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INTRODUCTION

Culture and education: looking back to culture through education

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Introduction

Culture and education are complex phenomena and their causal relationship is of a "chicken or the egg" character. There is of course a great debate over what constitutes both "education" and "culture", let alone their relationship with one another. The essays in this issue of *Paedagogica Historica* are not consistent in their conceptualisations. That inconsistency is a virtue, because it points to the extraordinary range of historical phenomena that may be included in discussions of education and culture. One way or another social transformations are powerfully affected by cultural developments, some of which may be clearly thought about in terms of the impacts of deliberate and incidental educational activity. In the process individuals, communities of various kinds, the state and collectivities and communities beyond the state are constructed.

When we examine human history in these terms, another theme emerges: the ways that interactions between cultural groups and ideas, and educational practices and institutions become crucial factors in understanding and explaining social change. This process, be it focused on individuals or society more broadly, often has profound effects. Some may be beneficial, but rarely are they less than complex. Sometimes they may be threatening. A number of essays in this volume discuss *transnational*, mainly beneficial interactions. It is but one of the ways that interaction produces new ideas, practices, and institutions – indeed, social change.

Whether intentional or not, the history of humanity is one of interactions. Significant issues for this process are surely those of culture and education. Sometimes the discussion occurs in terms of "civilisations". Any understanding of the historical emergence and trajectories of civilisations is barely possible without strong attention being given to "interaction". Some of the forms in which this occurs include political competition, attempts to redefine cultural, even geographical borders, and boundaries. There may be remarkable periods of stability for cultural and educational formations and the role they play in the making of particular ethno-national-religious communities – but then there is seemingly inevitable challenge, reform, sometimes regression – always change.

The articles in this issue of *Paedagogica Historica* were selected from the papers presented at the meeting of the International Standing Conference of the History of Education

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(ISCHE37) held in Istanbul in 2015. There are very few major cities in the world whose history over the millennia so clearly demonstrates the interaction theme, where the material evidence of cultural challenge, adaptation, and transformation is so clearly in evidence. Istanbul has an indigenous, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, and post-Ottoman national history. Its signal world influence as a cosmopolitan city, as a place in which many different peoples meet and met, traded, worshipped, warred, and worked, over a very long period is barely paralleled. As a consequence, the cultural and educational institutions and practices of Istanbul through the centuries have deeply fascinating genealogies.

The ISCHE37 meeting, which made culture and education its organising theme, found Istanbul a most appropriate venue. Indeed, the venue raised the question of the significance of cities as such, as part of any exploration of the historical connections and explorations of culture and education. The designated place of the meeting was one of Islamic civilisation's higher level educational institutions, the *madrasa*, Sahn-i Seman, which later became, as a result of the influence of the West, Istanbul University, reformed along European lines.

Culture can be defined broadly as well as narrowly. In this issue of *Paedagogica Historica* we think of it simply as a society's way of life and way of thinking. Cultural elements, such as language, religion, symbols, and routines interact through wars, migrations, explorations; the influence of travellers, merchants, holy men and women, philosophers, teachers, soldiers, rulers, citizens and subjects, and more. Educational institutions, educators, and educational materials count among the most effective agents of cultural development, change, and perhaps even "transfer".

The programme of the ISCHE37 meeting asked its participants to do more than examine the historical relations between education and culture in a general way. These questions were also asked: What roles do educational reforms and educational borrowing play in cultural change? What are the roles of educational institutions, educators, and educational materials in cultural formation and transformation? How have education and elements of culture such as language, religion, symbols, and routines influenced each other historically?

During the conference 347 participants from 43 different countries came together to discuss the questions and suggest answers.[1] Three keynote speakers set the tone of the conference. Tim Allender from the University of Sydney brought the essential issues of gender and colonialism to the attention of the meeting in his paper "Learning Femininity in Colonial India, 1820–1932". His paper appears in this post-conference journal issue. Fella Moussaoui-El Kechai from University of Algeria 2 discussed "French Colonial Policy and Algerian Elites: Between Confrontation and Reactions (1830–1962)". The third keynote speech was given by Ali Arslan from Istanbul University on the "Turkish Education System from Islamic Civilisation to Western Civilisation".

As is easily seen, the holding of ISCHE37 in Turkey had the excellent effect of making the Islamic world a major focus of deliberation. This had not occurred in any previous meeting of the International Standing Conference of the History of Education.

Four well-known scholars in the field from different countries produced a roundtable discussion under the title "Heroes and Education". Adelina Arredondo from Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Morelos talked about "Heroines in Campaign: Women Teachers of the Post-Revolutionary Mexico". The title of Craig Campbell's paper (University of Sydney) was "Oh No! Not the Heroes of Education Again! But Maybe …". From Yıldız Technical

[1]See the conference website for the whole programme at http://2015.ische.org/.

University Mustafa Gündüz contributed "A Pioneer Educator from Ottomanism to Arab Nationalism: Mustafa Satı Bey [Satı el-Husri] (1880–1968)". To conclude, Kate Rousmaniere from Miami University talked about "Margaret Haley: Civic Hero". Along with this inspiring and entertaining roundtable, there was a well-attended pre-conference workshop on a theme which grew in importance during the course of the meeting: "The Concept of the Transnational". In the meeting proper, four standing working groups met and 23 panels were convened. A total of 341 papers by individuals or research partners were presented.

Six sub-themes attempted to organise conference deliberations. The first was *cultural paradigms and education*. Suggested issues for discussion here included the different purposes, importance, and values of education within cultures; individualist or collective cultural values and the effect of these on education; the influence and understanding in different cultures of concepts such as hierarchy, equality, freedom, and democracy, and the ways such ideas may have been "transferred" through education; the role of education in cultural change; and the process by which acceptance and rejection of educational elements occurred as a result of cultural interaction and education "borrowing".

The second sub-theme was *agents of intercultural interaction*. Under this theme, pioneer educators of cultural exchange; educational organisations and institutions, teachers' associations, education journals, the media, and international organisations were examined. *Language and education* was the third theme that included discussion of the language of instruction in ancient, medieval, and the modern periods; the effects of the language of instruction on various cultures; the development of mother-tongue education and pioneering individuals and institutions; language reforms and education; and foreign language education and cultural interaction.

The fourth theme was *religion and education*: temple education in early Mesopotamia and Egypt; education in ancient China, India, and Turkey; early religious Jewish education; the establishment of Christian education theory, organisation, and schools in Antioch, Alexandria, Rome; cathedral schools, universities, and scholastic education; Islamic education and the *madrasah*; the process of transition to lay education; perceptions of secular education in different cultures; and cultural change and laity and secular education. The fifth sub-theme of the conference drew attention to specific cultural elements that included educational symbols, heroes, stories, and myths, examined from an historical perspective. Power symbols such as the administrators' or teachers' room; school and classroom design; the meaning and use of symbols in the education environment such as flag, cross, crescent, tughra, star, poster, and badge; and the use of symbols, myths, and stories about people and events that conveyed a message about what is valued in the culture.

The last sub-theme was about *rituals and routines*: flag ceremonies, morning ceremonies, reciting a pledge or national anthem; national holidays and special day celebrations and other events which became a tradition or habit rather than a necessity; how educational rituals and routines occurred throughout the centuries; and how rituals and routines constructed culture and values through education.

As can be seen, the conference sub-themes covered a broad spread of subjects, times, and spaces. This special issue of *Paedagogica Historica* does not hope to represent all elements of the themes and sub-themes. Though the articles selected here are a very small sample of many excellent papers presented at the ISCHE37 meeting, each of them nevertheless addresses some important issue connected to a discussion of culture and education.

Nelleke Bakker's paper concerns the culture of knowledge production in the selection and teaching of children with learning and behavioural problems in Dutch schools from 1949 to the 1980s. She provides an example of how contemporary psychological science helped transform special education. Twentieth-century reforms in education redefined the teaching profession, children, and families, and the cultural impact was often profound.

Kinda Alsamara discusses the development of western education and the confusion of associated terminologies in Egypt. She shows how language and translation affected cultural interaction and knowledge transfer. We can follow the impact of war and travel as they indirectly operate as agents of intercultural interaction, and on the transferring of scientific and educational ideas from Europe to the Arab world. In turn we see how important education was in the emergence of Arab nationalism in Egypt as it fell under English control as the Ottoman state grew weak.

Sarah Van Ruyskensvelde, Karen Hulstaert, and Marc Depaepe write about cultural transfer between colonial power and colony. Ideas and practices relating to discipline, punishment, and schooling are adapted in the Belgian colony of the Congo during the twentieth century. They emphasise continuity and change in routines and rituals, always important components of culture. The arguments provide a reflection on the sub-theme *cultural paradigms and education*. It also makes a theoretical contribution by discussing the grammars and semantics of schooling and the process they refer to as "educationalisation".

Two articles consider the role of women in two different cultures and societies. Helen Proctor and Heather Weaver show us how a women's magazine can function as cultural agent in order to instruct mothers of schoolchildren in Australia. The agents of educational and cultural transformation are many. Meryem Karabekmez argues that the cultural roles of Ottoman women began to change during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She shows the changes through case studies of two women teachers and how they acquired their social positions and status. In the then westernising Ottoman state, women's education gained importance. The paper emphasises not what men did for women, but what women did for other women, their fellow women. Such developments occurred as part of the cultural and educational changes associated with increasing women's rights and the defining of modern citizenship in the Republic of Turkey.

Citizenship education is an important element of relating education to a developing national culture, of the attempt to reconcile a minority indigenous culture to the hegemonic culture of national majority. Otso Kortekangas investigates elementary education as it was provided to Sami in early twentieth-century Finland, Norway, and Sweden using the analytical concepts "useful citizen" and "useful citizenship". Assimilation in part produced by national educational policies threatened Sami culture and the continuity of their traditional communities and livelihoods. Sami face a struggle to continue their own culture and identity, in a way that produces citizens equal to those of the majorities in Finland, Norway, or Sweden.

Another important element of culture is *religion*. Robyn Sneath's paper won the 2015 ISCHE Early Career Researcher prize. She gives us an example of struggle between government and an ethno-religious minority in a period where Protestants and Catholics dominated the main struggle for representation, power, and justice in the Canadian state. Sneath shows how minor Christian groups, in this case the Mennonites, differed greatly

from more powerful groups in their views of leadership and life, finding it difficult to sustain their own culture. Education became extraordinarily important to such groups as they sought to maintain and preserve their identities.

International associations can be effective *agents of intercultural interaction*. Betul Batır gives us an example from Turkey. She tells the story of the International Student Union meetings which took place in Pest and Warsaw in 1924 through the eyes of Turkish students. It makes a different contribution to the study of culture and education. The author points to the significance of international relations in education in the context of the aftermath of the First World War. For Turkey, the development of its post-secondary vocational schools and student unions was not only about nation-building after the collapse of the Ottoman state, but about representing the new nation in a positive light to the international community. Batır discusses the emergence of Turkey's main student union, and the recognition and assistance given to it by the Turkish state as student leaders went to international student congresses in the 1920s. They represented and promoted the culture and educational organisation of modern Turkey, the new nation as a full participant in international affairs. Student unionism had a significant role to play in international relations in the 1920s.

Carsten Heinze and Kristin Straube-Heinze address the question of the "hero" as a cultural construct that may help produce inspired and compliant citizens. Nazi Germany provides the example. They write about the discursive construction of heroism in school primers and readers for national socialist indoctrination in schools. They highlight the ways that deliberate cultural reconstruction may be attempted using textbooks, curricula, teachers, and schools.

Anja Giudici and Sandra Grizelj write about the relationship between the state, languages, and schooling. Their analyses disrupt uncontested memory in monolingual nation states. They discuss the significance of the 1914–45 period for multilingualism, and how it became part of Swiss national identity and culture. They address the vexed question of how language policy was utilised in countries that possessed many autonomous administrative and culturally distinctive regions as the goal of the unified nation was pursued.

In another example of ambitious cultural and identity re-shaping through the influence of the school, Tim Allender examines how female identities, in a predominantly non-white colonial setting, were variously constructed over a 145-year time period. The period of British Empire rule saw sometimes remarkable "successes" in the bestowing of new female identities upon some young women in India. Babur State, with Islamic law and an embedded caste system, sees gradual cultural erosion through the effect of British education. In turn it impacts developing women's rights in India. There is a parallel here with the argument of Meryem Karabekmez in her paper as discussed above.

Finally, Justyna Gulczynska draws a picture of secondary school students' cultural identity and "double personality" under communism in the 1945–89 period in Poland. The controllers of Poland's middle schools attempted an education that sought to explain and consolidate the state's political agenda. This was not very successful, especially, as was the case in Poland, where a rival institution to that of the state, the Catholic Church, provided an alternative culture, a way of interpreting the world which enabled the development of a rival ideal young person as family member and good citizen.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Filiz Meşeci Giorgetti is associate professor of the history of education at the Education Sciences Department, Istanbul University, Turkey. Her teaching and research interests include the history of Turkish education of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Her historical research has focused on the roots of educational rituals, and the educational politics of the early Republican period in Turkey. Her latest book is the first book in Turkey about educational rituals: *Eğitim Ritüelleri* (Istanbul: Yeni İnsan, 2016). Her current research project is writing the history of one of the important lycée of İstanbul. She was a member of the organising committee of the ISCHE 2015 Istanbul conference.

Craig Campbell is an honorary associate professor of the history of education at the University of Sydney. His research has concentrated on the role of schooling for the growth of the Australian middle class. He has written and co-written eight books addressing different aspects of the social history of education, including secondary education, school choice, and adolescence and youth. His latest book, with Helen Proctor, is the first general history of Australian school education published in 35 years: *A History of Australian Schooling* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2014). He has convened two ISCHE conferences in Australia and is a former member of the ISCHE Executive Committee. He is currently co-editor of the *History of Education Review* and DEHANZ, the *Dictionary of Educational History in Australia and New Zealand* (online). His current research project is a biography of Jean Blackburn, a hero of Australian educational history.

Ali Arslan completing his doctorate in 1992 with the thesis "Transition from Darulfunun to the University". He began his work as a research assistant in the department of the modern age and the history of the Turkish Republic in 1987. In 1990 he went to the UK to continue his research. Between October 1992 and December 1993 he worked as an education consultant in the Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1995 he started to deliver classes as an assistant professor in the department of the history of the Turkish Republic. In November 1997 he became an associate professor in the same department and a professor of history in 2005. He was chair of the department of history in Istanbul University between 2011 and 2014. Ali Arslan was head of the organising committee of the ISCHE 2015 Istanbul conference.