

## COMPARATIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT

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### Summary

Comparison is a natural and instinctive human behavior, which, in a formalized communication way, began to emerge when travelers visiting 'new' places, reported and compared what they were seeing and finding.. Within the academic domain, *Comparative Studies* appeared in the 18th century to be followed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century by *Comparative Education*. *Comparative Education* refers to the study of relations that occur between education and society nationally and internationally with the objective of understanding advantages and disadvantages and assisting in local and universal educational problem resolution.

Comparative Education is more than a descriptive catalogue: it refers to the inter-cultural comparison of the structure, goals, methods, and performance of different education systems and socio-cultural correlations within such education systems. It has to take into account factors like sense of national entity and identity, social and economic circumstances, basic beliefs and traditions (including religious and cultural legacy), attitudes, status of progressive educational thought, linguistic implications, as well as geo-political and ideological backgrounds and levels of international comprehension. One of the most important purposes of Comparative Education is to understand the world in which we live. *Comparative Physical Education and Sport* is a derivative of Comparative Education. It also looks at comparison between education and sport systems from different perspectives (local, national, regional and

international), epochs, and reasoning on perceived and actual similarities and differences regarding structure, organization, administration, methods, amongst others. Those comparisons are developed in contexts where politics, economics, culture *inter alia*, have important roles.

This chapter introduces the reader to *Comparative Physical Education and Sport*, an area that started to attract and generate study and research in the 1970s. The chapter is structured in nine sections and commences with defining the terms that are the core of this field of study. The development of *Comparative Education* is then introduced and followed by an explanation of *Comparative Physical Education and Sport*. The fourth section considers methodological issues, which form one of the basic elements of this field. The fifth part is dedicated to the International Society for Comparative Physical Education and Sport (ISCPES), the establishment of which signified international institutionalization of comparative physical education and sport. Subsequent sections chronicle how this area of study has been globally spread through conferences, workshops and publications etc., addresses some of the challenges it faces as well as the future of this field of study. The literature review has been comprehensive with careful attention devoted to gathering information on those publications that have been influential in the field.

## **1. Introduction**

From the outset, it is important to define the relevant basic terms. 'Comparative' stems from the Latin word 'comparare', meaning to observe two or more things in order to discover any relationships or similarities and differences (from the most basic to the most complex). Some comparativists argue that a single item observed is sufficient as the basis for comparison because the comparison is made in the mind of the observer. Thus 'Comparative' implies a process of, or a study by, comparison. The term(s) *Physical Education and Sport* can either be used collectively to represent what in some countries represents structured forms of physical activity in school curricula or separately, where the term 'Sport' embraces out-of-school and/or beyond school formal and informal engagement in 'Sport for All' or 'Elite Sport' activity. In essence, the chapter presents an overview of the area of Comparative Physical Education and Sport as a contribution to its understanding and growth. It is an area of study that has had, and has, leading exponents in the scholarly world and hence, has become established as a widely acknowledged domain of academe, and for its propensity for problem resolution, and policy and practice formulation.

## **2. Comparative Education**

In any review of Comparative Physical Education and Sport, it is necessary to explore its origins, which lie in the field of Comparative Education.

Comparative Education is the study of the interactions that take place between education and society, not just at local and national level, but also internationally, with the purpose of understanding any advantages and disadvantages and problem resolution at local and universal levels. It is a science that by comparing the pedagogical facts in

its broadest way, from the past or present, domestic or foreign, addresses specific situations and/or attempts to establish pedagogical concepts or universal laws.

Comparative Education is not a discipline in itself, as a discipline is defined by its concept, aims and content, methodological procedure(s) and its own language. While it is clear that an objective does exist, the methods and the language are taken from one or several disciplines; comparative education is located at the intersection of all disciplines. Some authors indicate that comparative education can be defined as the science that has as its objectives the identification, analysis and explanation of any similarities between education 'facts' and/or its relationship with the environment (political, economical, social, cultural etc.); whereas there are others who argue that comparative education is more a process than a discipline, i.e., it is method(s)/study approaches centric, drawing from the theory and methodologies of well established disciplines/sub-disciplines.

## 2.1 Its Evolution

'Go to foreign countries and you will get to know the good things one possesses at home'

(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

The genesis of Comparative Education can be traced back to the Greek Herodotus (484-425 B.C.), the traveler Marco Polo (1254–1324), the prolific compiler and writer Jehan de Mandeville (1300-1383) and the cleric and travel stories compiler Samuel Purchas (1577–1626). Travelers had their stories and visions of the new places they were visiting and reporting back to either patrons or sponsors supporting their trips and of course, where relevant, to their own Societies. The first attempt to systematize Comparative Education was in the late 18th century under the influences of education officials such as: Victor Cousin (1792–1867) a French philosopher; and Thomas Arnold (1795–842) a British educator and historian. At the beginning of the 19th century, scholars in other sciences started to incorporate comparison in their respective objects of study, thus spawning the likes of Comparative Law (Montesquieu, 1747), Comparative Anatomy (Goethe, 1795), Comparative Linguistics (Bopp, 1816), and Comparative Literature (Ampère & Villemain, and Noel & Laplace, 1816).

The 'father' or initiator of Comparative Education was Jullien de Paris in the 19th century. According to Haag (1989) the beginning of modern comparative education in a broad sense dates from the publication of the book (*Esquisse et Vues Préliminaires d'un Ouvrage sur l'Éducation Comparée*, 1817, translation in Berlin 1954) by M.A. Jullien de Paris (1775-1848), but unfortunately, the book was only rediscovered in 1935 and presented to the public in 1943. According to Jullien, education comprises, like any art or science, observations and facts. Thus, it appears to be necessary, as in other areas of knowledge, to classify facts and observations in analytical charts that facilitate juxtapositions and comparison to infer certain principles and exact rules that could make education become an approximate positive science, just as Comparative Anatomy progressed the science of Anatomy, so research in Comparative Education would provide new means to progress the science of Education (Gautherin, 1993).

The contributions of Comparative Education from the 19th century (see table 1) can be summarized in three parts as:

- First: Studious traveler, open subjective observations and encyclopedic information
- Second: Various countries are studied, elementary public education is studied, and volumes of information started to appear in specialized publications and periodical reports.
- Third: Social sciences evolve contextual analysis of education; statistics offers descriptive approximations; historical and sociological factors help to understand the differences. The national character and its influence in the educational systems.

Johann Gottfried Herder German	Acknowledge the importance of study travels to school centres to collect pedagogical information
Friedrich A. Hetch German	Criticize the German teaching centre in theory and compares it with the English one centred in the child experience and development
Ernst G. Fischer German	Compares school institutions from Germany and England
C. Kruse German	Compares higher education, quality of knowledge and life style from France and Germany
Friedrich Thiersch German	Compares schools from Holland, France and Belgium
Friedrich Harkov German	Compares Statistics with economical data. Compares Germany with France and England. Proposes a plan to build the elementary school system. Recommends visits to schools by teachers in training
Lorenz Von Stein German	Compares the German, French and English systems. Proposes comparison more than juxtaposition
Wilhen Dilthey German	Relates comparative research with the design of an educational policy
John Russel English	Published two volumes of his travels through Germany and part of the Austrian Empire
Thomas Macaulay English	Applied comparative studies for political purposes and used the inductive method. Compared Scottish and British education. Supported public instruction
James Key English	Concerned for public education particularly for the excluded ones. Travelled in Europe and concluded that the level of development of elementary education varies according to the effect produced by the Reform
Joseph Kay English	Compares Germany and Switzerland to improve the educational level and the life style of poor people in England
Mathew Arnold English	Theorized about the validity of comparative studies, showing the incidence of diverse factors in the configuration of educational systems, such as: history tradition, character and national differences, geography, economy, and societal structure
Cesar Auguste Basset - French	Influenced Jullien de Paris. Proposed the selection of a university representative, free of nationalist and pedagogical prejudices who could travel to other countries, observe education systems, compare and presents facts in his reality
Victor Cousin French	After his trip to Prussia presented a model oriented towards borrowing and copies from the goods that could exist in Prussia or in any other country
P.E. Levaseseur French	His main works confronted statistical data about the teaching in primary level in various European countries. Used dynamic comparison.
Horace Mann USA	Described school organization in 7 countries and proposed not to mere copy teaching models but to evaluate educational practices always in relationship with the context and adapting the information about the educative system and its socio-cultural and political reality
Alexander Dallas Bache - USA	Visited different educational institutions in Europe. Applied case studies based on interviews, legal texts and documents

Henry Barnard USA	First director of the National Bureau of Education. Reported about the European education methods
William T Harris USA	Expanded Barnard's contributions. Deepened the validity of comparisons based on Statistics
Simón Rodríguez Venezuelan	Visits and studies different countries in Europe and America. Influenced the education systems in several Latin American countries
Andres Bello Venezuelan	His concern was always education, his dedication towards teaching themes from higher education to primary schools and his interest to popularize the knowledge of sciences
Leo Tolstoi Russian	Travelled to various countries and concluded that the educational realities of those countries did not adapt to the Russian reality, so a own model should be created
Domingo Sarmiento Argentinian	Travelled to Europe and USA. Returned to his country convinced about the dynamic power of education for the development of a country
José Pedro Varela Uruguayan	Travelled to different countries and compared educational systems

Table 1: Representatives and Contributions of Comparative Education from the 19th Century

In the 20th century, the development of Comparative Education was much more extensive, flourishing in many academic schools and featuring in higher education institutions' curricula. The following trends of development in this field are evident in:

- Comparative studies with practical purposes
- Reforms or improvement in the teaching process provide motivation to study experiences from other countries
- National studies to solve a problem or international studies to know more or improve education
- Exchange and global understanding
- No imitation but adaptations, underlying conditions are studied
- Descriptive studies of foreign experiences, it does not go towards juxtaposition
- Encyclopedic information, it reports useful information
- Countries most frequently studied were: Germany, France, England and USA

Studies about comparative education are well discussed in the literature and various World Congresses (e.g. the World Council of Comparative Educations Societies - WCCES). Its scope continues to grow in the so-called globalization era: for example, UNESCO interest in how education systems operate worldwide is well known; and education features in the United Nations Organization's *Millennium Goals*.

### 3. Comparative Physical Education and Sport

Thus, ...this is a first step, designed to begin to insure that the history, philosophy, and international (and / or comparative) aspects of the field of physical education and sport as a growing profession and discipline will be faithfully recorded, investigated, analyzed, interpreted, composed, and requested“ (Zeigler, Howell & Trekell, 1971). (In Haag & Holzweg, 2006, p. 37)

As an academic area of study, the field of Comparative Physical Education and Sport is relatively young, dating from the 1970s (see for example, Haag, 1998, Hardman, 2008, Semotiuk, 2005). No one can deny that since historical times, there were aspects that societies or individuals observed and were presented or discussed among them such as comparison between the education received by Spartans and the Athenians and the place that physical education had in their respective socio-cultural systems. The works of the Prussian Leopold Berchtold, who in 1789 included physical education and sport in a 400-page questionnaire for travelers, and the Frenchman Marc Antoine Jullien, who in 1817, published a series of questions on public education that included physical education in European countries (Hardman, 2008) are also known. Vergez (2010) refers to a UNESCO (1956) document that presented a descriptive and comparative report on physical education in fourteen countries. The term *Comparative Physical Education and Sport* featured in a book edited by Zeigler, Howell, and Trebell in 1971; the first book specifically on *Comparative Physical Education and Sport*, authored by Bennett, Howell and Simri was published in 1975. Comparative Physical Education and Sport came to be officially established with the creation of the International Society for Comparative Physical Education and Sport in 1978.

Comparative Physical Education and Sport allows knowing and understanding the educational situation in diverse settings (countries, regions, cultures and societies). Knowledge of other educational systems serves to foster a deeper vision and a better understanding of one's own system, as intimated in the Tacitus (cited in Bennett et al, 1975) observation "To know thyself, compare thyself to others" and Goethe's assertion that "...Self-knowledge comes from knowing other men". Knowledge of other systems can enhance comprehension of major tendencies in physical education and sport and use or adapt them to the needs of one's own society. It can be a helpful tool to motivate and create innovatory practices as well to inform policy-making. It also opens a door to greater international awareness of the processes within physical education and sport and hence, promotes better understanding, exchange of experiences, collaborative partnerships and cooperation. The purposes of this field of inquiry are numerous and encompass the following:

- Systematic examination of sport/physical education/physical activity [S/PE/PA] in society
- Developing an understanding the interaction between S/PE/PA and culture
- Appreciating cultural empathy and the importance of international views
- Understanding the benefits and shortcomings of cross-cultural/cross-national borrowing
- Expanding upon the knowledge of one's own system of S/PE/PA

Robinsohn (1980, in Haag, 1989) formulated six areas related to the content of comparative education: problem and case studies, regional investigations, and surveys related to schools and education; trend analysis on a worldwide basis establishing tendencies; economic aspects of education and planning in the educational system; performance of educational institutions; the social and political functions of education; and similarities and differences in regard to education from a Marxist philosophy point of view. The latter could be adapted nowadays to include different philosophical views of the education system.

Haag (1989) summarized a series of advantages of comparative studies in education: a) facilitation of support and international cooperation; b) evaluation by comparing other systems; c) identification of conditions elsewhere that can be potentially improved in one's own system; and d) identification of general principles in regard to education. It is important to remember the educational purpose of sport. It is necessary to compare with other subsystems (Federations/Associations) that have achieved success, and to share knowledge, as coaches have been doing. "Simply having the opportunity to sit and study what another coach is trying to do and what problems are being overcome is a source of constructive thought and ideas" (Low, 1989, p. 10).

Generally, the field of comparative physical education and sport contributes to understanding and networking with international cooperation, because it allows observation and evaluation of physical education and sport systems. *Inter alia*, it helps to gain insight into socio-cultural, geo-political, historical and educational conditions of nations, and in return it can contribute to amelioration, evaluation or appreciation of one's own system. There are aspects that might be borrowed but such borrowing has to ensure that the aspects are indeed needed by society and that they are suitably adapted to meet with local realities in place.

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## Biographical Sketches

**Rosa López de D'Amico** obtained her PhD from the University of Sydney, Australia. Professor at the Universidad Pedagógica Experimental Libertador – Maracay, Venezuela. Coordinator of the Research Center “Estudios en Educación Física, Salud, Deporte, Recreación y Danza” (EDUFISADRED). Her research focused on physical education, comparative studies in sport, sport policy, leadership, culture and gender. Publications in Spanish, English and French. Editorial board member of various academic journals. She has more than 60 referee articles, 15 books and 15 chapters in books. In 2007 received the highest research award given by the Venezuelan Council of Universities. She is accredited in the highest level at the national researcher scheme established by the Ministry of Science and Technology. She was Director of Research and Graduate Studies at UPEL-Maracay (2003 – 2007); State Sport Director (2009 – 2011); and coordinated the establishment of the first doctorate in the area of Physical Activity and Sport

in Venezuela and contributes as a Member of the Venezuelan Committee for Evaluation and Accreditation of Academic Programs and Higher Institutions. Responsibilities at international organizations: International Council for Sport Science and Physical Education (ICSSPE) Chair of the International Committee for Sport Pedagogy (ICSP) (2008 – 2012) and Editorial Board Member (2008 - 2016), Executive Board member (2013 – 2016); Vice President of the International Society for Comparative Studies in Physical Education and Sport (2008 – 2014); Vice President of the International Association of Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women (IAPESGW 2009 - 2013); President of the Latin America Sport Management Association (ALGEDE 2009 - 2013); Secretary for the Latin American Association for Socio Cultural Studies (ALESDE 2008 – 2014)

**Walter King Yan Ho** obtained his Master and PhD degree in Sydney University with physical education as his major study. His expertise focuses on sport sociology, comparative study, curriculum development and pedagogy study. Walter had ten years working experience as physical education teacher in primary and secondary schools. While he was working in the Sport Development Board and Curriculum Development Institute respectively in Hong Kong from 1995 to 2002, he managed different territory wide program such as the GO!Sport Program and kept-in-charge of the Learning to Learn curriculum reform project in physical education. He is the President of the International Society for Comparative Physical Education and Sport (2008–2016), Vice-President in Education of the International Council for Sport Science and Physical Education (2008-2016) and Vice-President of FIEP for Asia. He works as Assistant Professor of the Faculty of Education in University of Macau. He is an active researcher in various research and developmental projects that cover areas in teaching of physical education, fitness and health development, academic programs in university and sports education. He chairs the collaborative and exchange works with Tianjin University of Sport, postgraduate program in physical education, sport studies, fitness and health education, extra-curricular activities as well as strategic plan for sport development in government and university. Walter has also been a good contributor of papers on sport globalization, reform works in physical education, comparative works in sport studies and pedagogy during the past few years.