

Eckhardt Fuchs and Eugenia Roldán Vera, eds.

The Transnational in the History of Education: Concepts and Perspectives

Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. 302 pp.

This edited volume by Eckhardt Fuchs and Eugenia Roldán Vera offers an overview on possible approaches to transnational studies in the history of education, along with exemplified case studies. Commencing the newly initiated International Standing Conference for the History of Education (ISCHE) book series, *Global Histories of Education*, Fuchs and Roldán Vera present in their introduction a helpful overview on established sub-perspectives within transnational research and relevant works connected to the respective branches. They not only describe their understanding of “transnational history,” but also historicise that understanding and connect it to the history of scientific thinking within the educational discipline before highlighting currently dominant research fields. They then describe current relevant theories and methods, which, from this reviewer’s perspective, are nearly all exemplified in the following chapters. While serving its purpose, the introduction could have nonetheless benefited from a discussion on both the potentials and disadvantages of all these respective approaches. Sometimes the reviewer misses literature from more diverse discursive contexts. In the section on Gender, for example, there are no German studies referenced despite its particularly vivid discussion and research tradition.

The remainder of the book is divided into nine chapters written by nine leading scholars in the field. Christine Mayer’s chapter focuses on transfer relations during the emergence of national mass schooling systems, what she proposes to research by combining cultural transfer studies and *histoire croisée*. The idea of mixing different approaches and her theoretical discussion are well developed, although the author could have elaborated more on her specific example.

Dorena Caroli deals with the question how the “*crèche*” day nurseries emerged and spread throughout Europe. She starts by reconstructing the French national case before observing its further dissemination, looking at how private actors, newspapers, and world exhibitions supported the spread of the idea. This chapter is innovative in broadening the scope of possible research themes, moving beyond supranational institutes, pedagogical classics, reform pedagogy, and mass school systems.

In chapter 4, Rebecca Rogers brings together empire studies with transnational studies, pointing out how the two can be profitably connected. Rogers reflects not only on the way transnational perspectives came into the British and French scientific discourse, but also offers an innovative discussion about how transnational questions were involved in her own research work. She then convincingly shows how teacher travels, a reoccurring theme in her work, and imperial studies can be understood in more detail with the integration of transnational insights. She exemplifies what this means by concretely re-reading her own work on the teacher Eugénie Luce.

Tim Allender then argues that transnational studies sometimes blur power relations, too often taken as a given, instead of addressing them. Categorising transnational research and relations as “modern and postcolonial” (125–126)—which he

points out is often done—would create a misleading image of colonial times, where relations were not strictly hierarchical. In what follows, Allender presents Indian research, conducted in both contemporary as well as in colonial times, which he argues subverts modernistic expectations and contains non-western traditions of transnational thinking.

Elsie Rockwell's chapter focuses on questioning how different French colonial education projects vary according to specific persons and contexts of adaptation, thereby also deconstructing a simplified, one-directional understanding between center and periphery in colonial times. Rockwell describes how ideas on the adaptation of education in the colonies followed from a certain line of thinking about how this episteme changed over time *and* in respect to the context within which the adaptation processes were situated. Comparing two "adaptations of adaptation" (169–174) she also describes how these experiences influenced the understanding of adaptation in the colonial center, successfully demonstrating how transnational perspectives allow for new considerations.

The following chapters by Barnita Bagchi and Joyce Goodman focus on feminist actors and their understandings of transnationalism. Bagchi discusses how the Indian author Toru Dutt deals in her writing with the transnational constitution of her upbringing and her multi-language capacities, framing it as a specific "vernacular cosmopolitanism" (193), as a value driven interpretation of her own position and role within a multi-fractured world. This intersectional interpretation of the transnational invites the reader to think about ways individuals interpret the transnational constellation they live(d) in. Goodman's case study focuses on Yoshi Kasuya, a scholar working in comparative education around 1900, whose interpretation of national contexts and relations can be read as an early transnational interpretation of these connections. From these studies on transnational identities and worldviews, the book turns towards processes of knowledge acquisition on the supranational level. Damiano Matasci and Joëlle Droux map supranational institutions and their connections and describe specific instances where supranational agencies used and diffused knowledge acquired by private initiatives. This allows for a more diverse understanding of the transnational, which often speaks less on private initiatives and their agency.

The book ends with Thomas Popkewitz's concluding chapter poetically criticising western perspectives as unreflectively inscribed in transnational and comparative thinking. Within the volume certain interesting points stand out. The authors ask how to understand the transnational, which fields it should be connected to, and what types of individual understandings of the transnational are circulating. There are gaps as well, for more diverse actors and spaces could be considered. Eastern Europe and South American transnational constellations are missing, as well as more diverse individual interpretations of the transnational. This might be the result of a focus on English as the core language for the book, which is implied in the series introduction, as well as in the book itself. Maybe the editors could consider organising translation funds or other means to encourage a broader field of possible contributions. Though agreeing on one lingua franca allows for a shared discussion it unintentionally reduces participation, by which certain areas (Western Europe and its

connections shaped by the colonial past), certain actors (academics and middle class individuals), or connected fields (imperial, comparative studies and studies on supra-national institutions) are more likely discussed. Overcoming this restriction might best be enabled by supporting language diversity.

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Marcel Lajeunesse, Éric Leroux et Marie D. Martel, dir.

Pour une histoire des femmes bibliothécaires au Québec. Portraits et parcours de vies professionnelles

Québec : Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2020. 200 pp.

Un tout récent ouvrage portant sur les femmes bibliothécaires au Québec, publié sous la direction de Marcel Lajeunesse, Éric Leroux et Marie D. Martel, vient de paraître aux Presses de l'Université du Québec, un ouvrage qui s'attarde sur ces femmes « compétentes et entrepreneures, exigeantes et déterminées, à l'œuvre dans les bibliothèques, établissements qu'elles ont », comme l'écrit en préface Jean-Louis Roy, « créés, régénérés, dirigés, fait rayonner » (p. viii et x).

Dans un premier chapitre, l'historienne Andrée Lévesque évoque l'apport d'Èva Circé-Côté, « première bibliothécaire de la Ville de Montréal » (p. 7). « Fidèle à sa vision d'une bibliothèque ouverte à la littérature » et notamment soucieuse d'en faire « un lieu de savoir, indépendant des autorités en place, ouvert à tous » (p. 18), elle aura « joué un rôle difficilement estimable dans l'évolution de la vie culturelle québécoise » (p. 24).

Marcel Lajeunesse s'attarde ensuite à Marie Sollace Saxe, « une figure de proue dans le monde des bibliothèques publiques du Québec » (p. 29). Il fait état de ses réalisations à la bibliothèque de la ville de Westmount, notamment des changements novateurs pour l'époque qu'elle y a introduits : ajout, entre autres apports, d'un service de référence ainsi que de locaux et collections mieux adaptés pour les enfants.

L'historienne, écrivaine et « bibliothécaire de carrière Marie-Claire Daveluy » fait ensuite l'objet d'un chapitre rédigé par la professeure Johanne Biron. Madame Daveluy qui fut, en 1917, la première femme à faire partie de la Société historique de Montréal, aura « dans une très large mesure, contribué à la professionnalisation du rôle des bibliothécaires. » (p. 45). La création de l'École de bibliothécaires en 1937 reste, par ailleurs, l'une des grandes contributions de cette instigatrice des bibliothèques scolaires de Montréal.

C'est à Hélène Grenier, « pionnière des bibliothèques scolaires à Montréal » (p. xii) qu'Éric Leroux, professeur à l'École de bibliothéconomie et des sciences de l'information de l'Université de Montréal, consacre le chapitre 4 du livre. Cette érudite fort active devient officière de l'Ordre national du Québec, nomination qui souligne notamment sa contribution à la démocratisation de la lecture au Québec.