

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION: GEORGE BEREDAY'S CONTRIBUTIONS

PANORAMA HISTÓRICO DA EDUCAÇÃO COMPARADA: AS CONTRIBUIÇÕES DE GEORGE BEREDAY

RESUMEN HISTÓRICO DE LA EDUCACIÓN COMPARATIVA: CONTRIBUCIONES DE GEORGE BEREDAY

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ABSTRACT: This article seeks to present an angle of the historical panorama drawn by Comparative Education, according to the documental bibliographic review carried out by the authors and to present the proposal of a comparative Bereday method. Initially, our methodological search turned to the different divisions into phases or periods proposed by classical authors. Soon after, we chose to bring the course of comparative education subdivided into decades and including how it also happened in the Brazilian scenario. In the following topic, our study focused on bringing the systematized methodology for comparative analysis proposed by George F. Z. Bereday, classic author of Comparative Education, whose legacy we can still recurrently observe in today's comparative studies.

KEYWORDS: Comparative education. Comparative study. Bereday.

RESUMO: O presente artigo busca apresentar um ângulo do panorama histórico traçado pela Educação Comparada, segundo a revisão bibliográfica documental realizada pelos autores e apresentar a proposta de um método comparativo de Bereday. Inicialmente nossa busca metodológica se voltou para as diferentes divisões em fases ou períodos propostas pelos autores clássicos. Logo a seguir optamos por trazer o transcorrer da educação comparada subdividindo em décadas e incluindo como ela se deu também no cenário brasileiro. No tópico seguinte, nosso estudo se debruçou em trazer a metodologia sistematizada para análises comparativas proposta por George F. Z. Bereday, autor clássico da Educação Comparada, cujo legado ainda podemos observar de forma recorrente nos estudos comparados da atualidade.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação comparada. Estudo comparado. Bereday.

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RESUMEN: Este artículo busca presentar un ángulo del panorama histórico trazado por la Educación Comparada, según la revisión bibliográfica documental realizada por los autores y presentar la propuesta de un método comparativo de Bereday. Inicialmente, nuestra búsqueda metodológica se centró en las diferentes divisiones en fases o períodos propuestos por los autores clásicos. Poco después, optamos por traer el curso de la educación comparada subdividido en décadas e incluyendo cómo sucedió también en el escenario brasileño. En el siguiente tema, nuestro estudio se centró en traer la metodología sistematizada para el análisis comparativo propuesta por George F. Z. Bereday, autor clásico de Educación Comparada, cuyo legado aún podemos observar de manera recurrente en los estudios comparativos actuales.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación comparada. Estudio comparativo. Bereday.

Introduction

Comparison is a human cognitive procedure that is usually present when people need to make decisions about different aspects of their daily life, whether to choose products and services, to satisfy basic needs, or to choose professional, political, cultural and social options. According to Schriewer, (2018), the first form compares simple operations; the second compares complex operations and is driven by the interest of discovery, studying specific processes and relationships and having a theoretical-methodological framework to define its categories of analysis. Thus, the knowledge of the other and the comparison with oneself, establishing a relationship of value, becomes an ever-present mental action (FRANCO, 2000) and which, more than establishing differences, also establishes identities. In this way, Comparative Education presents itself as an important instrument in the educational field, being an ally in the elaboration of educational policies.

National education systems are the object of study in Comparative Education (CE). Curiosity with the educational practices of other nations was present when education ceased to be a monopoly of the church and started to be directed by governmental bodies at the national level, that is, it started to be guided by political acts. Thus, according to Bereday (1972, p. 30, our translation): "the need arose to systematically explore the quality of foreign schools as a means of evaluating the educational system itself. As long as this need lasts, there will be no lack of demand for Comparative Education services".

The comparatist has the task of looking for similarities and particularities of a specific element in two or more places, or even in a single place, but in different historical times and that can somehow contribute to reflections that help in the problems presented in their own educational context.

According to Bereday (1972, p. 32, our translation) “it is the knowledge of ourselves, born from the knowledge of others that constitutes the most beautiful lesson that Comparative Education can provide”. All this comparative movement must happen without homogenization, since each context exists shaped by social, historical, political, cultural, economic and educational circumstances, therefore, they are unique and must be respected and looked at in an ethical way. This dialogue between the self and the other synthesizes the entire comparative analysis, since “understanding others and understanding ourselves is having in hand the two ingredients of comparison” (BEREDAY, 1972, p. 33, our translation).

The origin of Comparative Education goes back to the 18th century, but it is in 1817, in Paris, that its emergence is attributed to Marc-Antoine Jullien, known as the father of CE. In this article, we will bring studies where some authors considered as classics, who were responsible for the deepening and structuring of CE historically, are cited, among them are Matthew Arnold; Victor Cousin; Friedrich Schneider; Michael Sadler; Isaac Kandel; Robert Ulich; Alexandre Vexliard; Nicholas Hans; Joseph Lauwerys; Pedro Rossello; George Bereday among others. In our documentary methodological search, we came across studies brought by contemporary commentators that stand out and contribute to the expansion of comparative studies, among which we can mention Lourenço Filho; Suely Bonitatibus; Antônio Ferreira; Antônio Nóvoa, among others.

Some movements were also designing Comparative Education worldwide. Schneider launched the first newspaper in Germany in 1931. Classical authors published books that are still highlighted today, being translated into several languages. Several organizations have been establishing themselves worldwide, we can mention: the SBED – Brazilian society of comparative education; SUECI – Uruguayan Comparative Education Society; SAECE – Argentine society for comparative studies in education; SOMECE – Mexican society for comparative education; SVEC – Venezuelan Society of Comparative Education; APC-EC – Cuban pedagogues association – comparative education section; SIBEC – Ibero-American Society for Comparative Education; SEEC – Spanish society for comparative education; SPCE – SEC – comparative education section of the Portuguese Society of Educational Sciences, among other organizations.

With a brief overview of the global scope of comparative education shown above, we will proceed with the focus of this article. In the next section, we will present a historical overview on which Comparative Education was constituted. We will bring the timeline from the perspective of some authors who brought different names to designate the phases, perspectives, periods or even stages.

Two hundred years of historical construction of Comparative Education

At the beginning of the 19th century, more precisely in the year 1817, in France, comparative education gained notoriety with the publication of the first study written by Marc-Antoine Jullien, which mentioned the comparison: “*Esquisse et vues préliminaires d'un ouvrage sur l'éducation comparée*” (Outline and preliminary views of a book on comparative education) With this achievement, Jullien became known as the forerunner of Comparative Education.

Born in Paris in 1775, Jullien was the son of intellectual parents, began his work activities at the age of fourteen as a journalist, was a diplomat, traveled throughout Europe and other countries. Dedicated to his studies, he had hundreds of articles published and dozens of books, one of which became known, by chance, many years after his death and made a valuable contribution to Comparative Education. In the book, Jullien proposed a questionnaire that focused on comparative analysis of education in various countries, arranged in tables that allowed us to verify which countries were advancing, which retreated and which remained stagnant; what are the obstacles to be overcome, in each country; what are the positive aspects that can be used by other countries, as long as they are adapted to local needs and conditions (BONITATIBUS, 1989, p. 37).

Their ideals were that Education should use methods or techniques that were also applied in social sciences, concluding with that, that comparative education is an “almost positivist science” (KALOYIANNAKI; KAZAMIAS, 2012, p. 27). Jullien defended that intellectuals should be given the task of collecting data, conducting questionnaires, evaluations and observations, displaying the results in comparative, objective and systematic tabulations that would be useful to reform and improve European education. Kaloyiannaki and Kazamias (2012, p. 27, our translation) add that “Jullien claimed that, in different countries in Europe, both public and private education were incomplete, insufficient, without coordination [...] without internal harmony in different spheres – physical, moral and intellectual”. To solve this, a reform and improvement in education was necessary, and consequently it would ameliorate the ills faced socially and politically in Europe. Hence the importance of carrying out comparative studies in educational systems.

The moments that followed after Jullien were approached by scholars with similar interpretations, but with some peculiarities. Ferreira (2008) discusses the four periods proposed by Alexandre Vexliard, pointing to the “structural” period as the first period, designating it as the beginning and represented by Julien, having fundamental principles “of

comparative studies in education as well as the methodological principles” (FERREIRA, 2008, p. 41, our translation). When reporting on the second period, he called them “inquirers”, they were sent to other countries in order to study the education systems, this phase extended between 1830 and 1914, and had Victor Cousin as a reference author.

The period of “theoretical systematizations” was the third, located between 1920 and 1940, at that time authors such as Kandel, Schneider and Hans left publications of works that are references for the moment. The fourth and last period, Vexliard called “prospective”, because from that moment on, studies would be focused on the future, different from other previous periods that focused on historical issues.

Also, according to Ferreira (2008), the studies left by Friedrich Schneider divide this historical path of Comparative Education into two distinct moments: that of Pedagogy for Foreigners and that of Comparative Pedagogy,

the first essentially encompasses the 19th century and is characterized by the product of study trips abroad by pedagogues and politicians who observed the educational organization of the countries visited and eventually compared it with that of their own country. The second developed throughout the 20th century and is characterized by the systematic application of the comparative method in an attempt to explain the “determining forces” or the “configurative factors” that explained the pedagogical facts (FERREIRA, 2008, p. 126, our translation).

According to Suely Bonitatibus (1989) and his analyses, Diego Márquez divided the path of comparative education into four periods. The first was the “pre-scientific”, “marked by accidental comparisons [...] reports by travelers or observers of the Middle Ages [...] without specifically comparative purposes” (BONITATITUS, 1989, p. 32, our translation).

Next, it brings the “Scientific period” subdivided into two moments, the first of which represented by Jullien and his proposal for a comparative methodology using tables where data collected by applied questionnaires would be placed. The second moment of this phase would be called descriptive and would have representatives in various parts of the world, we can mention Sadler in England, Cousin in France and Sarmiento in Argentina, among others.

Bonitatibus (1989) goes on to report that Márquez calls the third period “analytical-explanatory”, where the comparisons had a historical basis, Sadler left studies that served as a basis for the representatives of that period. The author cites Kandel, Ulich and Hans with a historical focus, Lauwerys and Hessen bringing a philosophical bias and Schneider and Moehlman with anthropological proposals. “Comparative Period” was the fourth and last period proposed by Márquez, who said that comparisons should be based on History. It brings

Pedro Rosselló and authors whose studies were still punctual in the 1980s, among them Bereday, Kazamias and Anderson.

Still bringing the different phases/periods, it can be said that Noah and Eckstein brought, according to Bonitatibus (1989, p. 33, our translation): “one of the most interesting, comprehensive and complete evolutionary approaches in Comparative Education”. These authors subdivided the route into six stages. The “travellers' report stage” is the first, characterized by travelers who did not need to be from the educational area, their reports and observations did not require planning and were based on their curiosities, without systematization and interpreted from their own perspective.

The second moment listed by the authors would come with the “stage of educational loans”, moved basically by lending successful practices that could be transplanted, improving their own system. The works here were systematic, as those who collected them were experts sent by the government. These observed methodological, theoretical and organizational aspects that could be useful and limited themselves to describing them.

The third stage proposed by Noah and Eckstein was the "international education stage", it was understood that education was an object of mutual collaboration, "stimulating it in an orderly and complete manner, of a classification of Comparative Education in view of the theoretical approach" (our translation). One of the works in this regard was carried out by Nóvoa (2010).

Nóvoa (2010) gathered studies and information that supported the construction of a map where it grouped authors according to the approximation of their theories and approaches. The author emphasizes that this map characterizes his point of view of the analyzed context, including the choice of comparatists and that "[...] handled with precaution, they constitute an irreplaceable means that allows us to locate the different scientific currents and traditions" (NÓVOA, 2010, p. 37, our translation). In this map, the vertical dimension would be linked to theories (conflict and consensus) and the horizontal dimension to approaches (descriptive and conceptual). The next step was to group those that had more similarities in their theoretical-methodological positions, coherently approaching in an analysis model, thus getting a total of seven schemes, which Nóvoa calls “configurations”. Configuration A was called the historicist perspective, the authors grouped here sought explanations for educational phenomena, focusing on historical issues in different social, economic and cultural contexts, thus contributing to the improvement of the educational system. The following were part of this configuration: Hans, Ulich, Halls and Kandel. There

was no comparative theory, there was a descriptive juxtaposition of data within the historical approach related to cultural trends.

Nóvoa (2010) grouped in configuration B the authors: Eckstein, Noah, Epstein and Bereday and named it the positivist perspective. In his interpretation, Nóvoa (2010) says that these scholars led a change from the historical-philosophical perspective to something that prioritized the organization and treatment of quantitative data, in addition to promoting the narrowing of the object to be analyzed. The main focus of this line was the search for a method of comparative analysis, for some authors it should have hypotheses, experimentation, quantitative analysis and controlled results. Bereday contributed a comparative methodology based on four steps: description, interpretation, juxtaposition and comparison. We will focus on this author in the second part of this article.

Following the mapping brought by Nóvoa (2010), the next configuration was defined as the perspective of modernization, this one pointed out that education was closely related to development and modernization, therefore the studies were focused on national policies, had quantitative approaches and were analyzed statistically. Nóvoa (2010) cites the work of UNESCO and the IEA as examples of this approach and groups authors such as Heynemam, Hopper, Husen, Coombs and Neave, for them “the essential is to well put a problem and deal with it rigorously from the point of view of technical and methodological view, in order to produce useful reports for those who decide” (NÓVOA, 2010, p. 43, our translation).

The studies by Nóvoa (2010) point out that the problem-solving perspective had a purpose that mixed the two previous proposals, as they believed in an approach that highlighted scientific concerns and believed that it could be used to reformulate education. The concern was not to define a method or formulate laws, rather it was focused on guiding paths and putting into practice its steps.

Nóvoa (2010) points out within this perspective Edmund King with the proposal of an analysis model with the aim of “guiding the practices and policies to be developed”, having four steps: identification of the context; classification of concepts; explanation of decision-making devices and presentation of results. And Brian Holmes with a slightly more in-depth approach, starting with problem identification and analysis; classification of these data; organization that facilitates comparison; analysis and comparison and, at the end, the prediction of results. This perspective was widely accepted among academics, becoming a reference for comparative studies since the “path of investigation (was) relatively easy to grasp and materialize” (NÓVOA, 2010, p. 44, our translation).

The critical perspective, or configuration E, breaks with all the previous ones and their ideological and theoretical thoughts. Its ideal foresees that the eyes are turned to those who attend school, especially to minorities who have even fewer opportunities, which are women and ethnic and racial groups. The intention was that the comparative projects would bring contributions to these school attendees, so that they would have more awareness and could contribute to their emancipation. The theoretical rupture is linked to the non-acceptance of several factors that structural functionalism brought in the previous configurations, namely the "unfair and unequal social order" as well as the world dependence and neglect of educational processes, since only analysis was valued of school products.

Methodologically speaking, this critical perspective proposes the adoption of qualitative approaches: "case study, ethnographic methods, biographical approaches etc." (NOVOA, 2010, p. 46). It is possible to understand that there was an influence of Marxist thoughts characteristic of movements that seek conditions for social improvement. Several were the comparatists from this perspective, among them we can mention Carnoy, Kelly and Altbach. This group of comparatists was not concerned with defining a comparative method, they "seek to value an alternative reflection exercise that considers the great challenges at the international level and the main conceptual changes in scientific thought" (NÓVOA, 2010, p. 47, our translation).

The following configuration brought a conception focused on the perspectives of the world system. In it, the individual and the local were questioned, as scholars understood that isolated they no longer made sense, for them the comparative study should prioritize an international character and followed the thought that local specificities (religion, race, independence, among others) did not significantly influence the "mass schools", the latter was directly influenced by their country's ties to the world system. Comparatists from this perspective, such as Meyer and Hamirez, understood that education was seen as a global component of progress and modernization. If globalization was the clear explanation for this perspective, it would be essential to understand how the different communities appropriated world developments "in such a way that local events are influenced by phenomena that take place very far away and (vice versa)" (NOVOA, 2010, p. 48, our translation).

Nóvoa (2010) describes the last configuration as a socio-historical perspective in which the concern is to "reformulate the project of comparison through the passage from the analysis of the facts to the analysis of the historical meaning of the facts" (NÓVOA, 2010, p. 49, our translation), that is, to bring to the comparative work a relevance of the historically formed bias of educational phenomena, without disregarding all the subjectivity of reality in

individual and collective views. Comparatists of that time Pereyra, Popkewitz, Ringer and Schriewer bring proposals aimed at “qualitative and ethnographic methods”, focusing on “contents of education” and not on “results”, as well as on “history and theory” and not simply on “description and interpretation” (NÓVOA, 2010, p. 50, our translation).

Comparative Education in Brazil

According to our proposal, we will bring a historical overview of comparative studies in the Brazilian scenario over the decades.

According to Monarcha and Lourenço Filho (2004), between 1870 and 1896 four Brazilian educators, Joaquim Teixeira Macedo, Manoel P. Frazão, Amélia Fernandes da Costa and Leopoldina Tavares Pôrto-Carrero, had the mission of “collecting data on education systems from different countries” (MONARCHA; LOURENÇO FILHO, 2004, p. 31, our translation).

More than fifteen years passed for new publications to emerge, in 1913 N. Nivaldo Coaraci wrote a report “about technical education in the United States” followed by Basílio de Magalhães who in 1917 brought his work directed to some Latin American countries about the “processes for the education of mentally retarded people”. Until then, there was an “isolation of ideas” that distanced us from what was happening worldwide, so in 1926, Fernando Azevedo held an event with the presence of many educators and encouraged the approach of “renovating trends in teaching in foreign countries”. This was followed by several studies published by Anísio Teixeira in 1928, Gustavo Lessa in 1929, and Isaías Alves in 1934.

Also, according to Monarcha and Lourenço Filho (2004), in 1932 Anísio Teixeira created in the Federal District, the “first systematic course on Comparative Education in Brazil”, headquartered at the Education Institute. A few years later, in the state of São Paulo, Milton da Silva Rodrigues taught a similar course, also at an Institute of Education, and in 1938 he published an essay in which he discussed the “bases and purposes of education” in several countries.

In the following year, Comparative Education began as a discipline in the formation of teachers at the National College of Philosophy, being taught by Antônio de Carneiro Leão, who also contributed significantly to publications in the area internationally.

In this scenario, we can understand when Bonitatibus (1989) says that comparative education is a young discipline, since even though it emerged at the end of the 18th century,

in Brazil it was officially included in the curriculum of the Pedagogy course only in the 20th century, at the University of Brazil, a fact also related to the late emergence of universities in Brazil. Over the years, comparative education has gone through mandatory and optional phases in the curriculum of that course and, currently, it is present in a small number of higher institutions, such as UNESP and is also found in research lines such as in University of Ceará and University of Brasília.

Many studies were published from the 1940s onwards in Brazil, some with eyes focused on social problems, others confronting Brazilian school institutions with those of other countries. “Anyway, it has reflected the same major trends in methods of current comparative studies, proposing problems of great interest, such as the relationship between education and economic and social development” (MONARCHA; LOURENÇO FILHO, 2004, p. 32, our translation).

Taking the broader context, in the 1950s after the second world war, "international cooperation activities in the area of education resurfaced with renewed strength" (GOERGEN, 1991, p. 10, our translation). For this author, as well as for Monarcha and Lourenço Filho (2004) and Carvalho (2014), the emergence of international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) brought studies in Comparative Education that sought to study more deeply the world's educational systems and their problems. Carvalho (2014) highlights that:

International agencies analyzed education from different perspectives, emphasizing economic issues, such as the WB and OECD, or humanist issues, such as UNESCO. In these cases, an attempt was made to apply comparative studies to political action, in the sense of both promoting peace, solidarity among nations and universal security, as well as reducing poverty and promoting economic development. In other words, such studies were based on the concept that the future could be predicted and universal education models planned, in order to build valid intervention strategies for different national and regional contexts (CARVALHO, 2014, p. 132, our translation).

In the 70's and 80's, according to Carvalho (2013), there was a discredit coming from critical positions coming from social movements that related education as having fundamental importance for social changes and disruption of the power and ideologies of the dominant classes. “In this context, its investigation procedures, its scientific validity, its theoretical bases and even its purposes were questioned” (our translation). This also extended to “discrediting their results”. These two decades were responsible for a very critical period with

very few scientific productions, comparative education entered a “progressive exclusion” in Brazilian university fields (CARVALHO, 2013, p. 419).

The 90's brought a positive phase and this scenario changed again, in Brazil there was a significant and constant increase in publications aimed at educational policy and management. In the world scenario, comparative education has been revalued internationally, bringing a strong interest in world educational systems, this strengthening, according to Carvalho (2013, p. 420, our translation) took place after "the reorganization of the world order and the processes of globalization, the denationalization of the economy, the weakening of the nation-state and the strong influence of international agencies on national education policies”.

Globalization brought with it movements that placed education at the center of policies, as the identity of a nation is also an attribute of the role played by and in education. In this scenario, carrying out comparative studies between educational systems brought a positive aspect to thinking about one's own reality in the light of the other's experience.

The new century brought modernization and significant world change with it. According to Nóvoa (2017), comparative practice has gained a new look since the creation of the Programme for International Student Assessment – PISA, which provides a comparative assessment of the results of world education, ranking the dozens of countries that participate in it. “These global metrics, when compared, gain a new dimension due to the technological possibilities that have been opening up and that allow PISA to work with a colossal mass of data” (NÓVOA, 2017, p. 20, our translation). The field for comparative studies was increasingly promising. Comparative education gained space on the world stage.

George F. Z. Bereday's Contributions to Comparative Education

Moving on to the second focus of this article, we will talk a little about one of the classic authors of comparative education as well as his contributions. Researcher George Zygmunt Fijalkowski Bereday was born in Poland in 1920 and died in 1983. According to Wojniak (2018), Bereday had a comprehensive higher curriculum, studied economics and sociology at the University of London, history and political science at the University of Oxford, sociology and compared education at Harvard University. Professionally, George Bereday has worked and collaborated with higher institutions such as Teachers College at Columbia University, Universities of Tokyo, Hawaii, Warsaw, Edinburgh, Barcelona, Paris, Stockholm, among others. He participated in diplomatic missions in some countries,

representing the United States of America, in addition to consultancy work linked to UNESCO. He had books and articles published in the eight languages he was fluent in.

Like the classic authors mentioned in the first part of this article, Bereday also traced a division in the path of Comparative Education, according to his studies, CE was outlined in three phases, the first was the period of loans, having as precursor Marc Antonie Julien, still in the nineteenth century. In this phase “the greatest importance was given to the cataloging of descriptive educational data; the information gathered was compared to enable the transplantation of best practices from one country to another” (BEREDAY, 1972, p. 34). It was a time when it was believed that transplanting a positive model from a country could favor the educational system itself. Scholars at that time intended on borrowing the practices that stood out most positively.

The second phase cited by Bereday (1972) was the period of prediction, in the first half of the 20th century with Michael Sadler. Reflections and studies at that time pointed out that lending educational practices without considering the local social context was not a positive way of achieving good results, it was necessary to establish “a preparatory process before allowing transplantation” (BEREDAY, 1972, p. 34, our translation). The intention was to predict a possible success for their country, as this was based on the experiences lived in other countries.

The third phase matured in relation to the previous ones, aimed at greater systematization and analysis before predicting or even lending some educational practice. This phase, characterized as the period of analysis, began with some thoughts from Isaac L. Kandel and Schneider. The authors who were part of this period centered their studies saying that the “primary concern is in the analysis, in developing theory and methods, in the clear formulation of the stages of comparative processes and mechanisms to facilitate this broadening of vision” (BEREDAY, 1972, p. 36, our translation).

For Nóvoa (2010) and Bonitatibus (1989), Bereday was a scholar of a positivist approach, in which progress is constantly sought. His main focus of studies was aimed at finding information that could help improve education systems, for that it was necessary to start with real and urgent problems, analyze them in detail and thus broaden the vision, contributing significantly.

Bereday was one of the scholars who understood that before predicting or borrowing something, a rigorous systematization should be carried out. Comparatists needed to make a deep analysis in area studies, as they would then have a range of scientific knowledge that would serve as a basis for the comparative analysis that would follow and that would

constitute "a final photograph of this culture by the observer" (BEREDAY, 1972, p. 38, our translation).

It should be noted here that, according to Bereday (1972), the observer needs to be carefully prepared to carry out his research, three aspects are essential in this preparation: knowledge of the language, the trip to the analyzed country and getting rid of cultural and personal prejudice.

Regarding the first aspect, Bereday (1972) believed that the language barrier could be a complicating factor for the observer. Some judgments can be wrongly made if the comparatist does not master the language of the country he will be researching, this could bring a doubtful and even inconsistent result in the research carried out. For the author, overcoming the language barrier would be the same as "entering the intimate secrets of the nation under study" (BEREDAY, 1972, p. 185, our translation).

The second aspect shows that it would be necessary to travel to the location to be studied. Spending time there, experiencing daily life, going to environments, talking to people, participating in cultural events, all of this would contribute to broadening the observer's view, and consequent global understanding of the facts observed in the study. He concludes by saying that "the brief visit and the prolonged residence abroad are different things, but used with discretion, both have a place among the methods of Comparative Education" (BEREDAY, 1972, p. 190, our translation).

The last aspect necessary for the observer is to be careful with cultural and personal prejudice. This point "is as big as those arising from the lack of knowledge of foreign languages and the lack of interest in traveling abroad" (BEREDAY, 1972, p. 205, our translation). After all, if the observer allows himself to be influenced, even if unconsciously, by his cultural principles, he may be exercising erroneous judgments that would ruin his entire analysis.

It is possible to understand that Bereday excelled in coherent analysis, which could not happen if the observer was not prepared for it. It is only after this preparation that the comparatist should focus on the proposed comparative study in its four steps: description, interpretation, juxtaposition and simultaneous comparison.

The initial stage was carried out within the area studies, Bereday (1972) called it "description". This would be the moment when the comparatist would focus on collecting the data that will be used in the study, but this collection is not by chance, it requires a careful, detailed and planned search. It should contain a range of information from a variety of sources. The primary sources suggested by Bereday (1972) would be official reports from

public and legislative bodies, newspapers and magazines, taking care to be scientific material and not fictitious material. There should also be a search for secondary sources that would come from books, articles and materials written by well-prepared people who can scientifically contribute to the study. The search can still continue in auxiliary materials outside the educational field, such as books and articles on culture and other spheres with relevance to education.

The second step will be the “interpretation” of the data collected in the previous step. It must be done in a thorough manner and related to social, political, economic and historical contexts. This moment, as well as the moment of description, is performed separately in each place that will be compared, that is, in the first two steps of the comparative analysis, there is no cross-checking movement of the countries (or places) that are being compared.

For Bereday (1972), the comparatist must count on the help of the social sciences, which will lead him/her to a broad contextualization, observing the object from various angles, making the study completer and more in-depth. Historical aspects will show the object's path through time. The political aspects will show how the object was being modified based on government positions and actions. The economic aspects will show the investments that were made in the analyzed object and, finally, the social aspects deserving full attention, since the educational system is inserted in a social context permeated by culture, changeable and with strong issues involved and directly linked to education.

The next steps go to the two moments of comparative studies, the first was called by Bereday (1972) as “juxtaposition”. At that moment, the confrontation of the data that until now have been described and interpreted separately begins. “The student will re-examine the material for each country. The scope is to catalog, side by side, the data that it processed, to look for similarities and differences and open the way for the formulation of a preparatory hypothesis for the final comparison” (BEREDAY, 1972, p. 73, our translation).

This confrontation carried out in the juxtaposition will narrow exactly the comparative analysis that is now heading to the last stage: the “comparison” itself, where the “separate information from each country will now be rewritten in a single essay” (BEREDAY, 1972, p. 76, our translation).

Final considerations

Comparison is an inherent act of human life. Through comparison, we become aware of the other and perhaps even more of ourselves. Even demanding that to carry out a

comparative study we must go through a stage of describing, which is closely related to knowing, Comparative Education cannot be restricted to just reporting something that happened or presenting the indicators of a given process.

Thus, this article brought, through the conceptions of the authors analyzed here, subsidies to understand how the evolution, deepening and organization of comparative education in its two centuries of existence was constituted. In our study, it was possible to notice that there was a constant movement in search of definitions to carry out the comparative study. Authors from certain phases left studies that served as a basis for the next comparatists to support and deepen their works, thus outlining other approaches and perspectives that sometimes grouped the problematizations of the previous ones, sometimes broke with them, proposing a new look and a new methodological theoretical approach.

In light of the brief analysis of the history of Comparative Education, it is clear that initially it emerged with more immediate purposes from educational political entities, with the intention of supposedly improving education systems, considering other realities. However, it was also clear that there is a movement of those who refuse to accept that it is limited to a merely technical action and want it to take more critical and reflective paths. That is, we can see that throughout the historical evolution of Comparative Education, concerns about its purpose alternate, reflections deepen over time, moving from an unsystematic stage more focused on loans of experience or exchange by travelers and slowly entering by stages and moments of comparative studies where criticisms are elaborated, it investigates ways to explain the local realities and the contexts of the phenomena in order to elaborate a more elaborate and analytical comparative study.

We verified how vast the path and ways to carry out a comparative study are. We brought an outline with the method proposed by Bereday, which advocates the preparation of the observer before carrying out his study, being quite clear in the conduct of each of the proposed steps, from reliable sources of data collection, passing through broad and contextualized interpretations, confronting them side by side in the juxtaposition, thus providing a more assertive finalization in the complete comparison.

Given the above, we can state that the academic field of comparative education studies is part of the political, economic, cultural, international and internationally historical relations that constitute the object of study of the research. We believe that Comparative Education has a lot to contribute to Education in general, not with the intention of revealing models to be imitated or rejected, but rather, to seek, through comparison, an identification of similarities

and differences and their interpretation starting from the contexts to which they belong and trying to bring an understanding of this educational phenomenon.

In this sense, Comparative Education would provide conditions for the emergence of issues to be discussed, reflected, visualized by educational systems, promoting exchanges, scientific approaches, demonstrating its collaboration for the scientific debate and not just as a supplier of parameters for decisions or public policies.

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