

Between and Beyond. The Course of a Life in the Realms of History of Education, General Pedagogy and Comparative Studies. Interview with Edwin Keiner

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1. Introduction

Edwin Keiner held the chair for General Pedagogy and Social Pedagogy at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano until his retirement in October 2019. From 2014 to 2017 he also served as Vice Dean of the Faculty of Education at the same university. Prior to that, he worked as a professor for the History of Education and Socialisation at the University of Bochum and as a professor for General Pedagogy at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg. He has studied the theory and the history of education as an academic discipline with special interest in a comparative perspective. His academic focus is on methodology, historical and comparative research on educational research, and historical, empirical and comparative as well as interdisciplinary approaches to and in educational research. For several years he took over the role as chairman of the Commission for Research on Educational Research and of the Section for General Pedagogy of the German Educational Research Association. In addition, Keiner was very active in the European Educational Research Association (EERA) for example as the first elected representative of all networks and member of the EERA Council. In 2018, Keiner succeeded in bringing the annual «European Conference on Educational Research» (ECER) with about 3,000 participants to the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Italy, South Tyrol. He was a member of the

«International Research Community 'Philosophy and History of The Discipline of Education'» (University Leuven, Belgium) for almost 20 years and member of the editorial boards of *Paedagogica Historica*, *European Educational Research Journal* and *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*. At present, Edwin Keiner works part-time as a senior professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Frankfurt/Main, Germany.

2. The interview

Annemarie Augschöll-Blasbichler (A.A.) & Michaela Vogt (M.V.): *Dear Edwin, thank you very much for joining us for this interview; we will first briefly outline your CV and then explain our idea for structuring the interview.*

You were born in 1951. In 1979 you graduated from the University of Würzburg, Germany with a master's degree in education, sociology, psychology and philosophy. In 1988, you received your doctorate (Dr. phil.) at the University of Frankfurt am Main with a socio-pedagogical thesis on youth detention, and in 1998 you passed the German «habilitation» at the University of Frankfurt with a thesis on the history of educational research in Germany after 1945. In addition to various activities outside and inside the university, you held a position as provisional Chair for Educational Research at the University of Gießen, Germany from 1998-1999 and were appointed to a full professorship for History of Education and Socialisation at the University of Bochum, Germany, in 2003. There you also headed the interdisciplinary and international master's program «European Culture and Economy» until 2008. In 2008, you took over the Chair of General Pedagogy at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, where you also served as Vice Dean for the Nuremberg campus for three years. In 2014, you became a full Professor for General Pedagogy and Social Pedagogy at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, (South Tyrol) Italy, in addition to serving as Vice-Dean of Teaching for three years. In October 2019, you retired.

*Among your academic activities - in addition to various general, historical and comparative projects in the field of education and educational research - the following should be emphasized: in Germany, you headed the Commission for Research on Educational Research of the German Educational Research Association from 2003 to 2013 and were also chairman of the Section for General Pedagogy from 2009 to 2013. Since 2000, you have been active in the European Educational Research Association (EERA) in various functions, first as elected representative of all networks of EERA and member of the EERA Council from 2003-2006. In addition, you have been a member of the editorial board of the *European Educational Research Journal* (EERJ, Sage) since 2001. In 2018 you succeeded in bringing the large annual «European Conference on Educational Research» (ECER) to Bolzano, organizing it with many colleagues inside and outside the University of Bolzano, the Italian Educational Research Association, the «Società Italiana di Pedagogia» (SIPED), and the EERA office. With almost 3,000 participants from Europe and beyond, this was the largest conference of its kind so far, not only for South Tyrol and the University, but also for EERA. From 2000-2018 you worked as a member of the «International Research Community 'Philosophy and History of The Discipline of Education'», which met annually and was chaired by Paul Smeyers and Marc*

Depaepe (Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium; publications with Springer). From 2011-2018 you were a member of the Editorial Board of the «*Paedagogica Historica*» (Taylor&Francis), from 2008-2019 a member of the Editorial Board of the journal «*Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*» (Springer) and since 2013 you have been active in the «*Society of Politics, Education and Comparative Inquiry in European States*» (SPECIES) (Luciana Bellatalla and Giovanni Genovesi, University of Ferrara, Italy).

Your list of publications contains more than 100 titles, six of which are monographs, twelve book or journal issue editions, fifty articles in book editions and forty-four articles in scholarly journals. Thematically, the publications refer to the field of General Pedagogy, History of Education and Comparative Education, research on educational knowledge and educational research, the significance of media for education and upbringing as well as historical, empirical and comparative as well as interdisciplinary approaches to and in educational research.

In October 2019, you retired from your position at the Free University of Bozen/ Bolzano. At present, you serve as senior professor at the University of Frankfurt/ Main, Germany, Faculty of Education, and are involved in a «*Master in Research & Innovation in Curriculum and Teacher Education*» at the University of Granada, Spain until 2023.

Edwin Keiner (E.K.): Thank you! Enough praise! I am tempted to borrow the phrase of a good friend of mine «too much incense blackens the saint». Let us begin!

A.A. & M.V.: *Some brief words on the structure: we propose to use the classical temporal (modal) forms of history - 1) past, 2) present, 3) future - and to interweave them with a) reports and assessments of your personal and professional life, b) the disciplinary field of History of Education within Educational Studies, and c) the trans-disciplinary field of History of Education in the context of other research and scholarly disciplines and areas of life. Agreed?*

E.K.: Yes, gladly. I like such an «order», even if it could be seen by some as «very German». I would add a spatial dimension to the temporal and factual, which considers the comparative perspective. This would additionally result in the entanglement of space and time, which is the special value of historical-comparative educational research.

A.A. & M.V.: *We can do it that way. So: let us start with a look at your own life history. What got you interested in Pedagogy and the History of Education, and what is their significance in your biography?*

E.K.: I come from a very Catholic, rural and musical family, our father being a very strict teacher. Maybe that's why I was particularly interested in science and philosophy during my childhood and youth, as they allowed me to emancipate myself, at least intellectually, from my family's very conservative milieu. Music may have helped to smoothe out the process and to aesthetically alleviate conflicts. Another factor that certainly contributed to my emancipation was the fact that I spent my youth in a boarding school in Regensburg, Germany, which had a significant focus on music, by the way. Looking back, three factors were probably decisive in my decision to concern myself with pedagogy and then especially with its historical and sociological dimensions: A) During my civil service I worked at a school for mentally handicapped children and learned a lot about the connection between natural sciences, cultural

sciences and social sciences, especially in the field of special education. Pedagogy thus seemed to me the ideal interdisciplinary subject to pursue. It also had been clear to me for a long time that I wanted to work in research and science. B) In the mid-1970s, I spent several enjoyable weeks with relatives in Berlin, which was still divided at the time. A cousin of mine shared an apartment with Rudi Dutschke, a key figure of the student unrest in the 1960s, and others. In the context of the post-1968 movement, I got to know a variety of left-wing currents, movements and groups, a stark contrast to my conservative socialization which made me question a lot of former values and ideas and led me to develop my own reflexive position. C) During my studies I was supposed to concentrate on a special pedagogical field of study, which gave me little pleasure. This is why I decided to study in interdisciplinary breadth as well as to search for the discipline-specific theoretical core of pedagogy. During this search I became interested in the ordering systematics, methodology, philosophy and history of science on the one hand. On the other hand, however, I also allowed myself to be inspired by ruptures, contradictions, paradoxes because I suspected early on that pedagogy might conceal a speculative, non-theorisable core: the unique individual, the hypercomplexity of situations and the necessary reference to a barely predictable future, e.g. in the mode of a »representative interpretation«. Against this background, this ambivalence between the systematic and rupture, theory formation and empirical-historical irritation, knowledge and ignorance, answers and questions, and the change of perspectives has remained the fundamental «movement of thought» for me to this day. History, especially social history, and comparison, specifically intercultural and international comparison, function as perspectives and reasons to liquify, relativise, question apparently fixed theoretical-analytical, systematic constructs of pedagogical world views and to search for alternative and new theories and re-combinations for me.

A.A. & M.V.: *Could you give us an example?*

E.K.: Yes, gladly. Towards the end of my studies, as a student assistant, I was involved in a project dealing with the development, structuring and «pillarization» of the German school system since the beginning of the 19th century. The head of this project was Detlef K. Müller, University of Bochum, Germany, whose chair I would take over in 2003. Out of this project, another project developed under the guidance of Heinz-Elmar Tenorth, at the universities of Würzburg and Frankfurt, which dealt with the professionalization of the teaching profession in Prussia in the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. I was employed as a research assistant and was able to gain rich insights into archive and project work and research experience. At the same time, I developed a dissertation project, inspired and supported by Heinz-Elmar Tenorth, that looked at the history of educational research in Germany by analyzing its central journals after 1945. Towards the end of the project period, in danger of unemployment and considering time limitations, I changed the subject and dealt with the «Politics, Programmatic and Behaviour of Teachers in the German Revolution of 1848». Unfortunately, I could not complete the 1848 Revolution Study despite unemployment. In order to earn money, but also out of a peculiar passion, I accepted a pedagogical and research position in a juvenile detention center in 1983 with the task of analyzing the effects of a socio-pedagogical prison regime concept on sentenced young people. In this position I moved into the medium of

field research, criminology, pedagogy in theory and practice, social sciences, statistics, law etc. and finished by writing a comprehensive report for the Hessian Ministry of Justice at the end. My colleagues at the university immediately suggested that I submit this report – in conjunction with a theoretical and historical analysis of youth detention as a form of prison regime - as a dissertation. I did just that and received my doctorate in return. While I was still «in prison», my colleagues Heinz-Elmar Tenorth and Jürgen Schriewer, both from the University of Frankfurt, Germany, had already significantly expanded the preliminary considerations on a history of educational research in terms of time and space and transferred them into a historically and comparatively challenging project and a research proposal. This project on a comparative history of educational research in Europe was generously funded over a period of five years. (One might prefer to call educational research «Sciences of Education»; I will not discuss the difficulties of translation here. I prefer Education or Educational Research, as I would insist on the fact that «research» is not restricted to so-called empirical research). My focus as a research assistant was the coordination of the project, the combination of historical and comparative methods, and - as my own project for a postdoctoral qualification - the (already mentioned) analysis of the development of educational research in Germany as reflected in its journals after 1945. In this context, I became interested in the new technical possibilities of quantitative historical research and special methods, for example collective biography, quantitative and qualitative content analysis etc., and became involved in a working group on quantitative methods in History and Social Sciences (QUANTUM, Cologne, Germany; journal: «Historical Social Research»). I attended and gave courses on methods of historical social research at the Centre for Historical Social Research, Cologne.

Between 1984-1990 my four children were born. In 1990, I was offered my first permanent position at the Faculty of Education at the University of Frankfurt to expand ICT infrastructure and services in the Faculty and to advise on educational research methods. At the same time I was able to continue working on my (postdoctoral) German habilitation on the history of educational research, which was completed and accepted in 1998. Private upheavals made me a single father of initially four, then two children from 1995 onwards, and I am still more than grateful to my colleagues and the Faculty of Education of the University of Frankfurt for the flexible time structure they allowed me to follow. I mention this in order to point out that my own biography does not follow a systematic order either, but is characterized by breaks, contradictions and challenges; this is certainly very «normal» but often not mentioned.

The period of the late 1990s was characterized by an increased preoccupation with international and European issues. Through the mediation of Miguel Pereyra, now Professor of Comparative Education at the University of Granada, Spain, I became a member of an international group of researchers, who - under the leadership of Sverker Lindblad, Sweden, and Thomas Popkewitz, USA, - carried out an EU-funded project on «Education Governance and Social Integration and Exclusion» (EGSIE) for three years; I represented the German part in this project. This project was extremely valuable - not only for improving my English language skills, but also for gaining insight into the cultural variation in educational research,

as an intellectual challenge to the historical and sociological understanding of these variations, and for experiencing and reflecting my own role diversity as a person, a man, a scholar, a researcher, and also as a «German». At the end of the project, a Finnish colleague said to me, «Edwin, you sometimes missed the point, but that was good!» I took that as a compliment, and I am utterly grateful to the group for these experiences. This group was also the starting point for my involvement with EERA, where I was especially supported by Martin Lawn, UK, then Secretary General of EERA. With his help and advice, I continued to build on my encounters with international and inter-cultural diversity, reflexivity and productivity. In the European Educational Research Association, I first worked in the Comparative Education network before I was elected as the first spokesperson of all EERA networks as a member of Council. Following this extremely rich and exiting experience, I have moved around, both factually and professionally, mainly in the networks History of Education and Philosophy of Education. In Germany, I took on parallel leadership functions in the German Educational Research Association: first as head of the Commission of Research on Educational Research, and then as head of the section of General Pedagogy. Through a review of my historical habilitation thesis by Marc Depape and the networks in the EERA, I became a member of the «International Research Community 'Philosophy and History of The Discipline of Education» (Head: Paul Smeyers and Marc Depape, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium). Between 2000-2018, this group met once a year for a three-day symposium on agreed topics and analyzed and discussed them from philosophical and historical perspectives; the results were published by Springer in the series «Educational Research». The intellectual challenges of these discourses and the resulting friendships and networks, which are also intertwined with those of EERA, are invaluable to me. Thus, it is less the disciplinary borders, historically constructed as determinations and demarcations, that characterize my experiences and my thinking, but rather the changes of perspectives, their connection to relations, the relations of relationships, and the need for theoretical and methodical deconstruction and reconstruction again and again.

A.A. & M.V.: *Now we have almost arrived at the present. It would be nice if you could summarize your experiences of the past ten years and describe your present situation.*

E.K.: I moved from the University of Bochum to the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg in 2008, in part for private reasons. In Nuremberg, I was mainly involved in teacher training and the role of Vice Dean, responsible for the Nuremberg campus. I always maintained contact with the central university (location) in Erlangen, especially regarding interdisciplinary projects and with the Philosophical Faculty's PhD Commission, of which I was elected chairman in 2013. Nevertheless, to be completely honest, I missed the intellectual challenges. To help me out of this predicament, a request from the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, where I had already taken on teaching assignments, came in very handy. The change was exciting; my wife, who herself had once worked at the University of Bozen-Bolzano and now teaches psychology at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, agreed to the change, including turning our live-in relationship into a long-distance one. Fortunately, at that point, my children had all grown up. The Faculty of Education of the trilingual

University of Bozen-Bolzano is located in Brixen-Bressanone; that's where I took up residence. At my new position in South Tyrol, the different cultures of problem perception and solution, the forms of communication and also the interpretations and mutual attributions of Italian-speaking and German-speaking colleagues were of particular importance to me. Here, too, a theory-based connection between a comparative and a historical perspective was important, without which the complex intercultural setting of South Tyrol within Italy at the border to Austria and Switzerland cannot be understood at all. I broadened my horizons and sensitized my perceptions in such a way that, when I left, I was able to say with full conviction: «I never regretted a single day of working in this complex setting».

Considering the multitude of challenges and tasks, of contents and contexts, of cultures and locations and most of all the people I engaged with, I must say with gratitude that my life has been a rich experience. Instead of continuing to work for another two years, I decided to retire while still in full stride. The esteem that both academic and administrative staff expressed for me when I left touched me deeply on an emotional level as well; these people have become an important part of my own history.

To sum it all up, above all, there is the desire and the delight to change perspectives between a philosophical, social-scientific-empirical, comparative and, especially important, historical view of different subjects. In addition, my professional life has been characterized by a certain pleasure in identifying breaks, incompatibilities and paradoxes, in intellectual curiosity and playfulness, in irritation, but also in contradictoriness and irony.

A.A. & M.V.: *And what are your plans for the future?*

E.K.: I am currently trying to «become historical to myself» and to make my own history or rather the specificity of my historical reconstruction of my biography available at least to my children and grandchildren. For me, retirement is about slowing down without losing tension, about intellectual play without thinking about the consequences, about expressing appreciation without waiting to receive it - i.e. it's about practicing serenity, independence, modesty and mindfulness, and in between also allowing myself a small portion of playful vanity. In this respect, in my present pensioner's life pleasure outweighs pain, the spirit of inquiry outweighs boredom and curiosity and questions outweigh dogmatic knowledge and given answers - we don't need to talk about the little complaints of age.

As far as topics are concerned, it will still take some time to put my experiences in Germany, Italy and the rest of Europe into a more or less orderly form. Apart from writing a biography for my children (that is, telling the story of my life), three historical subjects (the focus here is on historical analysis) are currently close to my heart: A) The theme «Teachers in the 1848 Revolution» or pedagogy in the times of radical upheaval, the relationship between organization and movement, between tracked paths and impassable terrain, between structure, contingency and change has not yet been exploited both theoretically and historically for me. B) I would like to continue and complete work on a comparative «history of History of Education» mirrored by its journals, and thus in a sense take up again the theoretical and methodological approach I chose in my habilitation thesis. C) A third topic deals with philosophy and literature. It is concerned with a counter-concept to the pedagogically central

concept of «task» and «hope», namely that of the Latin «vanitas», a concept whose particular meaning was developed especially in the epoch of the German Baroque, also in context of the terrible 30-year war. This term does not correspond to the English «vanity» or «vainness», but rather to «futility» or «pointlessness». At the same time, a look at this concept of «vanitas» critically asks about the justification and evaluability of pedagogical aims and objectives, or, the other way round, it points to the question of a «history of pedagogical hubris and disappointment». Let's see how far I will get.

A.A. & M.V.: *Thank you. So far, we have covered your professional and personal life. In the following part - again in the sequence past, present, future - we will deal with your assessment of the disciplinary area of History of Education within educational research. A good introduction could be to deal with the relationship between General Pedagogy and the History of Education. You yourself have taught and researched both in the field of the History of Education and in the field of General Education during your professional career. We are sure that you will be able to take a historical look at the two fields of educational research.*

E.K.: This is an extremely difficult task since it involves a threefold relationship: a) the disciplinary or thematic relationship between these two areas b) the historical variation of these areas and their relationship, and c) the development of these relationships and their variations in space and time. I will try, but I am not sure if in the end there will be only «vanitas», perhaps better: pointlessness.

Firstly, pedagogy and history share essential common ground: at the beginning and during their disciplinary development they both were in a functional relationship with the emergence of nation states in the 18th and 19th centuries. Both contributed to the establishment and development of a «national identity» and aided with a structured reproduction of generations. A further common feature of General Pedagogy and History of Education is that both, at least in their educational function, were related to the respective national school systems - the one oriented at philosophical, basic research, the other one at 'didactics' of history and at 'traditionalizing', i.e. at saving the historical (educational) heroes and thinkers from oblivion and using their ideas for theory building. Pedagogy and History of Education have, so to speak, worked on the «practical side» of their reference disciplines (philosophy or theology and history); this may also have contributed to the fact that they have been or still are perceived by these reference disciplines in a rather marginalizing and devaluing manner.

Secondly: analytically speaking, there can only be a «General Pedagogy» if it can be distinguished from any «special pedagogies». Even if one would like to philosophically (or in the context of a 'power game') argue that the general takes precedence over the particular, I would still say that a basic «General Pedagogy» can only be developed and justified as a «special» General Pedagogy after the development of further specialized and partial pedagogies. For General Pedagogy, the problem of the disciplinary «*differentia specifica*» of «the general» in relation to other partial pedagogies is a fundamental theoretical problem. For the History of Education, however, it is more a problem of the constitution and construction of the historical subject within a particular theoretical context or a way of seeing and knowing, e.g., history of ideas, social, economic, political, legal, everyday life,

knowledge history, etc. Thus «education» is the reference topic for the History of Education, the «general» is the one for General Pedagogy.

Thirdly, especially for General Pedagogy, one should consider its culturally limited scope and recognition. This is already evident if one attempts to translate its name into English. Sometimes it is referred to as «general education» (which is more or less a direct translation from the German and the Roman languages). However, talking about the level of someone's «general education» simply describes a person's educational background (in German: «Allgemeinbildung») and does not refer to an academic discipline. The translated concept of General Pedagogy is mainly used by German and Roman speaking academic educational cultures, and monstrous words, such as «general science of education», are not in use and also suggest a natural scientific approach to the field via the word «science». In this respect «science of education» also sounds somewhat ambivalent. One could perhaps talk about «Foundations of Education», but then one would remain trapped in a more philosophically oriented perspective. This means: as a disciplinary designation, «General Education» exists primarily in Central and Southern Europe; the Anglo-Saxon world does not know this disciplinary category. One can assume that especially in Central and Southern Europe the systematic order of Roman law has served as a model for the modern disciplinary pattern of university subjects, disciplines and branches. In this context, it is decisive whether General Pedagogy, especially the History of Education, is explicitly included in the superordinate field of Pedagogy (or 'Science of Education') or whether it is more strongly associated with other reference disciplines, especially History or Philosophy (interesting comparisons could also be made with regard to the disciplinary location of educational psychology). In this context, it should still be clarified why, for example, in Italy General Pedagogy is combined with Social Pedagogy and why the comparative perspective plays a rather subordinate role after all. The special role of Roman law could also explain why - compared to Anglo-Saxon cultures - empirical social science and educational research is rather marginal in these cultural contexts.

Lastly, considering everything mentioned so far, it is interesting that the first international and multilingual journal in the History of Education, the «*Paedagogica Historica*», was initially not founded by scholarly associations in the field of education. Its foundation goes back to a resolution of the «8th Congress of the History of Sciences» in Florence in 1956, which was followed in 1959 by a survey that confirmed the need for an international journal for the History of Education. The Department of History of Education and Comparative Education (!) of the University of Ghent, Belgium, then published the first issue in 1961. Fortunately, there are now some very good studies of the history of the History of Education, especially in *Paedagogica Historica*.

A.A. & M.V.: *So, which are the problems we are dealing with in the present?*

E.K.: The first problem is shared by the History of Education and Comparative Education. More and more conference papers dealing with historical (and/or comparative) aspects are addressed to the many networks or special interest groups (SIGs) of the international academic associations without being explicitly assigned to the field of History of or Comparative Education. History of and Comparative Education thus seem to diffuse more and more into the diversity of the respective

subject areas and networks and do not remain related to the disciplinary organized field of History of Education (or other branches). This could signify that the History of Education and the affiliated scholars would lose their methodological and subject-specific competence and power of defining quality criteria as well as what counts as sound historical research in the first place. Moreover, a quick evaluation also reveals that current topics in History of Education do not cover a broad time span of several hundred years, but are very much limited to the 19th and 20th centuries, indeed to the end of the 20th century. This also brings the History of Education closer to educational or cultural sociology and its (different) methods and quality standards. Such processes of diffusion are particularly problematic for disciplinary cultures that - like the German or Italian, but also the Spanish - rely on disciplinary classification and demarcation because this diffusion tends to dissolve these disciplinary boundaries. This problem is exacerbated when researchers are called upon to «internationalize» their research (which usually means publishing in English and in English language journals), while the «international» Anglophone world hardly understands and recognizes such demarcating disciplinary cultures. Such problems, it should be added, are particularly relevant for emerging researchers, who end up trying to find their place somewhere in between, if they do not want to be trapped in their national cultures alone.

In my opinion, these problems can be countered in two ways, one that refers to social networks and another that emphasizes the epistemological and methodological dimension. History of Education researchers are now well organized in the International Standing Conference on the History of Education (ISCHE), the respective network of the EERA and the subdivisions of the national associations for educational research. The organizational efforts could be expanded and structured in a more precise and explicit way. One possible way of structuring is to develop - similar to attempts in the field of psychology – comprehensive «research programmes» and to explicitly link these programmes to the domain of History of Education, also perhaps for strategic reasons with an interdisciplinary impact. This is already happening and could be expanded. The epistemological and methodological perspective could aim to analyse regional, national and international research programmes and publications, e.g. with the help of disciplinary screening or «mappings», which could include the discussion and implementation of common quality standards and disciplinary problem definitions. Something like an «observatory» or (self-)organised research on research would be needed. Such ideas are already present in both ISCHE and EERA. For the social as well as the methodological side, however, this also means a reflective and transparent approach to the paradox of «cooperation and competition». Particularly in the face of hierarchical, technocratically standardizing quality controls adverse to innovation, it is important to strengthen the discursively organized, transparently controlled and valued role of peers for disciplinary self-observation and self-management.

A.A. & M.V.: *That brings us to the future. Do you have any further suggestions?*

E.K.: So far, I have focused particularly on the History of Education, and now I come back to what is called «General Pedagogy». It can be assumed that EERA's networks to a certain degree represent the subject areas of Educational Research in Europe. It can also be said that EERA represents linguistic, cultural, theoretical

and methodological diversity (as a productive resource). Against this background, I imagine a relational, non-hierarchical (!) structure of the Philosophy of Education, History of Education and Comparative Education (perhaps also including parts of Educational Sociology, Psychology and a Research on Research section), which represents, justifies and organizes the Educational Research foundations and their methodological and theoretical dimensions. I question whether this structure should then be called «General Pedagogy» - not everything needs a name. As a relation of relationships, comprising a challenging ambivalence, this structure could be enough in itself, at least at the start. The necessary change of perspectives would also lead to an increased internal irritation, curiosity and complexity and thus already guarantee premium intellectual quality. To give just one small example: in view of the fact that different languages and concepts also indicate different constructions of the world, a significant criterion for quality in regard to the acceptance of peer reviewed journal articles, should be the degree of reflexivity with which the respective topic/problem is faceted in different languages (and, therefore, meanings). Consequently, it is important also to relativise the monoculturality of the English language. In other words: I consider an explicit meta-theoretical, meta-linguistic and meta-semantic sensitivity and reflexivity of educational publications to be a decisive indicator of quality and a sign of sophisticated understanding of an educational 'European culture' beyond territorial boundaries.

A.A. & M.V.: *Let us briefly move on to the last part, the trans-disciplinary area of History of Education in the context of other disciplines and areas of life. You already mentioned some aspects; perhaps you can sharpen your arguments here. Looking back, History of Education did not have an easy time developing an independent identity. Do you agree?*

E.K.: Once again, there are at least two answers to that: when it comes to power, significance and influence, History of Education is indeed not on top of the game. On the other hand, it must be said that without a historical perspective any analysis is worthless or at least it will not reach the intellectual depth necessary to understand social and educational issues. In this respect, it is not a question of wanting to exercise power strategically or politically, but of making clear the added analytical and theoretical value that one gains from the historical (and I would add: comparative) perspective. I would also see this added value in an aesthetic, intellectual, thoughtful and playful dimension that is not based solely on historical «facts», but discursively cultivates and takes note of the complexity and variation of its possibilities of construction and interpretation against the background of current problems. The History of Education is actually in a good position with its aforementioned networks. These networks themselves have their own social, theoretical, methodological and discursive history, which is worth cultivating. When the question of disciplinary identity, the specific academic profile or the quality of research emerges - often from cultures that value disciplinary demarcation – this issue will have to be discussed in great detail. It is important to point out that the answer to this question necessarily implies a concept of exclusion. «Anyone who wants to talk about quality cannot remain silent about exclusion,» I have argued repeatedly (often followed by massive protest) in the context of EERA. Any form of analytical distinction (not: separation!) must, at least in the negative, mark «the other side». Against this background, one

could perhaps even argue that the trend to marginalize the History of Education, e.g. by traditional historians, can be seen as an advantage. Whereas traditional historical research insists on a closed off methodology and disciplinary culture in research and training, thus delimiting and limiting itself, History of Education tries to transcend and cross such boundaries in an interdisciplinary way. The latter works problem-oriented, it models complexity and work on theories and methodologies, which place the educational historical 'facts' in a specific and explicit theoretical and methodological context. Therefore, we should leave wallowing in the «narcissistic injury» of not being loved by our «mother discipline» behind and rather actively and constructively cultivate our own specific form of analysis, reflection and intellectual achievement, in addition to explicitly, transparently and controversially discussing our ideas, sources and evidence, for example, in the mode of the classical «disputatio».

A.A. & M.V.: *What challenges and problems arise from your analysis for the present, and the near future?*

E.K.: I think a secular change in the university landscape of the present and in the future also affects the History of Education. Since the 1990s at the latest, and with the growing dominance of Anglo-Saxon academic culture, neoliberal control and «New Public Management», academic cultures have been changing in many parts of the world, especially in Central and Southern Europe. These cultures - for all their diversity - were previously structured as «scholarly cultures» with disciplinary structures based on a dynastic pattern or on the model of medieval guilds, in which the university rector functioned as «Primus inter Pares». In Germany, Fritz Ringer called such scholars the 'German Mandarins'. In our times, a presidential system with strong administrative power has taken over, which severely limits the previous autonomy of the «scholars» (who are now redefined as experts). The disciplinary order, created by communication processes and represented by conferences, journals and textbooks, is increasingly being replaced by the topographical order of university locations. Independent of decentralized or centralized control of universities, the individual universities as venues are becoming the profile and performance indicators of particular disciplines and partial disciplines, if only to secure finances, reputation and third-party funding. One must expect this trend to continue and intensify. It will also lead to a structures within individual universities that assess some disciplines or scholars as high performers and others as low performers. This trend will in turn drive and dynamize the competition for funds and resources within the particular university. In my experience, defensive behaviour does little to help. Rather, one has to talk about strategy, intelligence and cleverness, about intellectual power and distinct abilities to be able to formulate curious, critical and irritating questions in order to confront the predominant trite and safe version of the truth. I believe that a sentence that I formulated together with a colleague (Karin Karlics) a few years ago on the topic of «coaching of emerging researchers» will also be important for the future of educational research as well as for the future of the History of Education and Comparative Education: «If, however, scholarly literature and educational research knowledge more and more resembles a commodity instead of a public good, we have to critically accept the Janus-headed character of the 'free' market more and more. We therefore suggest to teach and to coach students and researchers to use clever, hybrid strategies of research production, to disenchant the 'scientific' ideals,

to learn to walk on the edge between the market, where you have to sell yourself, and the scholarly and public responsibility, from which you draw your professional ethics and identity.

One may interpret this as a cynical, negative outlook (“the glass is half empty») and mourn the loss of the scholar’s role as a promoter of (temporal) certainty. But one can also emphasize the positive, productive aspects (“the glass is half full»): in the face of global information floods, it is part of the educational and research program of a (reflexive) modernity to strengthen the analytical ability and power of judgment of the individuals. This includes the fact that there are no one-dimensional criteria for standardizing quality etc., but that these criteria themselves are inscribed in a discursive area of time- and space-dependent deconstruction and re-construction. In exchange for the promise of certainty of the old scholars, the ‘mandarins’ who were criticized for the «musty odour under their gowns» in the late 1960s, we must now deal with the competence to interpret, defend and use uncertainty and open perspectives as productive resources. And this is precisely why recourse to history and History of Education, to time and space, in order to be able to formulate intelligent and clever questions, is more important than ever.

One prerequisite I don’t want to conceal, is essential and indispensable in this context: confidence in the certainty of being able to live in social and financial security . In this respect, the reflections on intellectuality and the quality of historical and comparative educational research are certainly related to critical theory, to the ‘Dialectic of Enlightenment’, and to the critique of modern capitalism. However, there is too little time to talk more about this now.

I believe that this interview is coming to an end since we have covered the nine main topics we agreed upon. It remains for me to point out reflexively and explicitly that - despite my strong European context, especially my years in Italy – I was socialized in Germany. Therefore, I beg your pardon and ask for your indulgence for any one-sidedness, unclear reasoning or lack of reflexivity. I leave judgment to you and the readers.

A.A. & M.V.: *Thank you very much for this insightful interview!*

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