Commission (COFEMER). If the certificate of elementary school, not evaluating young children and evaluate students from second and third grade-. These educational changes coupled with the social are the great challenge for the comparative work of education researchers.

### **Concrete analysis of the constitutive elements of all educational system**

The economic, political, social, cultural, educational and ideological context in each country is the basis for understanding the six constituent elements of every educational system. Based on the above, the education professional needs to know the methodological alternatives offered by the CE, in order to advise decision makers in the certainty of all lead

changes, adapting them to the diversity of <<educational situations>>. Identifying that it is the educational fact in its context which is compared and not the educational situation, since this is only regarding the conditions in which develops the educational fact specific to each country.

The six constituent elements of every educational system are:

### **Purposes, goals and objectives**

They are the real purposes which the State assigns to its educational system, these are related to cultural and historical conditions of each country, they are raised in the long term by adopting a permanent character. The explicit purposes are present in the Constitution, laws related to education, the agreements of the Ministry or the Secretary of education, approved by its corresponding instances, laws, regulations, mission, educational philosophy, all the regulations that govern the educational process. Ultimately the explicit purposes are laid down in the laws and documents, implied are those observed from the reality and covert, as the powers that be, who are not institutionalized but nonetheless have power. **Goals** involve a quantitative change and are present in the plans or Government programs. **CE objectives** in the programs-budget that are made in order to comply with the quantitative goals established, in different areas in how they are organized States in the education sector.

### **Administrative organization**

It is integrated by three fundamental aspects: distinction between a centralized or decentralized system, differences between the Federal States and the CIS and the particularity of the public domain and the private sector.

Also understands the organizational chart of the Secretariat or government. The budgets and how as this is distributed to education financing, compares the strength of a number of schools, teachers and students, as well as infrastructure that the educational institutions have it. In this element, it is vital to recognize that UNESCO recommended giving 8% of GDP to education, since **without funding there is no educational development**.

### **Pedagogical structure**

This includes three fundamental aspects: education division at the different degrees or levels of education from pre-school to higher education. The division of the education according to the training, which refers to the nature of education (general, technical and professional) by its duration and the population to which shall be addressed in the professional field. The articulation of the degrees and levels and training: conditions of entry, continuity and departure of a degree or level to another.

### **Educational content**

Educational content are the product of the overall goals and the particular objectives of the educational system. There are theories that will be studying in practice. Educational content defines the study plans and programs.

### **Teaching strategies**

They are methodological processes, techniques and training procedures that each educational system implements for the realization of interventions and teaching-learning processes and the teaching resources available for their implementation.

### Teaching-learning process actors

The teachers and the students profiles of every level, considering their education, as well as accreditation and certification.

The CE **assessment** is conceived more as a **process** than as an act. This means that from the description of the constitutive elements of every educational system is carried out self-assessment of each one of them offering alternatives of improvement and perfection to each education system. The CE **assessment** has a typology: as the **object of the evaluation** can be micro or macroassessment; **depending on the nature of the assessment** can be quantitative or qualitative. **According to point of view**, it can be educational, economic, social or cultural. **According to the form** can be summative, formative. **According to the method** can be normative or criterion. **According to the agent** can be internal or external.

### The relational analysis of the vivid educational program

**Conjectures** in CE are formed in the preparation of a trial, on the basis of a presumption established in odds. The conjectures around the CE, are presented in the **relations** network that establishes the comparativist from their analysis, their inferences and their constructions from the bonding of two or more constituents, through proposals, suggestions and recommendations that will have to be adapted by each education system in accordance with the context of their educational situation. The **comparative work conjectures** support decision-making educational authorities decision-making in order to improve and perfect the educational system.

The relational analysis is the basis for the construction of the conjectures in CE, for which it is necessary to consider the nature of education in their **structural dimension** that contains what is permanent: its essence and its values. The tasks and functions of each of its constituent elements, bodies or their members in a changing, cyclical context it is considered in its **functional dimension**. The proposal is to revitalize education from its **organic dimension** that articulates the structural and functional and that as any **living being** requires attention and care. It is necessary to work hard in the adaptation processes that offers comparative work to make the vision of education a proper place to its nature, live, which breathe, that will nurture, which is preserved, is a genuine generator of social good, required education to establish **order and operation** assuming its leading role in schooling and human formation processes in the improvement of the relations of all and each one of its elements which constitute it, in order to prevent the decomposition processes in which it is immersed.

The decomposition processes of education are currently manifested in the disorder and dysfunction on its organic, structural and conjuncture level. The so-called education reform does not correspond to international standards to be recognized as such, since it only refers to the professors actors (reform of the article 3) and to the evaluation (article 73 ° and agreement 648) and does not answer to quality learning, also does not offer alternatives to the inequity in opportunities. Education is a responsibility of the State, but requires the relationship with stakeholders in the teaching-learning process, since teachers are the key articulators of the current educational reform.

CE studies living relations and the education system from the theory of complexity (Morin, 1983). The task to the comparativist is to capture the living systems, make comparative work for appropriating the relationships that give life to the system, boost relations by means of the comparative work is what is required.

### Conclusion

Today's requirement is to make a <<**silent transform**>> as proposed by the contemporary French philosopher François Jullien (2010) the key is to do it with **comparative perspective**.

CE offers, through its comparative work, to give life to the system, offering order to the disorder and functionality to the dysfunctional, through analysis of the elements which constitute it in strict logical and methodological order.

The comparative work is distinguished for being a methodological alternative to appropriate a reality and is just the comparative analysis in their differences and similarities what allows coincidentally located in the reality of time and place are accurate, in order to seek the improvement and development of education systems. The comparative work is a methodological alternative used to construct an image of reality, it is also universally recognised that it is a means to understand and capture the reality, as well as appropriating it, carry out comparative work is to learn to settle in the present at a time and place. But comparison is also a methodological alternative, not only to assess the past and glimpse a path that leads to an accurate future based on a prospective planning, assistance to be located in a specific reality.

The key to comparative work lies not only in the analysis of the differences and similarities but in studying **connections**, contrasting the pedagogical structure the purposes for example is relate and contrast the administrative organization with stakeholders, establishing differences and similarities in modes of operation, analyze how connected, are linked, relate, will dominate, is decided or determined. Therefore, it is not enough to make the comparative analysis of description and explanation is required the comparison based on the study of the relations; an educational systems are not only the constituent elements but the network of relationships and the task of comparative work is to build that relational structure to make it work.

Building a knowledge based on the CE is to wrap an object, wrap a reality through the study of their differences and similarities in the relationships. Knowing an educational system is to wrap the analysis of that system through analysis of its various dimensions. Knowing an educational system is to know the six elements which constitute it in their network of relationships. An action to know is the comparative work.

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