

Reclaiming comparative historical sociologies of education

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The ‘blue marble’ photograph published in 1972 offered an iconic image of the earth. Taken from the Apollo 17 spacecraft at a distance of 45,000 kilometres, it shows a small blue and white planet in the vast darkness of space. That image prompted romantic and sometimes apocalyptic self-understandings of humanity relative to the immensity of the universe. It extended people’s horizons and imaginaries from the relational intimacies of families, clans and communities, beyond the bordering and ordering of nation-states, towards the idea of earth as an imaginable social whole; a system that had to be self-sustaining. Such narratives helped to make everyday life knowable and actionable, reminding people of their responsibilities and stewardship of the planet. They prompted scientific debates about extending the geological time-scale beyond the Holocene, the warm period since the end of the last ice age, to recognize the Anthropocene, when human activities leave geological traces on the earth (Chakrabarty, 2009; Monastersky, 2015). These narratives also stimulated political will, driving developments that helped to reconfigure practices of governing and encouraged people to reimagine their role in the world and how they were implicated in place, planet and permanence (Seghezzo, 2009). Such shifting boundaries of space and time, human self-understanding and practices of governing also opened the door to education reform and ways of working with difference.

Yet the reforms that have reoriented education over the last thirty years are premised on particular patterns of knowledge building and methodological choices. For example, New Zealand educational researcher John Hattie explains the reasoning behind his research into *Visible Learning* by telling the story of Elliot and his treatment for leukaemia. His narrative reveals how he reviewed certain research reports as evidence for developing the idea of ‘visible learning’. As a researcher, Hattie acknowledged how his insights came from somewhere; in his case, a concern with children and the challenges of learning. His research orientation was mediated by a particular form of reasoning that linked educational ways of looking to bio-medical logics, which used particular forms of evidence to identify a ‘best way’ forward. Recognising these methodological choices, Hattie also acknowledged the limits of his own knowledge building, declaring at the outset what his book was *not* about: ‘It is *not* a book about classroom life, and does not speak about the nuances of what does and doesn’t happen in classrooms ... It is *not* a book about influences that cannot be addressed in classrooms – thus critical discussions about class, poverty, resources in families, health in families and nutrition are not included – but NOT because they are unimportant It is *not* a book that includes qualitative studies’

(Hattie, 2009: iix-ix). But these nuances of research slipped past many education policy-makers and professional educators.

The idea of ‘visible learning’ went viral through education policy and professional networks because it offered an evidence-based educational improvement. It was knowledge from somewhere that was transferred to other places and its capacity to travel and realise reform success rested on particular methodological choices. Hattie’s research topic, children’s learning, and his key resource, educational reasoning inflected by bio-medical logics, used certain kinds of abstracted evidence to build knowledge about successful education. That evidence did not include direct engagement with learners or those who enabled their learning, and it did not interrogate the particularities of persons or places – the why or where learning occurred. Instead, the idea of ‘visible learning’ became a de-narrativised thing that was disconnected from the terms and conditions of its own formation. In this abstracted form, the meaning of visible learning could travel as endorsed policy scripts and remake local places by governing through knowledge. *Visible Learning* became an attractive product because it was ‘commercialisable’ in a hungry, competitive and hyper-accelerated global education market. But what is overlooked with the normalisation of this ‘what works’ gaze in education? And how does knowledge building affect the making and remaking of education and societies?

This volume of the *Routledge World Yearbook of Education* considers transformations in contemporary education that have accompanied global imaginaries. Our interest in globalising education is centred by the problem of knowledge building and what we are calling its ‘embeddedness’ (to use a broad descriptor). The blue marble photograph can be understood, we suggest, as a shift in horizons that ruptures familiar space-time boundaries that frame, form and filter everyday life. This rupture has unfolded with the globalising and regionalizing dimensions of economic and cultural change, digital communication, geopolitics and policy instruments that encourage global horizons such as PISA. Novelty is experienced through encounters with unfamiliar social worlds and unpredictable rhythms of time, which affect people’s ways of knowing and doing everyday life *in situ*, irrespective of whether they move or not. These experiences of novelty, positive or negative, have a role in disrupting established ways of knowing and doing education by disturbing familiar frames of reference and space-time boundaries that mark out what is known and how it should be done.

Given these global shifts, this volume attempts to grasp, situate and historicise the specificity of these re-spatialising phenomena. We approach this task by interrogating how social worlds become knowable and actionable through the ways in which they are framed in the present. The question that

informs this volume is: how space-times of education and forms of educational knowledge and practice are being, and have been, disturbed by these globalising phenomena and with what effects on reconfiguring education.

Researching education space-times

This research agenda focuses attention on forms of education that unfold as particular historical formations of educational practices, concepts and research methods. The overarching problem that we tackle is how reconfiguring space-time boundaries affects education as a social institution. The chapters offer various ways of understanding these contexts of education and how they become differentiated. Our object of inquiry is ‘changing contexts’ – where change can be read as both an adjective and a verb. Like Hattie, we have made certain methodological choices in setting up the research discussed in this volume. Tracing how the research context located our point of departure and how the dialogue between the volume editor’s respective vantage points oriented the project, we foreground two key propositions: first, that a robust engagement with changing contexts to re-examine ways of seeing, knowing and educating confronts the concept and effects of ‘social embeddedness’; and second, that a research imaginary informed by historical sensibilities offers a valuable entry point for understanding the re-spatialisation of education that we see as currently underway.

The research context of this edited volume

We take up the problem of social embeddedness as a way of contributing to a larger story about globalising education. Our entry point is partly defined by the current state of educational knowledge and research. But it also builds on a systematic inquiry into the re-spatialisation of education that has been organised through thematic volumes of the *World Yearbook of Education* between 2006 and 2017. The editors of the 2018 volume have different perspectives on this conscious knowledge-building project. Terri Seddon has been series and occasional volume editor since 2006. Noah Sobe has contributed chapters to the 2011 and 2013 volumes. Julie McLeod knows the *World Yearbook of Education* series as reader rather than writer. These different perspectives mean that this volume combines insider and outsider knowledge in order to understand how the respatialisation of education has become knowable and actionable, in part, through the World Yearbook project.

The specific World Yearbook focus on the respatialisation of education departed from the 2005 volume, which examined how the relation between globalisation and nationalism affected education

around the world (Coulby & Zambetta, 2005). Coordinated and organised through the series editorship of the Yearbook, each subsequent volume addressed a particular dimension of globalising education by examining the relation between ‘travelling ideas and local places’ to understand how spatially distributed formations of knowledge building and practices of ‘governing through knowledge’ reconfigured education. Over twelve years, the book series used the opportunity afforded by a *world* yearbook to map how governing knowledge emerged and was renegotiated through shifting space-times of education. This World Yearbook project offered ‘proof of concept’ understandings of globalising education. It also troubled established education concepts and research methods that defined fields of education research.

This dialogue within and between fields of education research came into sharper focus with the publication of WYB 2012. That volume speaks back to the tradition of comparative education by troubling the established concepts of policy lending and borrowing (Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012). As a thematic focus within the larger World Yearbook project, it was conceived as a contribution to an emerging field of ‘comparative policy studies’. The introductory essay indicated that aim of the volume was to look beyond normative judgments that saw travelling ideas as either good or bad and, instead, better ‘describe, analyse and understand policy borrowing and learning in an era of globalisation’ (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012): 3). This research agenda was located at the intersection between comparative education and policy studies, and mapped the research history that now informs understandings of policy borrowing and lending. Its core argument underlines the importance of researching local policy contexts where simple notions of policy implementation are disrupted by unpredictable policy effects.

The essay identified three generations of researchers who contributed to this emerging field of comparative policy studies. The first generation reached out from separate histories in comparative education and education policy studies: establishing foundational concepts, such as ‘selective policy borrowing and lending’ ‘externalisation’ and ‘cross-national policy attraction’, and through policy studies, focusing on the mechanisms that make globalising education knowable and actionable. The second generation named and captured the significance of travelling ideas and their effects through local policy contexts. They also extended the geographic range of policy and local contexts by tracing the effects of globalising education through developing countries. And, as Steiner-Khamsi noted, that middle generation also supported third generation scholars through targeted institutional support, for example, that organised by her own university, Teachers College Columbia (2012 p. 9). With that support, an emerging network of comparative policy researchers has become visible, and lines of inquiry are exploding in many directions. The design of the 2012 *World Yearbook of Education*

captured the conceptual contributions of this body of work by surfacing four lines of inquiry: the shift from bilateral to international frames of reference; understandings of logics or forms of reasoning that order systems and cases; the methodological repercussions of a ‘globalisation optique’ and how ‘policyscapes’ trouble nation-state case study research; and the analysis of cross-national policy attractions through ‘projections’, where the portrayal of one school system is ordered, distorted, simplified and smoothed with reference to address the priorities and social logics of another place.

The move towards codification of the academic field in the 2012 volume served as a provocation in its claiming and naming the primary object of inquiry as ‘policy’. This focus on policy had been centre-stage within the field of education since the 1990s (Dale, 1992). But sociology of education, and the larger World Yearbook project, had a longer history that was tensioned between policy and practice. Yearbooks focusing on educational improvements have been published since the late 19th century. In the US, progressive education movements and universities established agencies, such as, the US-based National Society for the Study of Education which, from 1901, produced the *Educational Yearbook* that remains associated with Teachers College Columbia. The *Yearbook of Education* was initially conceived through Kings College London in 1932, with Lord Eustace Percy as the editor in chief until 1935 (Holmes, 1974: 387). The war stopped publication from 1940 to 1946, and it relocated to the London Institute of Education in 1953. This institutional support incubated a British tradition of comparative education that referenced the needs of England and Wales, set in an international context and addressed using ‘common British traditions’ (Holmes, 1974: 390). There were associations with Teachers College Columbia from 1938, when Issac Kandel joined the editorial board. The prefix *World* was added in negotiation with comparative education scholars from Teachers College Columbia, particularly George Bereday (joint editor from 1957 to 1967), which filled the gap created by the suspension of Teachers College’ *Educational Yearbook* (Keller, 1949). But as Holmes suggests, this World Yearbook of Education retained an English orientation. By the 1960s, British and US interests in comparative education were diverging as US scholars extended their research into the developing ‘Third World’, with British scholars remaining focused on Britain and its commonwealth.

It was the process of europeanisation that cut across this Anglophone world and its visible networks and research orientations. The effects of the novel europeanising narrative unfolded at three levels, all of which had an impact upon ways of knowing and doing education. First, the process of making Europe unfolded through the establishment of a supra-national European state. The post-war union of European nation-states for economic purposes became a novel space of governing, where the supra-national state mobilised forms of soft governing to coordinate networks of actors: not only

governments but also communities, professionals and researchers. Second, this networking revealed the deep social embedding of education and how logics of education were anchored by certain forms of reasoning that sedimented particular educational practices, concepts and research methods, often in taken-for-granted ways. These ways of looking and seeing were materialised through policy and professional ways of knowing and doing education that re-made policy processes, and prompted the concept of ‘governing through knowledge and numbers’ (Ozga, 2008). Finally, this novel supra-national space of ‘Europe’ and its practices of governing became an object of inquiry, which was identified initially as *Fabricating Europe* through a 2002 collaboration between Portuguese comparativist António Nóvoa and British historical sociologist Martin Lawn (Nóvoa & Lawn, 2002). The concept of ‘europeanisation’ framed research on the making of a European educational space. It was a research agenda that centred formation of the *European Education Research Journal*. It also informed the World Yearbook project, which was re-conceiving its own objects of enquiry in more globalised, one-world ways, in line with the shift from a British to a more european/international editorial board.

The idea of europeanisation as the making of a supra-national European space bumped up against the 2012 idea of comparative policy studies within the World Yearbook project. Where comparative policy studies prioritised policy research through studies of ‘local policy contexts’, the study of europeanisation focused on the respatialisation of national education systems through the emergence of a supra-national European educational space and its effects on ‘local places’ (Alexiadou & Jones, 2001). In practice, the main trajectory of europeanisation research prioritised ‘Europe’, the supra-national space of governing, and highlighted the way knowledge-based regulatory technologies, such as policies, audit and data practices, resourced and oriented the emerging European educational space. These methodological choices co-existed with research that also examined how the space of experiencing Europe was affected by the process of europeanisation (Niemeyer & Seddon, forthcoming). And for researchers that were not ‘from Europe’, there was scope to explore how the long shadow of europeanisation was framed by larger processes of globalising education, as well as by the historic effects of colonisation that had made a eurocentric world (and made its historical specificity invisible) through eurocentric knowledge building (Connell, 2007; Chen, 2010; Caruso & Sobe 2012; Takayama et al 2017)

However, defining this emerging field of europeanisation research as comparative policy research seemed to lose some of the complexities of globalising education. The process of chunking up fields of inquiry is a necessary methodological step, and makes it possible to discipline research through the use of specific concepts, methods and practices of knowledge building. Yet a focus on ‘policy’

and investigations of ‘local policy contexts’ foregrounds social worlds that are bordered and ordered with reference to policy. Whereas studies of europeanisation foreground the relation between forms of state and civil society: an object of inquiry that sprawls across forms, scales and disciplinary formations, and also builds on often unacknowledged geographies of knowledge. In contrast to policy studies, research on europeanisation was tracing emergent spaces that unfolded through the spatialisation of knowledge networks of state and non-state actors, and also the coordinating effects of their antagonistic and collaborative forms of reasoning. This work prompted a place-based, rather than a policy orientation. It incubated a sociology of locality that could be policy focused but could also plunge into the borderland spaces between policy and practice, governing and experience, ‘representations (mental space)’ and ‘real space’, that is ‘the space of people who deal with material things’ (Lefebvre, 1991: 4). This line of inquiry had its own intellectual history at the intersection, not between comparative education and policy studies, but between social history and sociology of education.

Historical and sociological vantage points

The codification of comparative policy studies raised questions about the unit of reference that frames, forms and filters knowledge building about globalising education. It also served as a reminder that the naming of a field of inquiry pinpoints the methodological choices that inform its way of looking and seeing, which, in turn, orients its associated educational practices. However, bumping into that name – comparative policy studies – brought particular methodological choices into relief along with an awareness of the mostly taken-for-granted assumptions and premises that inform knowledge building within a particular field. In part, it was the juxtaposition of a field defined by comparative research of policy and policy effects with the largely unarticulated framing of sociology of education that prompted this 2018 *World Yearbook of Education*. Its aim has been to examine space-times of education and account for their unevenness by interrogating the changing contexts that make educational practices, concepts and research methods as seen from three vantage points: sociology of education, history of education and comparative education.

Research into globalising education through these three fields of education research brings conceptualisations of space, time and mobility into sharp focus. However, it is the intersecting effects of these concepts – used as either research topic or conceptual resource – that can give historical sociology its somewhat sprawling and elusive character. The core project of historical sociology is to understand ‘what people do in the present as a struggle to create a future *out of* the past, of seeing that the past is not just the womb of the present but the only raw material out of which the present can be

constructed' (Abrams, 1982: 8, emphasis included). It is a line of inquiry that has unfolded through generations of researchers: from Marx, Durkheim and Weber, through second wave scholars like E.P Thompson, Barrington Moore and Theda Skocpol, to a proliferating third wave, where feminist and post-colonial contributors have also struggled to understand and act within and through emerging forms of modernity (Delanty & Isin, 2003). As C. Wright Mills noted, 'all sociology worthy of the name is "historical sociology" ... an attempt to "write the present as history"' (Mills 1967: 146). It is a research orientation that aims to grasp an emerging present by triangulating knowledge building based on detailed analyses of history, social structures and biography (Kumar, 2015).

The aim of writing the present as history underpins the methodological standpoint of the 2018 *World Yearbook of Education*. As noted above, our interest in globalising education is captured in two key propositions. The first substantive proposition is that a robust engagement with changing contexts confronts the concept and effects of 'social embeddedness' which, we argue, is crucial for any re-examining of ways of seeing, knowing and doing education. This is because who sees what, from where and for what purposes invites a reconsideration of the ethical and political dimensions of knowledge building and its material effects. This substantive dimension raises questions about the unevenness of education and how the texturing of space-times contributes to inequality. For example, naming and addressing the 'uneven space-times of education' recognises that the compression and stretching of space and time are not only policy effects but are also experienced differently by people, how they know their place and act out their sense of permanence. The apparent "smoothing" of global configurations through dominant policy scripts and standardising social technologies are also implicated in the fabrication of principles and practices that are lived and often taken-for-granted as unevenness, distance and shifting forms of inequality. Acknowledgement of these contradictions and of how dilemmas are experienced marks this volume of the WYB as a contribution to the long tradition of educational inquiry that looks past the uncertainties of any particular present to better understand the points of leverage that steer educational change and continuity in ways that make futures.

The second methodological proposition is that a research imaginary informed by historical sensibilities offers a valuable entry point for understanding the re-spatialisation of education. As Edward Soja has long argued, there is a 'growing awareness of the simultaneity and interwoven complexity of the social the historical and the spatial, their inseparability and interdependence' (Sojo, 1996: 3). For example, a field named 'comparative policy studies' is provocative because it makes the methodological choice to focus on one context, centred by policy and policy effects, rather than engaging the messy multiplicities of space, place and context that, in practice, spatialise entities-

identities, relationships and cultures (Massey, 2005). Foregrounding time and temporalities makes it possible to think about encounters with the spectres of a past and a future, where historical memory and future-oriented imagination colour story-telling in the present. Temporalities also suggest the ‘over-writing’ of identities where traces and smudges persist, haunting and unsettling the present and unevenly moving into the future (McLeod 2014). Temporalities also play through institutional spaces and processes of knowledge building by congealing particular re-contextualisations that can disturb, transform and sometimes produce things anew. Categories and concepts are used to objectify a ‘here and now’, but they are also entangled with contextual narratives and habits of mind, which carry traces of ‘there and then’. Narrating a context inter-crosses – criss-crosses and weaves between – temporal spaces in ways that are also interrupted by things that move, travel, and live through particular patterns of mobility and fixity (Sobe & Kowalczyk, 2012).

One challenge of historical sociology lies in how to write the present as history, where each present is both an input to and outcome of social forms and formations. The delineation of what is dead and past, and what is live and emergent provides a well-known methodological circuit breaker in this kind of intellectual iteration, and marks a distinction between history and historiography (Spiegel, 2014). Comparison is a parallel methodological strategy and, in the form of longitudinal, epochal and cross-border comparison, is central to historical sociology (Kumar, 2015). Those research traditions that traced *longue durée* as social formations and sedimented knowledge cultures have become *histoire croisée*; analyses that investigate concepts as inter-related and often associated with transnational history (Werner & Zimmermann, 2006).

These different forms of comparison open up analysis in ways that are different to the distinction of past from present. First, lateral comparison offers a way of juxtaposing particular presents for purposes of analysis, for example the present narrated as ‘policy studies’ and the present narrated as ‘europeanisation’ or the present experienced in diverse geo-social settings. Second, depth comparison reveals how a particular event or artefact, such as education or supra-national ‘Europe’, is fabricated through particular formations of knowledge, knowledge-building and social learning that make and remake identity, relationships, cultures and their effects. Finally, criss-crossing (*croisée*) comparison makes it possible to look both at and behind the landscape of tangible things to surface patterns and processes of knowing and doing that configure globalising education. This move, which examines space-time-contexts and their histories and effects together, reveals the significance of knowledge-building, methodological choices, and also more or less habitual ways of looking and learning. We see the concept of ‘space-times of education’ as offering a way of investigating spaces of governing and experiencing where, for example, dilemma-driven policyscapes, learning spaces and workplaces

sediment meanings through material practices, with reference to certain contexts, concepts and congealed social interests.

Entangled histories

This trajectory of comparative historical sociology leads, we believe, towards an understanding of the present as arising from ‘entangled histories’. The idea of ‘entanglement’ focuses attention on events, such as travelling ideas, people and goods that interrupt a particular present, and the effects of those interruptions that distort, diffract and disturb established forms of education and society. ‘Entanglement’ also acknowledges how each of these elements also has their own history and how narratives fix these histories as if they just unfolded through path-dependent knowledge building and social organisation. Entangled history addresses issues of convergence, contingency, diverse and unexpected collisions of forces and effects, which are all features of such entanglement. This orientation that acknowledges interlocking flows and forces has gained traction across the social sciences and humanities. However, we should not rest on the assertion of ‘entanglement’ as a sufficient concept to account for the complexity of the present or the past. Neither should we be satisfied with the ‘finding’ of ‘entanglement’ as the sufficient outcome of scholarly research. Rather, the imperative is to trace out the specificity of relations and the forms that unfold with particular entanglements.

In the case of historical sociologies of education, we can see how comparison of events with reference to particular (and messy) space-times of education helps to account for globalising education. It offers concepts and methodologies for tracing how and with what effects education, and the educational logics of learning, working and governing, become entangled with socio-cultural and geo-social transformations, such as globalisation. As (Burson, 2013: 3) explains,

The notion of historical entanglement is the manner in which an “object” of historical study (for example, a concept, discourse, or identity) is constituted at the meeting point or intercrossing among various historical contexts as opposed to its being considered in only one isolated discursive context. Entanglement may be considered to operate on at least three levels: multicultural entanglement (the intercrossing of synchronous cultures); transdiscursive entanglements (the intercrossing of theological, scientific or ethico-political debates, for example); and diachronic entanglement (the arguably inevitable way in which scholarly analysis interjects itself into, and alters, the past by the very process of attending to the first and second entanglements).

In this volume of the *World Yearbook of Education* we draw on concepts and methods associated with entangled history to write about globalising education as an historical phenomena. Initially, this rationale was hard to pinpoint and we struggled to identify the core line of argument. The relative invisibility of historical sociology in the field of educational research was part of the problem. It complicated the selection of chapter authors because there was no visible bookshelf or college of easily identifiable scholars grappling with entangled histories in the sphere of sociology of education and policy studies. Pragmatically, therefore, we organised the volume in three sections, with chapter authors selected with reference to each editor's particular interest in time and identity, space and work, and context and mobility. Yet the movement of changing socio-political contexts has also affected the volume. Working on the 2018 volume of the *World Yearbook of Education* since 2016 means that it has come to fruition alongside the disturbing effects of war in the MENA region, the disconcerting farce of Brexit and the Donald Trump US Presidency, and the dislocating geopolitical ripple effects, which now intensify political violence in Europe and increase sabre-rattling in East Asia. This lived history contextualised the volume but has also confirmed the importance of recognising knowledge and developing methodologies that can interrogate and understand such entangled histories.

As the volume came to completion, the contributions helped us to grasp the significance of space-times in globalising education. In particular, it helped us to understand why an earlier framing of the World Yearbook project as one of 'comparative policy studies' had served as such a potent methodological provocation. Such entanglements suggested how space-times of education were implicated in globalising education, but they also highlighted the salience of 'social embeddedness' as a key concept in writing the present as history.

Entangled space-times

The expansive essay by Bob Cowan, which immediately follows this opening chapter, introduces many of the concerns that initially prompted this volume of the *World Yearbook of Education* by highlighting the way space and time are troubled by globalisation. Speaking through academic comparative education, Cowan suggests that 'what works' research, such as the study of visible learning, has built on 'fix-it' forms of comparative education that have operated with simplified understandings of space and time, where

Space is places in which some version of research by ‘field-work’ (i.e. the collection from educational sites of systematically organised data) shows that successful or non-successful action on education occurs. Space is locales of educational success and failure. Good space is where success is clearly visible (e.g. once upon a time, Japan; Finland; or last year, Shanghai). Bad space is where failure is occurring (say, Pisa-shocked Germany or Spain). Exciting space is a scientific version of the promised land: the happy, evidence-sensitive, places where data-informed reform will occur. (Cowan 2018, this vol p. X)

This pragmatic, action-oriented form of comparative education reasoning has unfolded through policy and activities focused by particular understandings of modernisation. Its underlying logic was to produce ‘successful’ education through ‘successful’ reforms, when seen from the vantage point of international politics. Fix-it comparative education, as Cowan argues, looks across geographic areas to identify successful education landscapes and reforms. It draws on histories of policy borrowing and lending that are seen as having proven capacity to extend and generalise the success of ‘successful countries’ to those deemed unsuccessful.

But what counts as success? Whose success is in view in fix-it comparative education? And whose success is at stake in visible learning? For comparative historical sociologists one challenge is to understand how such simple views of time and space shape or indeed impede our ways of knowing the space-time of education, arguably distorting the frame of reference that orients and motivates how we act and know in any particular present.

We argue here that such questions are not answered directly by established practices derived from either fix-it or academic comparative education. As Cowan notes, while comparative education is consciously renewing concepts, methods and practices, its epistemological debates have congealed in ways that continue to surface narratives about educational change and continuity that are premised on analysis of the education landscape without explicitly acknowledging imperium. By ‘imperium’, Cowan means the social organisation of power whereby the governing effects of knowledge that materialise as habits of mind as well as the exercise of authority, play through everyday practical politics of education and societies. For example, world culture theory offers a counter-narrative to fix-it comparative education by highlighting the significance of global scripts that now re-write educational activities (Silova & Brehm, 2015). However, in researching education landscapes through lateral comparison rather than depth or criss-crossing comparisons that reveal the play of knowledge-authority regimes, world culture and fix-it narratives do not fully render the complexities of transfer, translation and transformation. As Cowan notes, the new as well as the old directions in comparative

education are limited by the way that field has conceptualised ‘context’. Reducing space and time to linear trajectories, looks past the effects of social embedding and its implications for policy borrowing and lending. It encourages knowledge building that writes linear, progressivist histories of past, present and future; it doesn’t write the present as history.

Yet despite these limitations, the gaze that realises ‘what works’ agendas through comparative education continues to dominate education policy and practice. It is a gaze that has particular significance because of its orientation, persistence and effects in globalising education. The ascent of fix-it comparative education as the *modus operandi* of globalising education over the last thirty years has steered the remaking of education, while its ontological and epistemology habits, even in academic comparative education, mostly look beyond or ignore reflexive anxieties. Our dis-ease thus rests on warranted concerns about the usefulness and adequacy of concepts, methods and practices associated with comparative education and its logics of policy borrowing and lending. The problem, as Cowan observes, is that these simple fix-it understandings of time and space rest on particular ways of understanding education as an instrument of governing that can steer social change and achieve the success of a promised land.

This problem of ‘context’, we suggest, is fundamental to ‘what works’ research and ‘fix it’ comparative education. The reduction of context to a simple backdrop or container for knowing and doing education fails to grasp the entangling effects of space and time, and of knowledge and narrative. Similarly, not looking at context, as if contextualisation had no effects, makes it possible to look away from the social embeddedness of learning, knowledge networks and education systems. We critique both logics because they make it possible to sustain a future-oriented gaze but in ways that imperfectly acknowledges how effects of work and learning can change education and society.

Looking towards a future without also acknowledging its present and past as history overlooks the entanglements that cohere educational practices, concepts and methods of knowledge building into forms of education. Downplaying the persistent effects of imperia, not only through landscapes of the present but also through the deep reach into the hearts and souls of a social body, risks making the narrative formation of contexts invisible. Neglecting histories and sociologies of knowledge and authority makes it hard to see the unpredictable consequences of educational practices, concepts and methods, and how they shape the space-times of education.

This line of reasoning has motivated our analysis of the space-times of education. As an intellectual project, it is a critique of ‘what works’ research and ‘fix it’ comparative education. But problematizing

space-times of education and social embeddedness also re-opens debates about what is not seen through a ‘quick fix’ policy-research lens and the implications of those partial narratives and invisible effects for globalising education. The chapters that follow Cowan’s essay take this agenda forward by laying out more explicit conceptualisations of space-times of education and their effects. Each chapter draws on detailed knowledge building work to engage with concepts of ‘space’, ‘time’ and ‘mobility’ employing diverse research approaches that deepen understanding of the multiple dimensions of globalising education

Eventful space

The assumption that space is eventful, an active force in the making and re-making of education and societies is central to the concept of space-times of education. This premise acknowledges that concepts, methods and practices are events that occupy, orient and form particular ‘places’. These events are embedded and given meaning, significance and social force because of the way they unfold through a certain space of social relationships, habits of mind and practices of governing. The situating of these events makes places, where learning, working and governing have effects; this knowledge-building and the exercise of authority fix circuits of labour and circulations of knowledge that also steer and sustain everyday life. As Gieryn (2000: 465) notes, ‘place’ is a distinct spot, which is distinguished by geographic location, material form, and invested meanings. It is doubly constructed, being ‘built or in some way physically carved out’ [and] also ‘interpreted narrated, perceived, felt, understood, and imagined’. These processes entail knowledge building that makes meaning through referencing a particular space-time and how it is narrated as context: fixing a space-time as a unit of reference (as in the very concepts of ‘national education’ or ‘international education’) is a way of governing through knowledge.

Space, therefore, is not just a container or a simple event in a flat world. It is rather an ontological unfolding that is not only influenced by a single context. The production of space rests on entanglements between multiple contexts where the concepts, methods and practices that make space are also mediated by ways of seeing and experiencing space and place. Doreen Massey (1993) identifies eventful ‘space’ with reference to the ‘stories-so-far’ that are framed by particular geometries of power, which make space and also configures and orients place. Space making, she suggests, is, first, a ‘product of interrelations’ and is constituted through interactions, ‘from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny’. Second, seeing space requires us to recognise the relational processes that play through forms of interaction, multiple voices, logics’ and directions. Spaces therefore locate ‘multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality’, ‘co-existing

heterogeneity’ and ‘distinct trajectories’. Finally, these features mean space is always under construction. ‘Without space, no multiplicity; without multiplicity, no space ... Multiplicity and space as co-constitutive’ (Massey, 2005: 9). But the sum of the-stories-so-far is never just one space; those stories emerge through spatialities that rest on different ways of seeing space and understanding spatial organisation (Lefebvre, 1991). Space is produced as those spatialities perceived as ‘spatial practices’, prompt conceptions or ‘representations of space’ and are felt as an experienced ‘space of representation’ that is lived affectively.

There are echoes here with Donna Haraway’s (1988) concept of ‘situated knowledge’ and her now famous call for researchers to acknowledge the contexts in which knowledge is produced and made possible – the relationship between epistemology and perspective. This has been an influential concept in the humanities and social sciences, and especially among feminist and qualitative researchers. Its citational popularity has coincided with an autobiographical turn and critical attention to the reflexivity and power of research encounters. However, in many respects this has resulted in rather thin applications of the concept of situated knowledges, such that it risks becoming a simple phrase to describe the personal and political positioning of the researcher, thereby diminishing some of its analytic power and reach. In explaining their associated concept of the ‘geosocial,’ Mitchell and Kallio (2017) have made a convincing case for not confining the argument of ‘situated knowledges’ to ‘the personal subjectivity of the knower alone’. Rather, they urge making ‘situated knowledge locatable in “actually existing spaces”’ (2017: 14). To do so, they look to the messy intersection of macro, geo-political, geo-economic, globalizing forces and local, everyday micro practices and social relations: ‘Tracing the connections between these human practices and social, environmental, and political-economic worlds, and constantly thinking and rethinking the meaning of the ‘ground’ and ‘politics’ in the twenty-first century, is the aim of geosocial thinking’ (Mitchell and Kallio 2017, 14)

The chapters in the ‘Space’ section of this book elaborate the idea of ‘eventful space’ by considering the work that makes space and how and forms of labour fix time as a particular present and a platform that both locates and orients subsequent space-making. The first two chapters address the making of education as a social institution. Beatrix Niemeyer reflects a Germanic reading of education back to Anglophone researchers. She introduces the concept of ‘space of orientation’ to trace how the German tradition of letter writing made a normative public space, a context that framed, formed and filtered what it meant to be an educated person. She suggests that this space making served as both an input to the formation of education as a public space and also embedded particular kinds of knowledge and narrative as particular social movements steered the institutionalisation of public schooling. Through

these processes women learned their own subordination as men learned their privileged access to public space.

The remaining chapters offer more detailed analyses of specific space-times of education. Martin Lawn targets the space of governing made through europeanisation by tracing particular circuits of labour and ideas that remade European education at the nexus between policy and research. He shows how the knowledge-building habits of comparative education networks and their particular methodologies and pragmatic work practices made a distinctive European educational space. He gives the idea of ‘governing through knowledge’ meaning and also shows how researchers are implicated in this governing work that steers education through cultural resources that make education knowable and actionable. Chin-ju Mao analyses the unevenness of educational space-times by comparing two high schools in wealthy and poor parts of Taipei. She shows how the context of school choice reconstitutes the status order through the normative bordering and ordering of relationships, rules and resources at each school.

The two final chapters in this section surface interventions intended to change space-times of education. Arwen Raddon used the concept of ‘time-space’ to analyse Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) in Singapore. Combining insights from Barbara Adams and Doreen Massey, she considers how the low status of TVET is both embedded within geometries of power and also constantly renewed through habits anchored by Anglophone colonial histories and popular culture. Tracing interventions in TVET, Raddon documents the difficulties in dislodging socially embedded associations between working class education and low status learning. Finally, Lorraine White-Hancock asks, how can space-making enable innovation? Using the concept of ‘learning through working’, she traces how scientists and artists create borderlands within STEM that realise innovation through unlearning and relearning embedded concepts, methods and practices. This expansive learning depends on space-times that combine appropriate work organisation and a culture order that is open to transgression. She argues, innovative work and learning mobilises educational logics to orient and authorise workplaces as learning spaces.

Troubling temporalities

These various constructs – social embeddedness, eventful space, situated knowledge and geosocial thinking – all offer ways of understanding and analysing the tricky terrain of space and its inherited, contested, volatile and sedimented meanings and social effects. We can add and subtract emphases and elements, but the ethical and methodological challenge remains that of trying to understand the

shifting grounds on which educational research, practice and policy takes place. Crucial to this, as we have argued, is the dynamic between space and time, which is by no means self-evident. Of course, all research takes place in and over time and research methods and ways of knowing and theorising emerge and take hold of imaginations in particular times and places and in ways that can be fateful, non-reversible, in their effects. Our own endeavours in this volume arise in the context of a ‘temporal turn’ across the social sciences, which is associated with a range of approaches that privilege time as an object of analysis, allow for understanding of the social in greater time perspective and interrogate the presumed linearity of temporal processes (Savage 2010; Thomson and McLeod, 2015). In our discussions, temporality is engaged ‘not as a fancier word for time, but as signifying the messy, moving relations between past, present and future’. (McLeod 2017, see too; Harootunian 2007; Lorenz and Bevernage 2013).

The shifting horizons of globalisation, as noted above, accelerating ecological changes and the messing with time, speed and presence made possible by digital communication, among other phenomena, are bringing time and temporalities into sharp relief, from big historical and epochal time to everyday micro experiences of time. The philosopher of history, Helge Jordheim writes of these ‘multiple temporalities’ not as discrete layers – such as in geological formations – with the rhythms of daily life on top, and the slow change of the environment on the bottom (Jordheim 2014, 508). Rather he suggests that ‘it might be more useful to imagine different temporalities existing in a plane, as parallel lines, paths, tracks, or courses, zigzagging, sometimes touching or even crossing one another, but all equally visible, tangible, and with direct consequences for our lives’ (Jordheim 2014, 508). Jordheim employs the term ‘temporal regimes’ to characterize ‘the plurality of times inherent in the plurality of social phenomena’ (2014, 509).

The chapters comprising the second section of this volume, ‘Identity and shifting temporalities’ take up the challenge of exploring different registers of transformations in educational space-times through the lenses of identity, citizenship and pedagogy. In each chapter, the focus and topic is historicised and this historicity is brought into the foreground. Jordheim’s concepts of multiple temporalities resonates here, as the chapters variously trace the criss-crossing of policy change, national affiliation, colonising and decolonising agendas and the remaking of teacher and student identities via pedagogies and rhetorics that engender complex affective responses. As each chapter illustrates, subjective and everyday experiences bear the marks of longer historical processes and also point to some of the ways in which educational aspirations and policy regimes take root and gain meaning. The traces and memories of earlier temporal regimes continue to haunt the educational present yet, at the same time, this present is forcibly interrupted by, among another phenomenon, the promise of

digital communication and pedagogies or policy reform discourses directed to more standardised governing of teachers and learning. While it is not easy to disentangle the layers that constitute the temporal regimes of the educational present, these chapters offer ways of doing so that give analytic priority to the subjects visibly populating the space times of education – teachers, students, citizens – those who are also typically cast as the beneficiaries, mediators or objects of educational policy reform.

Inés Dussel considers the ways and extent to which digital media in schools are ‘reconfiguring the space-times of education’. She questions the standard debates of these pedagogical changes (accelerating or compressing time, inaugurating different rhythms of teaching and learning), and calls for new ways of approaching the concepts of space and time that step away from seeing them as still ‘linear and homogenous’. In particular, she draws out new types of archival work?? attached to digital media in schools, addressing the function and politics of images, ‘their relationship to truth claims, memory, and the representability of the real’. Memory figures powerfully in Michalinos Zembylas’ analysis of education policy in Cyprus, taking as a focus the affective charge and orthodoxies of the ‘I don’t forget and I struggle’ policy. A key aim of this policy was to encourage Greek-Cypriot children not to forget national struggles and to preserve a particular conception of ‘history, memory and identity’. Here history and memory operate at several levels: in historicising the production of the curriculum and policy texts, in historicising national and collective memory – the “emotional archive of the nation state” (Kenway and Fahey in Zembylas) – and the politics and affect of memory mediated in the space-times of education and pedagogies. Here policy reform meets affect studies, and this encounter dramatizes the ways in which the educational present inherits and is constituted by complex memories and emotional legacies – hope, nostalgia, bitterness, sentimentality, loss.

The importance of attending to affective responses in order to grasp the reach and character of globalising education is also a central theme in Nancy Lesko and Alyssa Niccolini’s chapter on school reform and public feelings teachers. They work with the notion of ‘viscosity’, understood as a ‘spatial and temporal event’ that aggregates people/bodies over time, to analyse how antipathetic and negative feelings accrue to teachers, who are grouped and pitted as ‘at odds’ with the public. Their lively analysis shows how ‘the brisk and sharp affects that mobilize...reform strategies at the macro level of politics have congealed with the slow and unglamorous work of teaching at a more micro level’. Traversing the micro and macro effects of policy reform agendas is a focus as well of Hannah Tavares’ chapter, which explores the ‘temporal legacies of colonial situations’ in relation to questions of identity, citizenship and the broader space-times in which education – as government, as colonising, as otherwise – takes place. Focussing on Hawai’i, Tavares’ discussion places colonialism

as vital in theorising temporality and in understanding constructions of normative and desirable educable citizen subjects. This chapter is also a necessary and timely reminder of what attention to globalisation, europeanisation or other forms of regionalisation can exclude from view and the concomitant imperative to embrace a robust account of the historicity and geosocial politics of knowledge, where knowledge that matters is named as central, not peripheral or ‘merely’ local.

Problematizing Mobility

Coming to terms with mobility, circulation and flow is essential to grappling with the uneven space-times of education. Scholarly interest in people and objects in movement or in "flux" has exploded in step with the study of globalisation. As discussed above, a recent World Yearbook project sought to deepen our field's understanding of "policy borrowing and lending" (Steiner-Khamsi and Waldow, 2012) by directing attention at the global movement of educational policies and practices. But by harkening back earlier scholarship, in some cases the diffusionist paradigms of early anthropology as well as political science engagements with concepts such as Westernization and modernization, a wealth of insightful scholarship on the cultural exchanges, flows and circulations of educational practices, policies, objects and individuals has emerged in recent years (e.g., Caruso & Roldan Vera, 2005; Popkewitz, 2005, 2013; Cowen 2009). In addition to considering the transnational as one of the criss-crossing layers of educational time-spaces, this work often also directs careful attention to travelling, movement and mobility as key aspects of 'changing contexts' (again used here in the double sense adjective and verb). The third section of this WYB volume consists of four chapters that surface the linking of mobility with the time-spaces of schooling.

Flow and movement are seen as positive, necessary component elements of one-worldist globalisation. James Clifford (1997) pointed out some time ago that the customary academic paradigm has been to attribute movement and the advantages that accrue from the ability to occupy multiple positions to cultural elites, academic researchers among them. Settlement, stability and all that remains in-situ is then easily coded as a "backwards" provincial remainder needing to be reformed/transformed by "forces" seen as moving in from the outside. Connected to this is the analytic and cultural paradigm that views "authentic" forms of mobility as inhering exclusively in the free (and freeing) movements of subjects for whom journeys/departures are a matter of choice, in contrast, for example, to forced mobility of refugees. Sobe and Fischer (2009) have argued that this dichotomy is clearly evident in the completely opposing ways that "student mobility" is discussed in European and American contexts. This final section of the volume problematizes mobility in an effort to help us move further beyond limited temporalized and spatialized notions of context. Anna Tsing

(2000) evocatively recommended that we pay attention to the ways that global flows make and re-make channels, and in this section contributors use what we would characterize as criss-crossing comparison approaches to develop new understandings of the texturing of the time-spaces of education.

In the first chapter Noah W. Sobe and Jamie Kowalczyk propose that examination of ‘big C’ Context – meaning the categories and concepts used to define social embeddedness – is an essential part of developing criss-crossing comparisons. In proposing a reconceptualization of context as a weaving and an assemblage, they draw on Bruno Latour’s (2004) distinction between ‘matters of fact’ and ‘matters of concern’ to argue for the importance of researcher reflexivity and for conceptualizing of objects of analysis in the first place.

The mobility of academic researchers is carefully examined by Marianne Larsen in a chapter that questions contemporary vogues for academic movement and considers the (im)mobilities that are mutually embedded with mobilities and help to generate the unevenness of the space-times of higher education teaching and research labour. Drawing on network and assemblage metaphors, Larsen presents a historical sociology of the role mobility plays in constituting a global academic assemblage. She uses Bærendoldt’s (2013) notion of “governmobility” to illustrate the ways in which mobilities become self-governing principles, and she draws the important conclusion that mobilities don’t just happen on top of existing institutions or societies but constitute them.

In the subsequent chapter Eleftheris Klerides comes at mobility and the uneven space-times of education through a historical sociology of interculturalism in history teaching that is informed by a careful analysis of changing theories and practices in the field of international relations. Contrasting the production of *homo nationalis* with a *homo interculturalis*, Klerides offers a window into changing contexts of schooling through fine-grained discussion of textbook revision politics and initiatives. The chapter accomplishes a significant rethinking of the contexts of history teaching by convincingly showing that realist, liberalist and constructionist approaches to international relations are useful in helping us to identify the political principles and social structures that make different modalities of imagining the relationship between history and identity possible.

The final chapter of the volume presents a call for the sociology of education to “move beyond itself” towards a “mobile sociology of education. Paolo Landri argues that this entails opening up the ways in which researchers engage with the space-times of education; examining the co-implication of the human and non-human in social ties; and, moving from accounts of policy to more complex analyses

of practices. He proposes that a sociomaterial gaze helps us to escape from the pitfall of methodological nationalism. Shifting the lens from policy to practice similarly brings visibility to the materialities of education. Not losing sight of the importance of liveable time-spaces of education, Landri's mobile sociology invokes nomadic thinking and practice to underscore the openness of everyday life.

Globalising Space-Times and Contextualizing Embeddedness

Despite these extensive debates about space and time in cognate fields that are revealed through the chapters, the history of educational policy and practice tends to flatten out education. The failure to look at the ontological depth and epistemological complexities of educational space-times means the term 'context' is widely used by policy makers and professional educators. But that concept rests on evacuated notions of time and space and, at best, offers a thinned down gesture towards the complexities of space-times of education that look past the effects of embeddedness. One irony is that this understanding of context, which frames future-focused advocacy of fix-it comparative education and simple here-and-now versions of visible learning, informs official policies of globalising education, just as we enter a new game of globalising space and time. So, what does this new game mean for knowing and doing education?

As Cowan notes, globalising education is a new game of space and time; it troubles the warp and weft that once anchored educational concepts, methods and practices, which fixed forms of education. But the main trajectory of education research has largely focused on the making of education space-times within the parameters defined by schoolwork and its particular learning identities. These preoccupations with the professional practice of education focused attention on 'education *in* society', while studies of 'education *and* society' were left to academic educational studies that rested on relations with cognate fields. The effects of globalising education, however, have now troubled that tidy divisions in educational research between professionalised and academic studies. They have done so in part by drawing professionalised research as well as professional work and learning into the thin practices of visible learning that are endorsed by fix-it comparative education (Ball, 2008). The normalisation of this way of knowing and doing education is an effect of globalising space-times, where advocates work the transnational borderlands between governments, professions and education-business and roll out knowledge-based regulatory tools, which are making a global space-time of educational governance.

Yet the challenge for education research is to understand how education now 'morphs as it moves'.

It requires research into the respatialising effects of globalising education and how they unfold through inter-crossings between globalising space-times and contextualised embeddedness. We began this Introductory essay by troubling the trajectory of globalising education. Focusing on knowledge-building, we asked two questions: what is overlooked with the normalisation of this ‘what works’ gaze in education? And how does knowledge building affect the making and remaking of education and societies? The chapters collected in this *2018 World Yearbook of Education* offer insights into the first question by evidencing many effects of space-times of education that are often rendered invisible by the normalised gaze of a ‘what works’ knowledge formation. In concluding this essay, we address the second question by building on Cowan’s commentary that invites us to codify the perspective, project and research voice that informs this study of space-times of education and what it adds to this present and the new game of globalising education. Organising our concluding comments on this basis clarifies our contribution to knowledge through this thirteenth volume of the World Yearbook project and suggests an agenda for further research on globalising education.

Perspective

In this essay, we have sought to canvas some of the challenges and conceptual puzzles that arise in research on globalising education. Sociologies and histories of education have long examined forms of education by documenting the nature and effects of concepts, methods and practices as they take form through space-times of education. But our individual formations embedded in sociology of education, history of education and comparative education have created an interdisciplinary context, where we have surfaced the processes of knowledge-building that intrigued us, individually and as an editorial team. Our collaboration has revealed how the concepts of space, time, mobility, and the methodological choices around comparison complicate research centred by globalising education. The earlier World Yearbook provocation of naming ‘comparative policy studies’ highlighted for us how contextualisation is an effect of knowledge formations. Being alert to space and time, and also scale, subjectivity and steering effects reveals how knowledge and narratives make forms of education and contribute to imperium, all of which unfold through policy scripts, embedded habits of mind and differentiated capacities for mobility and immobility. But as Cowan notes, continuing to disagree about labelling a field of research also indicates a live knowledge politics and invites us to clarify and codify the rules of engagement that define particular practices of knowledge building and the problematics, the field of concepts and methodological choices, which distinguish fields of research. Our perspective recognises that interdisciplinary inquiry requires re-disciplining rather than de-disciplining research (Bonnell & Hunt, 1999).

On this basis, we name the *2018 World Yearbook of Education* as a contribution to knowledge in comparative historical sociology of education. We take Cowan's point that studies of space and time can overcomplicate research in education, but suggest the broad concept of 'space-times of education' is a useful objectification. It permits investigations into the nature and effects of education that employ methodological choices selectively to avoid the encaging consequences of common-sense assumptions: for example, about education as schooling, about local, national or global scale of analysis, about particularities (e.g. age, gender, ability) of learning identities, about the purpose of education. We also show, through the chapters of this book, that comparative historical sociology, as a knowledge formation, has developed a range of concepts and methods, particularly different methods of comparison, for understanding education. The challenge is to turn those conceptual resources towards globalising education which, as Cowan suggests, means recognising how education and imperium inter-cross through the social organisation of knowledge and authority that mobilises education as a "'text" for transfer, translation and transformation' (2018, this vol. p. X).

Project

The historical sociology of globalising education is a project that requires us to write the present as history. We investigate space-times of education to better understand the inter-crossings between forms of education and formations of concepts, methods and practices that fix mobile and immobile boundaries of space and time. We target 'context', 'education' and 'narrative' as effects of imperium. The problem of 'context' is writ large when 'education in societies' no longer references national education systems, and 'education and societies' reference globalising 'one-world' narratives rather than the embedded histories and narratives, which distinguish national and regional knowledge cultures. The significance of 'education' becomes apparent as 'long-term social learning processes' are mediated by the politics of individual and educated identity. Such education is not reducible to 'schooling' but, rather, references how space-times are bordered and ordered by imperium. Education as an effect is realised through lived cultures and their processes of socialisation, and through period cultures, which steer learners through teachings. But it is through the borderland tensioned between these long-term social learning processes that 'education as text' unfolds as a specialist space-time, which is purposefully designed, resourced and rule-governed as 'schooling' (Hamilton, 1989). In the *Long Revolution*, for example, Raymond Williams (1976) focuses explicitly on this institutionalisation of culture and how education, like journalism, theatre and books, fixes cultures of selective tradition. Williams was writing a history of the present – 1960s Britain – by tracking the institutional forms and formations of concepts, methods and practices that produced the political revolution of democracy, the economic revolution of industrialised societies and which was unfolding

during the 1960s as a social revolution through the effects of mass literacy.

In this present, these effects of generalising literacy across peoples and places on a wide scale are now chicken and egg with globalising education and societies. We investigate globalising education by tracing narratives that reveal how the respatialisation of education and societies disturbs knowledge building. This intellectual move shows how patterns of reasoning and geographies of knowledge have material effects that govern everyday life (Bonnell & Hunt, 1999; Popkewitz, 2015). Marking out text and context, shows space to be communicative and eventful. While temporalities can seem fateful when narratives disturb the familiar experience of time, space, affect structures and social learning processes. Tracing narratives also pinpoints inter-crossings between education and imperium by revealing novel entanglements between knowledge and networks, where practices of governing rub-up against the socially embedded concepts, methods and practices that distinguish particular space-times of education and societies. These effects of knowledge building arise because narratives are not simply representations but social epistemologies. They take tangible form as processes of narrativity construct ‘constellations of relationships (connected parts) embedded in time and space, constituted by causal emplotment’ (Somers, 1994: 616). This distinctive form of cultural-political boundary work is central to education and imperium because it constructs meaning by contextualising everyday life with reference to particular boundaries of space and time. For as

... we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world ... it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identities ... whether [or not] we are social scientists or subjects of historical research, but that all of us come to *be* who we *are* (however ephemeral, multiple, and changing) by being located or locating ourselves (usually unconsciously) in social narratives *rarely of our own making* (Somers, 1994: 606).

Voice

In naming this project a comparative historical sociology, we also claim a vantage point for looking with a certain critical distance at globalising education. As Cowan suggests this claim to understand space-times of education is associated with a certain kind of voice; it offers academic interpretation to inform ‘views on what is a good society, what is good knowledge, and by extension what is a good education’ (p. X). Rather than accepting the space-time assumptions of ‘what works’ research, we look past its ‘happy land’ promised through pragmatic, action-oriented forms of visible learning and comparative education. We see its future-oriented gaze and, by looking through historical contexts, also see how the social organisation of education and imperium has become entangled with certain

economic logics and free-trade imperatives. We question this trajectory for education and societies because, despite the narratives of quick fix reform, there is persistent evidence of social embeddedness (eg. Brexit). This means long memories and our responsibilities to a long future are matters of fact for which education and imperium have long been and will continue to be accountable.

Through this project we glimpse our questions and concerns about globalising education as a collective project, not simply idiosyncratic interests. Our jolting realisation is that by working together our insights both reflect and are shaped by broader political, historical and theoretical currents, and in this way, also represent the *zeitgeist*. But with this glimpse of our present as history, we also recognise our complicity. We acknowledge the embeddedness and historicity of our research approaches, and how the ideas and ways of seeing that are appealing to us also have urgency now. And we name our project and claim its methodological choices because warrantable assertions are necessary if the academic voice as Cassandra is to speak truth to power.

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