

# The British Association for International and Comparative Education (BAICE)

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The British society for the study of comparative education has shown flexibility, and readiness to adapt to contemporary developments, by a number of name changes over the decades. Initially it was the British Section of the Comparative Education Society in Europe (CESE); then the British Comparative Education Society (BCES); the British Comparative and International Education Society (BCIES); and since 1997 the British Association for International and Comparative Education (BAICE). The British Section of CESE was represented in Ottawa, Canada, at the 1970 conference which led to the establishment of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES), and the Council has received with equanimity its subsequent changes of designation.

This chapter documents the origins, history, rationale and activities of the British society. It explores the influence of key personnel and changing fortunes in the light of related shifts in the professional and intellectual context in recent decades. The history also shows how, in recent years, the society has contributed to a resurgence of interest in comparative and international research in education, to emergent trends in policy analysis, theory and methodology, and to creative and stimulating collaborations with related agencies including the WCCES itself.

## Origins and Early Years

In the Britain of the 1960s, the prospects for the study of education, and specifically for comparative education, looked bright. The Robbins Report on the future of higher education in the UK seemed to predict the creative expansion and development of higher education, including exciting prospects for the higher education of teachers (Robbins 1963). The potential growth of courses in comparative education, not only in university departments of education, but also for Bachelor of Education (BEd) students at the college level, seemed to be the beginning of a positive new era. Unfortunately this period was relatively short-lived.

Certainly there was a feeling of optimism, even of exhilaration, among participants at a conference at the University of Reading in September 1965 on 'The Place of Comparative Education in the Training of Teachers' (Mercier 1966). In 1961 a group of specialists in comparative education had already met in London to found CESE. This European society was at that time a small and rather exclusive body, largely being the preserve of specialist researchers, but some of its members also contributed greatly to the success of the 1965 conference at the University of Reading. Some 70 participants met in Reading, with a fairly even distribution from university departments of education and from colleges of education that focussed entirely on the training of teachers. This core of people resolved to found a comparative education society, of which the constitution and formal membership would be determined at a further conference to be held in Reading in the following year. Participants who wished to do so were then to be enrolled as foundation members. At the suggestion of Brian Holmes of the University of London Institute of Education, it was agreed that this new society would be a section of CESE, though few people believed that any problems would be likely to arise if, in Holmes' phrase, this British organisation were to 'go it alone'. The British society has diverged considerably over the years from its European parent body particularly in embracing a more international and development orientation.

The British Section of CESE was thus duly established at the conference held at the University of Reading in September 1966. It was perhaps an indication of the awareness of the common interests of both the university and college constituencies that the first Chair, N.K. Growcott, came from a college of education (Bolton), while the first Vice-Chair, Margaret B. Sutherland, came from a university department of education (Queen's University, Belfast). When Margaret B. Sutherland became Chair of the society in 1968, the next Vice-Chair, H. Gillmann, also came from a college of education (Doncaster). This alternation between the two sectors of higher education lasted until 1980, when representatives from university departments of education began to dominate. The shift reflected changes in the climate of higher education.

### **Aims of the New Society**

The aims of the new society were indicated to a considerable extent by the eight addresses presented at the 1965 conference. Joseph Lauwerys, of the University of London Institute of Education, outlined the history of the study of comparative education, downplaying the French (and positivistic) influence of Jullien (1817), and emphasising the more socio-cultural and historical orientations pioneered in England by Matthew Arnold and Michael Sadler (Higginson 1979). Other speakers provided not only statements of the benefits likely to result from the study of comparative education, but also possible methods of study and research, with examples of provisions then being made in different countries. For example, Vernon Mallinson of the University of Reading included in his discussion of the potential of comparative education, a plea for the study of small countries such as

Belgium in addition to the customary attention given to large countries such as the USA, France and the USSR. This issue has remained important. It has been picked up by other British comparative educators as concerns have increased about the growing influence of multilateral organisations, such as the World Bank, that underplay the importance of context sensitivity and differences in scale (Bacchus & Brock 1987; Bray & Packer 1993; Crossley & Holmes 1999). Brian Holmes spoke about research strategies and his own problem approach to comparative study (Holmes 1965). W.R. Fraser (Woodbroke College, Birmingham) outlined the possibilities of the area studies approach; W.D. Halls (University of Oxford) commented on the potential of field studies; and Edmund King (King's College, University of London) favoured an applied orientation to comparative studies. The other two speakers focused on how teaching could be adapted to different types of students of comparative education. Ken Smart (University of Reading) discussed the characteristics and needs of overseas students, especially from the Third World, and C.H. Dobinson (also University of Reading) considered the particular needs of students taking the new BEd courses.

More than one speaker referred to the beneficial effects expected from the study of comparative education. The main emphasis was on insights into the social forces determining education systems, echoing the views expressed by Sadler at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Sadler 1900). Discussing the question of the academic respectability of the field, Lauwerys recognised the potential of contributions from specialists in other forms of educational studies – history, sociology and economics. He nevertheless concluded (Mercier 1966, p.31) that students of comparative education:

would begin to see more clearly how social forces shape educational systems and practices. In this way they would gain insight into the nature and function of their own – and perhaps be less dominated by routine and tradition because they would see that these are not always justifiable rationally.

Vernon Mallinson (cited in Mercier 1966, pp.33-34) similarly affirmed that the student of comparative education must:

accept ... the implication of the cultural background of the society in which he lives.... He (sic) must know what limits are set to his freedom and what are the limits of his creative potential in terms of the whole culture pattern. He must know about other culture patterns, how they arose, and what limiting factors they in turn impose. The student will come to recognise different solutions to common problems, and arrive at a better understanding of nationalism (the role of the schools in fostering 'national sentiments') and internationalism, as well as international co-operation. Comparative education properly taught must, by constructively challenging the myths and objectively assessing a given culture pattern, lead to more effective international understanding and to a greater measure of communication.

Unlike previous, and future, generations of comparativists, the speakers at Reading gave little attention to the possibility of improving one's own educational system as a result of comparative studies. W.D. Halls, however, having warned of the need to ensure academic independence and integrity by avoiding "being too involved with official agencies" (Mercier 1966, p.110) while carrying out research, did emphasise that independent comparative education research might indicate to policy-makers the probable results of proposed changes in their provision of education. Halls was prescient in this respect since this issue has exercised the minds of many British comparativists – especially because so much comparative and international research has been funded by governments and international agencies (Preston & Arthur 1996; McGrath 2001a, 2001b).

Various speakers at the Reading conference also exhorted researchers to ensure that comparative education would be studied not simply through documents and statistics but also by visits and study tours that generated personal knowledge of the cultures and systems in question. Such background knowledge could be increased, Mallinson suggested, by the reading of fiction or other books written in the country being studied. He developed this 'humanities inspired' approach in an article published in the journal *Comparative Education* (Mallinson 1968). For similar reasons, Halls suggested the need to be proficient in a foreign language, though the ideal that he indicated – four European languages in addition to English – was perhaps somewhat over-ambitious. This interpretive/hermeneutic concern for differences in cultural context added considerably to the existing stock of research strategies and priorities that writers such as Bereday (1964) advocated in his then influential book on *Comparative Method in Education*.

A final observation from the inaugural conference in Reading was made by W.R. Fraser. He argued that, in addition to the possible enlightenment that could result from increased awareness of other cultures and the many facets of social life that could be taken into account, one other aspect had run throughout all the discussions at Reading in 1965, namely that comparative and international studies "are, most of the time, not just bewildering, but also very enjoyable!" (cited in Mercier 1966, p.108). The Reading Conference thus marked an enthusiastic and vibrant start for the British society, and reflected the influence of strong, applied, historical and humanistic traditions that have continued to shape much of its intellectual spirit and landscape.

### **Changing Contexts and Changing Constituencies**

Once established, the British Section of CESE thrived. The list of the themes chosen for annual conferences provides a conspectus of the key topics engaging the interest of British comparative educators. They included reforms in secondary education; the changing school curriculum; trends in teacher education; priorities in educational planning; the politics of education; higher education reform; and education in multicultural societies. Initially, the venues for the annual conferences alternated between Reading and other selected universities. Gradually, however the choice of venue came to depend more on whoever was

willing and able to organise and host the conference rather than deliberately alternating the venue (Brock 1986a).

Significant changes during the 1970s and 1980s had a lasting impact on the nature and shape of comparative education in the UK. First among these was the Conservative government's 1972 White Paper, 'A Framework for Expansion' (Department of Education & Science 1972). Although this document foresaw an expansion in nursery, technical and vocational education, within two years the trends it had set in motion led to the closure and/or merger of many UK colleges of higher education. This was partly due to a predicted drop in population growth, but was compounded by the educational and financial crisis of the mid-1970s. Such was the perceived state of education that in 1976, Prime Minister James Callaghan launched what came to be known as the Great Education Debate, an examination of what kind of education system the country needed for a post-industrial future.

Unfortunately many of the positive ideas and hopes generated were dashed by a financial crisis that hit Britain in 1977. Inevitably this led to a squeeze on funds for higher education, not least for teacher education, and to the beginning of tighter regulation on the education of teachers (McDade 1982; Brock 1986b). This continued in subsequent decades, and by the time of Watson's (1982) study of the state of comparative education in 'British Teacher Education', it had become apparent that traditional teaching in the comparative field of study was being squeezed out from colleges of education and was barely surviving in some universities. Watson wrote (1982, pp.196-197) that:

there has been a crisis of confidence in the value of comparative education as well as its place in educational institutions. While there has undoubtedly been much valuable research work undertaken during the 1970s, there was a considerable sense of gloom and despondency in the 'state of the art' issue of *Comparative Education* in June 1977, largely because of cutbacks in funding for research and travel, both essential ingredients for the furtherance of practical and realistic studies in comparative education.... For far too many teachers and administrators, comparative education is regarded as an interesting luxury, a 'frill', but an unnecessary ingredient for a common core teacher education curriculum.

By the mid-1980s, therefore, not only was comparative education in decline in the UK (as were other 'foundation studies'), but this had had a detrimental impact on membership of the national society.

Another influence on the development of the field and the society was the decision by Holmes and a group of supporters in London to establish the London Association of Comparative Educationists (LACE) in the mid-1970s. To what extent micro-political motives relating to leadership of the British Section of CESE or intellectual disagreements over research priorities and methodology inspired this organisational conflict will probably never be known. From an intellectual standpoint, the dispute over territory nevertheless reflected differing views over the nature and direction for British comparative research and ongoing

tensions between positivistic trends and more interpretive traditions. LACE conducted some interesting work, mainly on methodology and theory (Turner 2004). It continued for about a decade, but its existence was partly instrumental in the decision taken at the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the British Section of CESE, held at the University of Bath in 1979, to form a separate British Comparative Education Society (BCES).

The BCES existed for only a few years before its title was again changed. In 1983, under the Chair of Keith Watson (University of Reading) and the Vice-Chair of Colin Brock (University of Hull), the decision was taken by an overwhelming majority to change the society's name to the British Comparative and International Education Society (BCIES). This reflected the growth of the international development constituency and the increased significance of its contextual and professional focus (Watson & King 1991). Some comparativists, especially in London, opposed the move, but the vast majority of members understood the reasoning behind the decision. A similar (and also controversial) name change had been made in 1968 in the US-based society.

In short, the introduction of the word 'International' into the name of the society was an acknowledgement of changing geopolitical and intellectual realities. Since the 1950s there had been an emerging division between the work of those who saw themselves primarily as comparativists, mainly concerned with the industrialised nations, and those who worked in the newly independent developing countries. For example, when the Colonial Department (later the Department of Education in Tropical Areas and, later still, the Department of Education in Developing Countries) was established at the University of London Institute of Education in 1927, its main concern was to support good policy and practice in the colonies (Little 2004). The comparativists based in London as part of the Department of Comparative Education, on the other hand, predominantly focused on Europe, North America, the Soviet Union and Japan. Two distinct but parallel fields of study were thus emerging. The latter, comparative education, emphasised theory, methodology, and research in industrialised countries, while those involved in the study of education and development emphasised the improvement of educational planning, policy and practice in the developing world. The latter were often less concerned with theory and more focused upon the practicalities of what worked on the ground in poor countries, drawing evidence from different contexts with which they were familiar. Influential British scholars such as Edmund King (1967, 1989) made efforts to bridge the gulf between such groups, and pioneered ways in which the two sub-fields could work together. The division nevertheless continued to influence developments in the field in the UK.

Moreover, as more colonies gained their independence during the 1960s, and as the Commonwealth Secretariat together with the British Council began sending scholars to the UK to take courses in educational policy-making and planning, educational administration, science education, English language teaching, technical and vocational education, and rural development, a significant shift in both the student body and the focus of funding began to take place. Student

numbers from poor countries were growing faster in the international education field than those from the rich and industrialised world. Government departments, such as the UK Ministry of Overseas Development (ODM) (later the Department for International Development, DFID), together with the British Council, decided to designate 10 universities and three colleges of education (technical) as special 'centres of excellence' for such work. Inevitably those 10 universities began recruiting staff who had had developing-country experience. Many of these staff became members of the British Section of CESE and the BCES. Eventually they outnumbered the more theoretically oriented comparativists, and began to argue that the methodology and research techniques of comparative education should be applied more internationally to the developing world. In many ways such developments were supported by work being pioneered in the USA on modernisation theory and its challenges in the form of dependency perspectives. The name BCIES was, therefore, seen to be a more appropriate title for much of the work and research interests of the UK constituency at this time.

### **Society News and Communications: The Birth of *Compare***

From 1969 onwards, attempts to keep members of the society informed of ongoing developments were strengthened by the circulation of a bulletin three or four times a year. Initially this was a modest, cyclostyled document that offered news of members' activities, arrangements for study tours, book reviews, and other materials. The scope of the bulletin grew to include, for example, proposals for a research project on school textbooks in different countries, and responses to a questionnaire asking members for information about books and visual aids used in their courses on comparative education. It was also in this Bulletin that members received from the then Chair, Margaret B. Sutherland (1971), a report on the 1<sup>st</sup> World Congress of Comparative Education Societies held in Ottawa, Canada, in 1970, and on the proposal made there to create "a Council and a continuing Congress". Later issues highlighted the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Congress of Comparative Education Societies, held at the University of London Institute of Education in 1977. This event was organised by the main body of CESE rather than by the British Section of CESE, and was both the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Congress and the 8<sup>th</sup> biennial CESE Congress.

From the modest publication of the Bulletin, there developed a more scholarly production, the journal *Compare*. This became the official journal of the British society in 1970. Initially *Compare* was published by a small firm in Liverpool called Dejall and Meyorre. This publisher kept changing the size of the volumes, and although the content of some papers was extremely good, university libraries found it hard to find the appropriate shelf space. In 1976, *Compare* was taken over by Carfax Publishers in Oxford, and it has since evolved into one of the leading, internationally peer-reviewed journals in the field. The Founding Editor was Leon Boucher of Chester College. A useful history of "*Compare*" was written by Higginson (2001) and is available elsewhere. The journal expanded from two to three issues per year in 1992, and from three to four issues in 2003. With the

Taylor and Francis Group's subsequent incorporation of Carfax, the quality of production and marketing contributed much strategic support for *Compare*; and this in turn assisted the growth and robustness of BAICE.

Initially, it seemed as if the new journal would include with its scholarly articles, the types of communications with members which the original bulletin had provided. Certainly the production of the separate bulletin fell into abeyance in the mid-1970s. However, in 1981 this kind of communication was revived in the form of an annual Newsletter which contained information on members' activities, conferences and projects, and book reviews. This series continued until 1989. More recently, communication with members has been through an annual Chairperson's letter which provides information about changes in the society, past and forthcoming conferences, and the like. In due course, e-mail and the website ([www.baice.ac.uk](http://www.baice.ac.uk)) became more important.

Numerous other publication developments for BCES/BCIES took place from the 1980s. Reports of the annual conferences, including the papers delivered during them, had been published in cyclostyled format from 1966 to 1979, much like the regular conference reports from CESE. However, beginning in 1981 the annual conference papers were published in book form by Croom Helm publishers. The themes that commanded attention at this stage included: Politics and Educational Change (1981); Changing Priorities in Teacher Education (1982); Youth, Education and Employment (1983); Dependence and Interdependence in Education (1983); Education in Multicultural Societies (1984); and International Academic Interchange and Co-operation in Higher Education (1987). When Croom Helm was absorbed into a larger publishing house, this arrangement ceased and conference papers were produced by the host institution for each annual conference. After the late 1990s, Symposium Books in Oxford published some of the society's annual conference papers. Occasional papers from one-day seminars have often been reproduced in simpler format, made available in web-based forms, or published in *Compare* or related journals. Indeed, the work of members has long been represented in the wider educational literature, and in other comparative and international journals and books. The journal *Comparative Education*, for example, was founded in the UK in 1964 and it has developed a distinguished profile of its own, led by key figures from CESE, BCES, BCIES and BAICE (see Crossley et al. 2007).

### **Alliances, Mergers and Renewed Growth**

Running parallel to the above developments was the British Association of Teachers and Researchers in Overseas Education (BATROE). This body brought together academics who were involved in teaching this sub-field, together with some of their students. BATROE also sought to hold annual conferences where both scholarly papers were presented and pastoral matters pertaining to the many Commonwealth and British Council scholars could be addressed. The British Council was always well represented, and the Chief Education Adviser at the ODM usually talked about government thinking on educational aid and development. Most of the students attending these meetings were taking diploma

or master's courses in the UK.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, two government policy changes had a major impact on the position of overseas students. In the early 1980s, the Conservative government courted anger from the academic community by developing a policy towards overseas students whereby they were expected to pay 'full-cost' fees. This policy was seen to discriminate against poor international students and to tarnish Britain's enviable reputation for dealing equally with overseas students. Following a public outcry, students from Hong Kong, Malaysia, Cyprus and the European Union (EU) were exempted from the increased fees for a period of three years. The policy paper on the 'Power of Change' (Overseas Development Administration 1992), then advocated a reduction in the number of Commonwealth and British Council scholars coming to the UK for long courses. Instead it recommended that they should be trained in another developing country. This policy paper was widely criticised for its short-sightedness and its likely impact on British higher education (Watson 1994). Given these policy changes, it was inevitable that the size and influence of BATROE itself would decline. Thus both BCIES and BATROE were facing major challenges at about the same time.

In 1979, two Birmingham businessmen/project management consultants, the Ozanne brothers, decided to launch a new education journal, the *International Journal of Educational Development*, to fill a perceived niche in the market. They were concerned about the cynicism that they encountered in the developing countries with regard to the so-called 'experts' who arrived for brief visits and then felt able to write definitive reports. They were also concerned that the importance of education in the development discourse was being squeezed out by economists. They therefore aimed to publish a journal containing articles based on research into policy and practice in the developing world which might influence policy-makers. The first two volumes of the journal were published by W.I. Ozanne and Associates Ltd., and were printed by a firm in Hong Kong, but it became apparent that this system was economically not viable. Bill Ozanne, therefore, approached Pergamon Press in Oxford to see if they would like to add the journal to their social science portfolio. They agreed enthusiastically, beginning with Volume 3, Number 1. Elsevier Science Ltd. later took over the Pergamon imprimatur and continued to publish the journal, which is now recognised as one of the leaders in the field. Both this journal and *Comparative Education* are available to members of BAICE at reduced subscription rates, and in the case of *Comparative Education*, to individual members of some constituent societies of the WCCES. To celebrate the first 10 years of the *International Journal of Educational Development*, it was agreed to host a conference in Oxford. Thus the first International Oxford Conference on Education and Development was held in September 1989 and attracted over 80 participants from 26 different countries (Watson 1990).

Meanwhile, several academics and individuals concerned about the apparent decline in the number of British personnel involved in international education met to see how to increase collaboration between the different constituent groups. The key figures were Beverley Young (British Council), Peter

Williams (Commonwealth Secretariat), Kenneth King (University of Edinburgh), and Keith Watson (University of Reading). Bill Ozanne was also involved in later discussions. These discussions led to the creation of the United Kingdom Forum for International Education and Training (UKFIET), which eventually brought together professional associations such as BCIES, BATROE and BALID (British Association for Literacy in Development); non-governmental organisations such as Education for Development, Action Aid and Oxfam; and agencies such as the British Council, DFID and the Commonwealth Secretariat, to share ideas and organise a biennial international conference on education and development (Watson and King, 1991). It was agreed that, in addition to organising Oxford conferences, UKFIET would hold colloquia/ seminars on key educational issues. The underlying idea was that while organisations such as BCIES and BATROE would continue to hold their own annual conferences in one year, they would benefit from coming together every second year as part of a larger event. This would include delegates from international bodies such as the World Bank, UNESCO, DFID and the EU together with academics and researchers from around the world.

The first UKFIET-sponsored Oxford International Conference on Education and Development (though in reality it was the second such event), was held in 1991. Since then it has gained in importance and prestige with the result that the seventh conference in 2003 had over 400 delegates from over 70 countries and the eighth one in 2005 was larger still. These biennial conferences had clearly become an important landmark for both British and international scholars and practitioners involved in comparative, international and development education (see [www.ukfiet.org](http://www.ukfiet.org)).

The success of UKFIET and the first two Oxford conferences thus facilitated closer co-operation between different groups involved in comparative and international education in the UK. It also coincided with major changes in funding for educational research, moves towards greater collaboration between institutions and organisations, and the decline in funding for overseas students. With the obvious benefits of such alliances, negotiations took place during the mid-1990s between the officials of BATROE and BCIES to combine as a new and larger association of interested professionals. Rosemary Preston (University of Warwick), the then Chair of BCIES, together with Thelma Henderson (also of the University of Warwick), the then Chair of BATROE, Bill Ozanne, the Secretary of both UKFIET and BATROE, Peter Williams (formerly Commonwealth Secretariat), and Keith Watson, the then Chair of UKFIET, undertook to draw up a new constitution for a reformulated society. This was achieved in September 1997, and the new name was confirmed as the British Association for International and Comparative Education (BAICE). This was ratified at the inaugural BAICE conference at the University of Reading in September 1998.

Looking back, it was highly appropriate that Reading should have been the venue for the first BAICE conference since this was another new beginning and it was here that the original British Section of CESE had been formed in 1966. Moreover, the three keynote papers prepared for the inaugural conference

collectively formed a launch symposium appropriately titled 'Reconceptualising Comparative and International Education'. This was convened by Michael Crossley (University of Bristol), Keith Watson (University of Reading) and Rosemary Preston (University of Warwick), and contributed much to the intellectual rationale that underpinned the formation of BAICE itself. Indeed Crossley (2000) and Crossley and Watson (2003) subsequently developed these themes, building on the efforts of earlier generations of UK comparativists, to encourage greater co-operation between 'comparative' and 'international' colleagues and constituencies. They have also articulated ways in which a fundamental 'reconceptualisation' of the field could be pursued further in theoretical, methodological, substantive and organisational terms. Selected papers from the inaugural BAICE conference were published first in Volume 29, Number 3 of *Compare* (1999), and subsequently in a book edited by the conference convenor (Watson 2001).

The renewed aims of BAICE reflected the combined traditions upon which it was founded. To cite the official society brochure (2004, p.2), the association aimed to encourage the growth and development of international and comparative studies in education by:

- promoting teaching and cross-disciplinary research;
- facilitating research publication;
- networking with other professionals and professional organisations;
- supporting students;
- organising conferences and meetings; and
- being a resource to policy makers.

A new constitution was introduced in 1997. The BAICE Executive Committee, elected by the full membership, normally meets three times a year, and an elected Chair and Vice-Chair each hold office for two-year periods. The Vice-Chair normally succeeds the Chair, to maintain continuity. A President is also elected annually, the main role being the presentation of a Presidential Address at the annual conference. While the Executive Committee deals with most ongoing society business, an Annual General Meeting held during the conference ratifies key decisions and provides further representation and guidance. An honorary BAICE Secretary provides administrative support. Over the years, therefore, many traditions and structures first developed for the British Section of CESE have been maintained, though working procedures have been formalised and systematised, reflecting increasing transparency and organisational maturity.

### **Further Developments**

Reflecting renewed national and international interest in comparative and international research throughout the social sciences, worldwide as well as UK membership of BAICE has grown steadily, and research student engagement has been especially noticeable. Since 2005 the BAICE Executive Committee has included a research student representative, and other student members have played a key role as Membership Secretaries. Regular day conferences have

increasingly been targeted at student members. These include the first joint day conference of BAICE and the British Educational Research Association (BERA) on 'Globalisation, Culture and Comparative Education', held at the University of Bristol in 2003, and a dedicated BAICE/BERA research student event at the University of Oxford in 2004. BAICE has thus continued to reach out to other research constituencies – including UKFIET, the UK Academy for Learned Societies in the Social Sciences, research councils, and several non-governmental organisations. Most teaching in the field is now focussed at the postgraduate level, and related closely to research and consultancy work; but the BAICE constituency continues to grow. Nevertheless, within the society much remains to be done. For example, a formal archive would be a considerable asset and remains a priority for future development.

Links with the WCCES have always been strong. Brian Holmes, Professor of Comparative Education at the University of London Institute of Education was a founder member of the WCCES and its second President (1974-77). Edmund King, Professor of Education at the University of London King's College, was also a founder member of the WCCES and Chairperson of the Research Committee (1987-89). These distinguished figures in the field of comparative education later served as Co-opted Members of the WCCES and remained as active and valued founder members until the end of their lives. Raymond Ryba, from the University of Manchester, was the third Secretary General for a long period (1983-96). Mark Bray, who had joined the British Section of CESE in 1978 while teaching at the University of Edinburgh, remained a member of the society in its various manifestations after his move to the University of Hong Kong (via the Universities of Papua New Guinea and London) in 1986. In 1994 he was appointed WCCES Assistant Secretary General to work with Raymond Ryba; in 2000 he became the fifth Secretary General; and in 2004 he was elected the 10<sup>th</sup> President of the WCCES. David Turner of the University of Glamorgan, who had been Assistant Secretary General from 1982 to 1985, became Chair of the WCCES Finance Standing Committee in 1997 and WCCES Treasurer in 2000; and Rosemary Preston of the University of Warwick played a major role in the 2004 12<sup>th</sup> World Congress in Cuba, in her capacity as Chair of the WCCES Congress Standing Committee. BAICE contributed funds to this very successful event which were earmarked for young scholars facing financial hardship.

Factors that have influenced the contemporary revitalisation of the field include changing geopolitical relations that have reshaped global politics and challenged dominant world views; the intensification of globalisation that has transformed priorities and perspectives worldwide; and paradigmatic developments that draw increased attention to the importance of cultural and contextual differences. More specifically, international competition has heightened interest in international rankings of academic achievement (and in critiques of them); and the growing influence of international development agendas such as the Millennium Development Goals has attracted both widespread attention and sustained critical analysis. Details of the changing intellectual landscape of BAICE can be found in Watson's (1996, 1998) reviews of the varied fortunes of

comparative and international education. Indeed, the boundaries of comparative education have become increasingly diffuse as both new and experienced researchers have developed comparative dimensions to their work (see e.g. Alexander 2001). The two linked special millennial issues of the journal *Comparative Education* (Crossley & Jarvis 2000, 2001) illustrate these trends well. They also articulate the diversity of British perspectives on the field, and present an insightful international response. Links between UK comparativists and CESE have also continued to develop, reflecting ongoing European studies by researchers such as Patricia Broadfoot, David Phillips and Marilyn Osborn (see Alexander et al. 1999, 2000); and direct organisational involvement, such as Robert Cowen's (University of London) election to the CESE Presidency in 2004.

While the history of BAICE is complex and multifaceted, improved awareness of this history can do much to enhance understanding of contemporary issues and debates. From the early beginnings related closely to teacher education, the field has transformed itself in ways that have seen the research orientation emerge more strongly. Reflecting and inspiring broader intellectual trends, the dominance of the nation-state as the primary unit of analysis has been challenged by arguments favouring greater methodological diversity and more globally and more locally framed analyses (Bray & Thomas 1995; Arnove & Torres 2003; Crossley & Watson 2003). BAICE and its members have played an active part in this broader international revitalisation and reconceptualisation; and in the light of this, the future is both challenging and encouraging.

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