

Multiculturalism as a topic of interest for Comparative Education in Wolfgang Mitter's publications

Multiculturalismo como tema de interesse para a Educação Comparada nas publicações de Wolfgang Mitter

Multiculturalismo como tema de interés para la Educación Comparada en las publicaciones de Wolfgang Mitter

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyse multiculturalism as a topic of interest for the field of Comparative Education, based on an exploratory study from the publications of the comparatist Wolfgang Mitter (1927–2014). This exploratory study analysed 42 selected studies published between the years 1964 and 2017, and verified that Mitter focused his approaches on cultural pluralism, especially in Eastern European countries and the challenges facing educational systems in the context of globalisation. The theme of multiculturalism emerges as a topic of interest in the field of Comparative Education. Also, it demonstrates a macro perspective on the educational systems, educational policies and the international challenges facing education.

Keywords

Wolfgang Mitter. Comparative Education. Multiculturalism.

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RESUMO: Este artigo visa analisar o multiculturalismo como um tópico de interesse para o campo da Educação Comparada, com base no estudo exploratório das publicações do comparatista Wolfgang Mitter (1927-2014). Foram analisados 42 estudos selecionados publicados entre os anos 1964 e 2017. Verificou-se que Mitter centra as suas abordagens no pluralismo cultural, especialmente nos países da Europa de Leste e nos desafios enfrentados pelos sistemas educativos no contexto da globalização. O tema do multiculturalismo surge como um tema de interesse para o campo da educação comparada. Também demonstra uma perspectiva macro sobre os sistemas educativos, as políticas educativas e os desafios internacionais enfrentados pela educação.

Palavras-chave: Wolfgang Mitter. Educação Comparada. Multiculturalismo.

RESUMEN: Este artículo pretende analizar el multiculturalismo como tema de interés para el campo de la Educación Comparada, a través de un estudio exploratorio de las publicaciones del comparatista Wolfgang Mitter (1927-2014). Se analizaron 42 estudios seleccionados publicados entre los años 1964 y 2017. Se comprobó que Mitter centra sus abordajes en el pluralismo cultural, especialmente en los países de Europa del Este, y en los desafíos que enfrentan los sistemas educativos en el contexto de la globalización. El tema del multiculturalismo emerge como un tema de interés para el campo de la educación comparada. También demuestra una perspectiva macro sobre los sistemas educativos, las políticas educativas y los desafíos internacionales que enfrenta la educación.

Palabras clave: Wolfgang Mitter. Educación Comparada. Multiculturalismo.

Introduction

The comparatist Wolfgang Mitter (1927-2014) was born in Trautenau (Trutnov), in the region of Bohemia – Czechoslovakia, during a period of significant transformations in the European scenario. He received a scholarship to complete his doctorate in 1954 at the Free University of Berlin under the supervision of Professor Werner Philipp³ (CESE, s.d.). In 1948 he started a degree in history, English language and literature, Slavic languages and literatures and philosophy at the University of Mainz.

In line with his background in history, language and literature, it is possible that Mitter developed an interest in the relationship between education and historical and social context while still attending Russian and Eastern European history classes at the University of Mainz. With the thesis *Die Entwicklung der politischen Anschauungen Karamzins*⁴ (Mitter, 1955), explores the theme of the political and philosophical ideas of Nikolay Karamzin⁵ (1776-1826).

³ Werner Philipp (1908-1996) taught at the University of Mainz from 1946-1952 and taught Russian and Eastern European history at the Free University of Berlin until 1934, when he immigrated to the United States.

⁴ *The Development of Karamzin's Political Views* [Free translation].

⁵ Born in the Russian province of Mikhaylovka, Simbirsk in 1776, Nikolay Mikhaylovich Karamzin was an influential historian and poet whose research focused on Russian history (Britannica, 2021).

His trajectory as a researcher interested in comparative education was established mainly in the 1960s. From 1956 to 1964, he taught at the classical humanist secondary school Friedrichsgymnasium Kassel in Hesse (Germany) and, from 1964 to 1972, assumed a chair of General and Comparative Education at the Paedagogische Hochschule in Lüneburg, Lower Saxony (Germany) and simultaneously took over as Professor of Comparative Education at the University of Hamburg, North Germany (Aleksandra, 2014). Mitter also held positions in different institutions and research associations within the field of Comparative Education (Table 1).

Mitter was also Editor of the International Review of Education (UNESCO-Institute for Education, Hamburg) and the German journal *Bildung und Erziehung* between 1971 and 1997. In the following years, he was nominated to the German Commission for UNESCO (Honorary Member), Academia Europaea (Conferred Member), Russian Academy of Education (Conferred Member), holding positions or being nominated to honours and awards by different organisations dedicated to research in the field of Comparative Education.

He intensifies the studies on educational science, particularly on the development of educational curricula from a comparative education perspective. In addition to several books' reviews, where it can be seen his deep critical sense for the subject of education, with particular interest in education in the USSR and Eastern Europe, the main publications include: *Das sowjetische Schulwesen*⁶ (Mitter, 1970), *On the Efficiency of the Soviet School System* (Mitter, 1973), *Didaktische Probleme und Themen in der UdSSR*⁷ (Mitter, 1974), *Sekundarabschlüsse mit Hochschulreife im internationalen Vergleich: Ergebnisse einer Untersuchung über Bildungssysteme sozialistischer Staaten*⁸ (Mitter & Novikov, 1976), *Pädagogische Forschung und Bildungspolitik in der Sowjetunion: Organisation, Gegenstand, Methoden*⁹ (Mitter & Novikov, 1978).

⁶ *The Soviet school system* [Free translation].

⁷ *Didactic problems and topics in the USSR* [Free translation].

⁸ *Secondary qualifications with higher education entrance qualification in international comparison: results of a study on education systems of socialist states* [Free translation].

⁹ *Pedagogical Research and Educational Policy in the Soviet Union: Organisation, Subject, Methods* [Free translation].

Table 1 – Positions held, honours and awards – Wolfgang Mitter

Year	Comparative Education Organization
1964–1972	Chair of General and Comparative Education, Paedagogische Hochschule (Teachers College), Luneburg, Professor of Comparative Education, University of Hamburg
1972	Head of the General and Comparative Education, German Institute for International Educational Research, Frankfurt am Main
1974–1995	Professor at University of Frankfurt am
1978–1981; 1987–1995	Director, German Institute for International Educational Research, Frankfurt am Main
1978–1981; 1987–1995	Director of Institute for International Educational Research
1981–1985	President of the Comparative Education Society in Europe (CESE)
1985	Award of the Order “Chevalier de Léopold II” (Belgium)
1991–1995	President of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES)
1992	Goethe Plaque of the Land Hessen (Germany)
1997-2000	President of the World Association of Educational Research (WAER). Honorary member
1998	Medal “650 years of Charles University Prague.”
2001	Honorary Doctorate (Dr. h. c.), Faculty of Education, Carl-von-Ossietzky University, Oldenburg
2010	“Nummus memorialis argenteus” (Commemorative Silver Medal) of the Charles University
1998	Medal “650 years of Charles University Prague”

Source: adapted from *Academia Europaea* (Aleksandra, 2014).

Although he maintains his interest in the education system in Russia and its neighbouring countries, he broadens his focus to the new globalised contexts of societies and multiculturalism. For this comparatist, multiculturalism is a

phenomenon that manifests itself in diverse geographical contexts and social spheres, requiring strategies that include ethnic, religious and cultural pluralism in education policies (Mitter, 1987).

Multiculturalism and challenges for an educational pluralism

Multiculturalism can be approached in different fields of investigation and distinct perspectives, being predominantly inserted in approaches centred on social sciences, particularly in sociology, psychology and anthropology (DomNwachukwu, 2010). In an anthropological approach, we can assume that multiculturalism is not a new phenomenon; it has manifested throughout various moments in human history with the

coexistence of different ethnic groups and religions in the same society or social group (Linton, 1936; Roegholt, Wardekker & Oers, 1988, Halbwachs, 2010).

Multiculturalism highlights social frictions more forcefully in a context where education is more vulnerable to political, economic, and social issues (Mulusa, 1992). In reaction, temporary adjustment measures

are adopted, not necessarily effective in social advancement through education. Although it is not an entirely positive context that benefits educational pluralism, as in the case of societies with some established social structure, this scenario may reveal a modernisation of community and a path to more equity in education (Brunner, 1992).

The first approaches to multicultural contexts and their impact on educational practices were developed in the first decades of the 1960s in Anglo-Saxon countries, specifically Canada, Australia, the USA and the United Kingdom (Catarci, 2015). Educational pluralisms emerge from regional or even national contexts where multiculturalism is present in society, and the school, as a social microcosm, reflects multicultural realities (Banks, 2016) that need to be considered for a more equitable society.

In the United States, multiculturalism in education surged in the 1960s in response to civil rights movements (Banks & Banks, 2013). Multiculturalism also emerged as a measure of social inclusion and equity in countries that were recovering democracy after the end of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, but “this acceptance does not disburden schools and teachers the need of coping with conflicts, all the more so as conflicts constituent element of democracy in West” (Mitter, 2010, p. 144).

Although the terms multiculturalism and educational pluralism are epistemologically close, it is essential to note that they are not the same thing. From a praxeological point of view, while multiculturalism addresses the

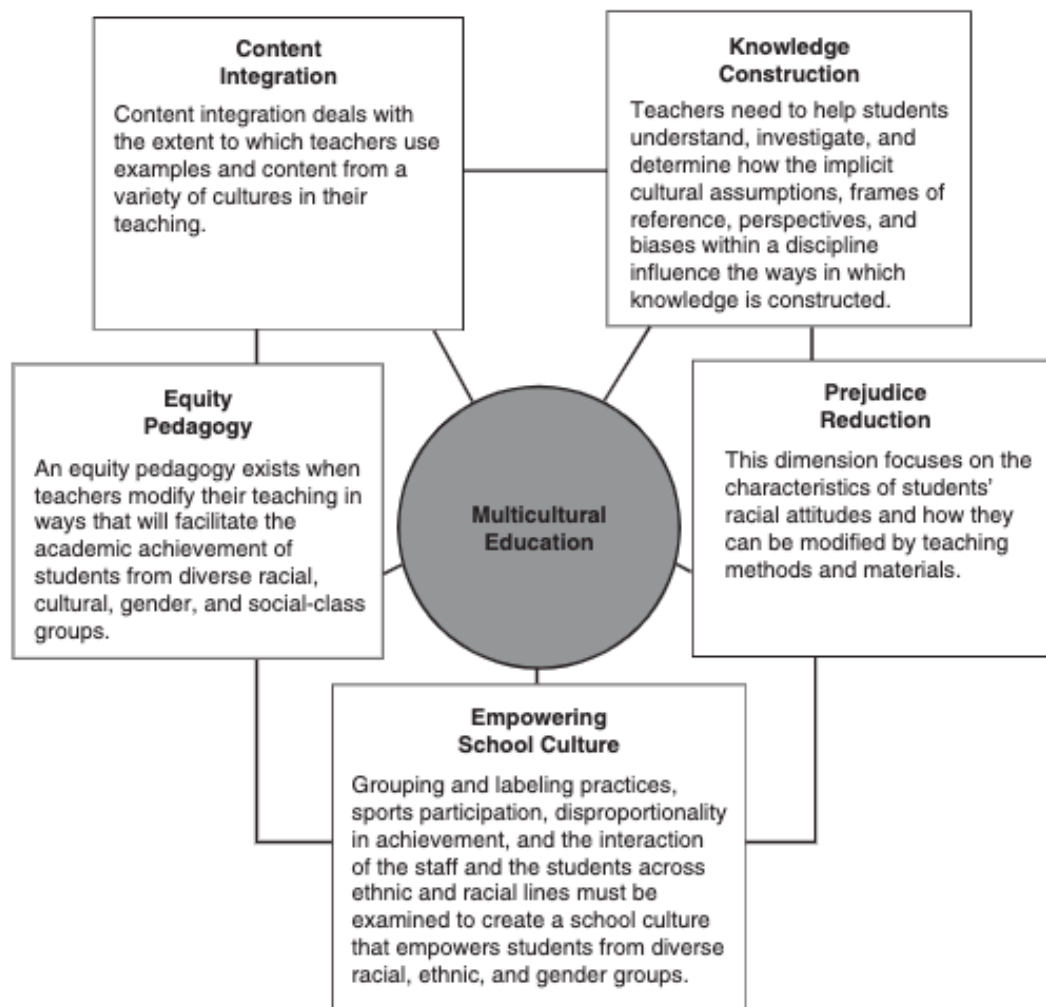
cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious diversity of society (Rattansi, 2011), educational pluralism focuses on the context of education and the socio-cultural reality of the school.

Banks & Banks (2013) point out that it is essential to see at least five dimensions: 1. Construction of knowledge; 2. Reduction of prejudices; 3. Strengthening of school culture; 4. Pedagogy of equity, and 5. Integration of contents (Figure 1).

From the authors' perspective, it is possible to explore matters related to multiculturalism as a social element inserted in the contents of the school (dimension 5), leading the students to understand the cultural diversity of the school community as part of their construction of knowledge (dimension 1). As well as discussing the individual and collective damage related to prejudice (dimension 2) and understanding the differences to exercise respect and tolerance. The simple conscious adoption of these dimensions may promote the empowerment of the school culture (dimension 4) and the development of a pedagogy of equity (dimension 5).

Multicultural education is not necessarily an education for a pluriform society. Educational pluralism in a multicultural school should not aim to standardise identities, but help promote greater awareness that tolerance of the other is as necessary as acceptance of my identity, culture, and worldview.

Figure 1 – *The Dimensions of Multicultural Education*



Source: Banks & Banks (2013, p. 19).

Study Purpose

This article aims to analyse multiculturalism as a topic of interest for the field of comparative education, based on an exploratory study from the publications of the comparatist Wolfgang Mitter.

Adopting a qualitative analysis approach, a narrative literature review was conducted with systematised procedures to map the publications of Wolfgang Mitter available in three international reference databases.

The selection of databases, the search procedures and identification of sources, data extraction and analysis will be described in this topic, utilising the recommended guidelines for investigations with systematised literature reviews for research in education (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018; Zawacki-Richter, Kerres, Bedenlier, Bond, & Buntins, 2020).

Method

Study Search

The research was conducted using Web of Science (WoS), Scopus and EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS) as data sources. The choice is justified by the fact that databases and indexers are recognised as relevant within the Social Sciences, particularly in the field of Comparative Education.

The strings established for the search and data collection allowed locating the most significant number of author publications available in each selected database [Author: AU "Mitter, Wolfgang" / Search mode: Boolean / 1920-2021 / All databases].

Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria were elaborated to meet the research objective, allowing a

selection of the publications found from the established parameters. Nevertheless, due to linguistic limitations, only publications written in English or German were considered from the start.

The results underwent the first selection considering the thematic of "multiculturalism in education"¹⁰ as an eligibility criterion. The second eligibility criterion is based on the type of scientific publication, including all studies published as articles, conference papers, book sections, and books. Therefore, publications that did not meet these eligibility criteria were excluded (e.g., other publication types such as book reviews and publications that do not address the thematic criterion).

Findings

Screening and Extraction Procedures

After collecting data in the databases EBSCO, WoS, e Scopus, the results were entered into the Syras 1.10.0 online platform for the manual screening by the article's authors (SCIPLOT, 2020). Publish or Perish 8 (Harzing, 2007) and VOSviewer 1.6.18 (CWTS, 2022) were used for automated analysis of the results included in the review.

As demonstrated in the PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 2), 269 papers were identified in the databases: EBSCO (n=236), Scopus (n=27) and Web of Science - WoS (n=6). From this first result, 102 duplicated records were eliminated by automatic

verification of the databases and 37 by manual verification.

After eliminating the results due to duplicity or other reasons, 130 records were inserted into the Syras online platform, and 24 duplicate records were detected by the platform, which was eliminated. The screening was then done with the universe of 106 papers, of which only 46 were selected for analysis, using the eligibility criteria set.

Only articles, book chapters, books or reports written in English or German that address the topic of multiculturalism in education were considered eligible. As not all records had an abstract, during the entire

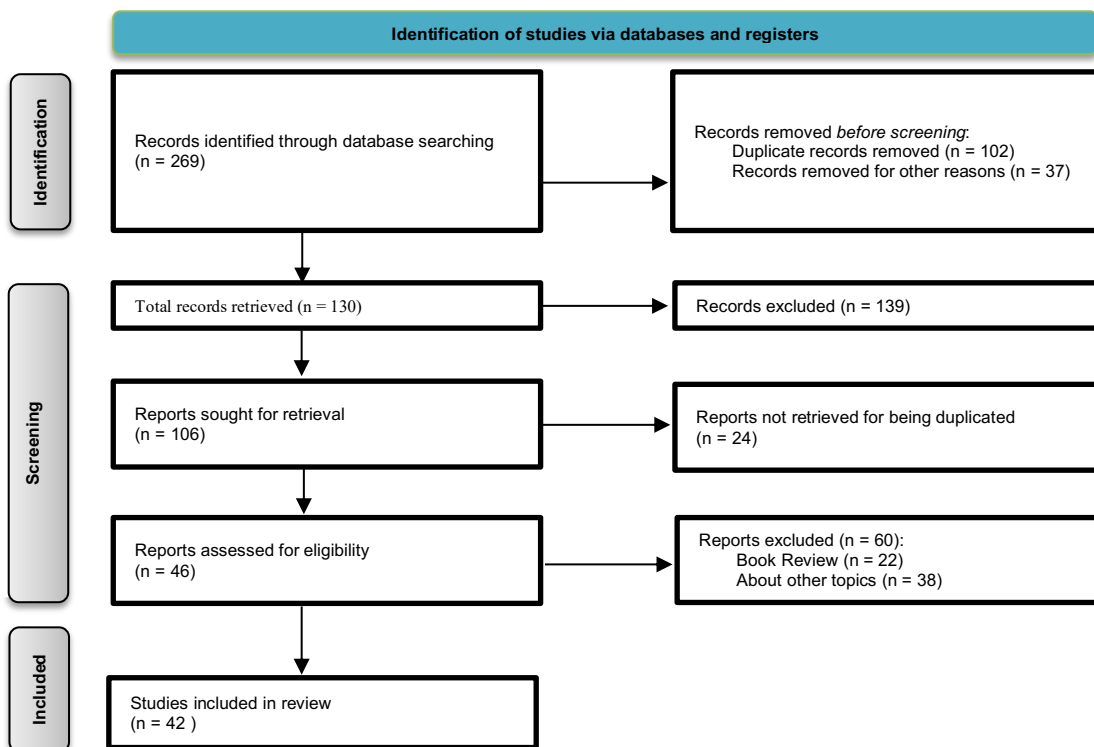
¹⁰ This selection was based on the screening of the results, considering the occurrences of words, both in English and German, related to the theme, such as: "interdisciplinarity"; "intergroup", "cultural", "culture", "pluralism", "diversity", "foreign", "global", "globalism", "globalization", "international", "multicultural", "multiculturalism", "integration", "migrant", "migration", "immigrant", "immigration", "groups".

screening process, the introductions of the records accessible for reading by the researchers were checked.

During this procedure, it was verified that, at the moment, it would only be possible to

have access to the full texts of 42 studies included in the review (Table 2), forming the corpus of content analysis.

Figure 2 – PRISMA Flow Diagram 2020 v1



Source: Databases and registers (Page, et al., 2021).

Analysis of selected studies

The analysis was performed automated and manually by MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2022 (release 22.1.1). From the methodological standpoint, a deductive analysis was initially adopted using an analytical framework structured at the beginning of the investigation and in line with the descriptors used in the research. As some complementary information emerged from the data, inductive analysis was also constituted with categories of codes that emerged from the results.

From the set of studies included (Table 2), it was verified that five are book sections (BS), one is a conference paper (CP) published in a journal, and 36 are articles (A) published predominantly in scientific journals in the field of comparative education between the years 1964 and 2017. As expected, due to the author's background, 14 works (33%) are publications in German and 28 (67%) in English in this set of selected studies.

Table 2 – Overview of Included Studies (n=42)

Author(s)	Publication Title	Type*	Journal	Vol/Issue	Pages
Mitter, 1964	Russischunterricht 1964 in Der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (G*)	A	Osteuropa	14(9)	634-639
Mitter, 1972	Russischunterricht an Sowjetischen Schulen der Nationalen Minderheiten (G*)	A	Osteuropa	22(1)	43-55
Mitter, 1973	On the Efficiency of the Soviet School System (E*)	A	Comparative Education	9(1)	34-47
Mitter, 1976	Wege zum Hochschulstudium und Bildungsaspirationen von Jugendlichen in osteuropäischen Ländern (G*)	A	Osteuropa	26(11)	977-996
Mitter, 1977	The Policy-Oriented Task of Comparative Education (E*)	A	Comparative Education	13(2)	95-100
Mitter, 1978	Sekundarbereich II - Abschluß der Jugendschule oder Beginn der Erwachsenenbildung? Skizzierung einiger Grundfragen im Spiegel internationaler Tendenzen (G*)	A	Bildung und Erziehung	31(1)	486-495
Mitter, 1980	Education in the Federal Republic of Germany: The Next Decade (E*)	A	Comparative Education	16(3)	257-265
Mitter, 1980	Gegenwartsfragen des ungarischen Bildungswesens (G*)	A	Osteuropa	30(2)	108-118
Mitter, 1982	School systems and social equity in western and communist countries: A historical-comparative appraisal (E*)	A	International Journal of Educational Development	2(3)	213-224
Mitter, 1984	Foreword (E*)	CP	European Journal of Education	19(1)	7-9
Mitter, 1985	Goal Aspects of Teacher Education (E*)	A	European Journal of Teacher Education	8(3)	273-282
Mitter, 1985	Primarschulpädagogik – internationale Entwicklung. Zu diesem Heft (G*)	A	Bildung und Erziehung	38(3)	277-280
Mitter, 1986	West Germany (E*)	A	Education and Urban Society	18(4)	437-448
Mitter, 1986	Bilingual and Intercultural Education in Soviet Schools (E*)	BS	Tomiaik J.J. (eds) Western Perspectives on Soviet Education in the 1980s		97-122
Mitter, 1987	Integration und Reintegration von Minderheiten im Bildungswesen (G*)	A	Bildung und Erziehung	40(3)	255-258
Mitter, 1987	Expectations of schools and teachers in the context of social and economic changes (E*)	A	International Review of Education	33(3)	263-276
Mitter, 1987	The Teacher and the Bureaucracy: Some considerations concluded from a Soviet case (E*)	A	Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education	17(1)	47-60
Mitter, 1988	Erziehungsziele und Persönlichkeitsentwicklung. Kommentar zur 13. Konferenz der Comparative Education Society in Budapest, 27. Juni – 1. Juli 1988 (G*)	A	Bildung und Erziehung	41(1)	337-350
Mitter, 1990	Educational Reform in West and East Germany in European Perspective (E*)	A	Oxford Review of Education	16(3)	333-341
Mitter, 1991	Teacher Education in Europe: Problems, Challenges, Perspectives (E*)	A	British Journal of Educational Studies	39(2)	138-152
Mitter, 1991	Comprehensive Schools in Germany: Concepts, Developments and Issues (E*)	A	European Journal of Education	26(2)	155-165
Mitter, 1992	Education in Present-Day Germany: Some considerations as mirrored in comparative education (E*)	A	Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education	22(1)	53-67
Mitter, 1992	Educational Adjustments and Perspectives in a United Germany (E*)	A	Comparative Education	28(1)	45-52
Mitter, 1992	Current Trends in Educational Research in Europe (E*)	A	European Journal of Teacher Education	15(1)	53-64
Mitter, 1992	Multicultural Education: Basic Considerations in an Interdisciplinary Approach (E*)	A	Prospects	22(1)	31-40
Mitter, 1993	Das Bildungssystem im Loyalitätskonflikt in historisch-vergleichender Sicht (G*)	A	Bildung und Erziehung	46(4)	375-391
Mitter, 1993	Education, democracy and development in a period of revolutionary change (E*)	A	International Review of Education	39(6)	463-471
Mitter & von Kopp, 1993	Nationale Loyalität und kulturelle Identität im Konflikt. Zu diesem Heft (G*)	A	Bildung und Erziehung	46(4)	369-374
Mitter, 1997	Challenges to Comparative Education: Between Retrospect and Expectation (E*)	A	International Review of Education	43	401-412
Mitter, 1998	Globalisierung im Bildungswesen zwischen Realität und Utopie. Herausforderungen an "Bildung und Erziehung" zur Jahrhundertwende (G*)	A	Bildung und Erziehung	51(1)	101-118
Mitter, 2000	Zusammenprall oder Interaktion von Kulturkreisen? (G*)	A	Bildung und Erziehung	53(4)	411-428
Mitter, 2003	A decade of transformation: Educational policies in Central and Eastern Europe (E*)	A	International Review of Education	49(1)	75-96
Mitter, 2004	Nation-States versus Regions in European Education: Trends, Perspectives, Problems (E*)	A	European Education	36(3)	5-18
Mitter, 2004	Rise and decline of education systems: A contribution to the history of the modern state (E*)	A	Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education	34(4)	351-368
Mitter, 2005	Educational Research in the Federal Republic of Germany (E*)	BS	Nisbet, J.; Megarry, J.; NisbetWorld, S. (Eds) Yearbook of Education 1985		-7
Mitter, 2005	Educational Issues in a Globalising Society: Learning Between Progress and Risk (E*)	A	World Studies in Education	6(1)	5-22
Mitter, 2007	Introduction-Book-The Education Systems of Europe (E*)	BS	Hörner, W., Döbert, H., KOPP, B.V., Mitter, W. (eds) The Education Systems of Europe		1-10
Mitter, 2007	Education in Europe: The Way Ahead (E*)	BS	Hörner, W., Döbert, H., KOPP, B.V., Mitter, W. (eds) The Education Systems of Europe		852-866
Mitter, 2007	Das deutsche Bildungswesen im internationalen Vergleich (G*)	A	Bildung und Erziehung	60(2)	135-148
Mitter, 2009	Strukturdimensionen des Bildungswesens - funktionale Differenzierung versus soziale Ungleichheit (G*)	A	Bildung und Erziehung	62(3)	265-280
Mitter, 2010	Between retrospect and expectation: Trends and dimensions of education in East-Central Europe (E*)	A	Orbis Scholae	4(2)	41-60
Mitter, 2017	Educational issues in the multicultural society of Germany (E*)	BS	Education and Cultural Differences: New Perspectives		429-449

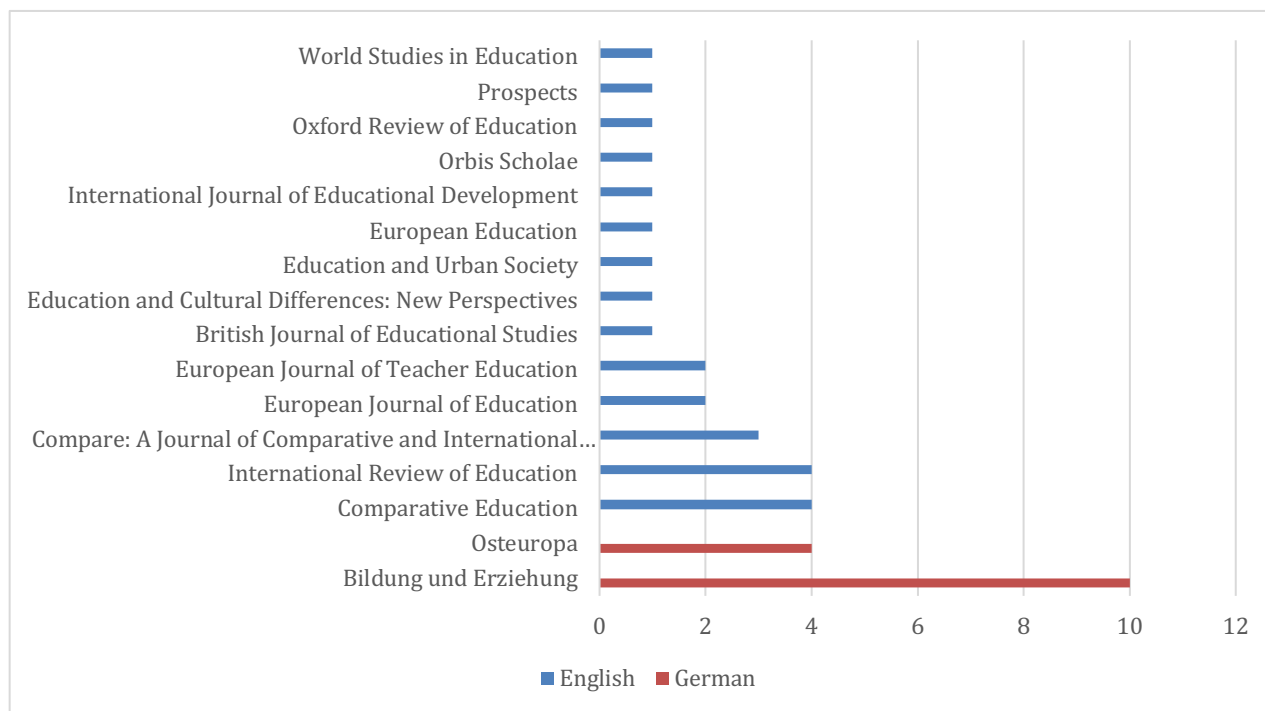
A-Artigo; CP-Conference Paper; BS-Book Section / (G) German / (E*) English

Source: data compilation by the author

It can be seen that publications in English occur in a more diverse range of journals (14). In contrast, German-language publications are concentrated in two journals: Osteuropa (4) and Bildung und Erziehung (10) (Table 2). Also found that

more than half of the selected records are publications in the journals Bildung und Erziehung (n=10), Osteuropa (n=4), Comparative Education (n=4), International Review of Education (n=4), Compare (n=3) and European Journal of Education (n=2).

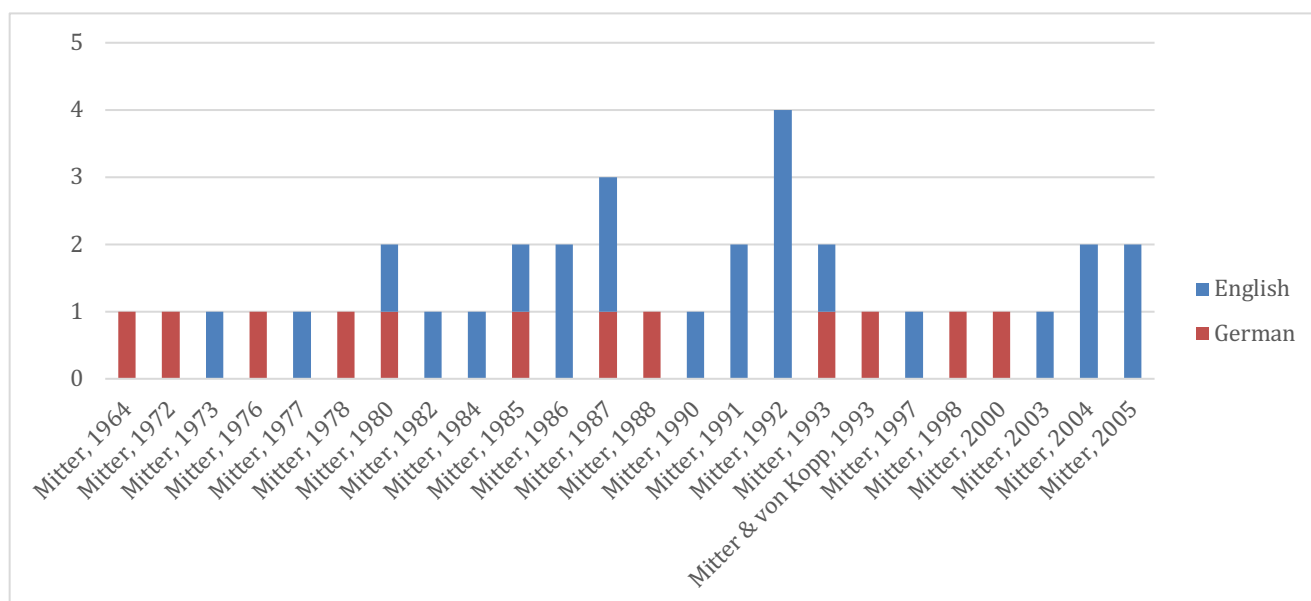
Graph 1 – Journals and languages of publications



The distribution of the works shows the author's interest in the topic, with studies in the field of comparative education distributed between the years 1964 and 2017. The author had at least one

publication related to the theme (Graph 2). It was also found that there are more publications in the years 1987 (n=3), 1992 (n=4), 1993 (n=3) e 2007 (n=3) (Table 2).

Graph 2 – Selected studies distributed per year and language of publication



Coding and Content Analysis

An initial set, created in an automated way by the software, was composed of 27 keywords such as codes with a broader scope and which served as a starting point for manual analysis and inductive coding process. The automated analysis of MAXQDA allowed us to verify the frequencies of the words of the set of descriptors associated with multiculturalism in education, its presence in the text segments and the percentage of segments where it appears in the group of selected studies (Table 3). In some studies, words emerged which were different from the initial descriptors used in the research but with similar meanings. They were included because they reflected the thematic framework of the texts.

The data showed that 70% of the selected studies featured the word 'international' in references to the theme of education. Also, the words "integration" (55%), "cultural" (60%), "global" (50%), "groups" (55%), "culture" (38%) and "foreign" (43%).

Together, these six words stand out in 612 coded text segments.

These words in comparative education denounce the axis of Mitter's reflection, especially his international perspective of education in a context of globalisation and interaction of human groups and cultures, national and foreign. He states that "In the current period, education systems are affected by the growing influence of global changes, concerning both their internal processes and their positions in the perceptions by the society." (Mitter, 2007, p. 853).

It is interesting that although the word "multicultural" appears in only 1/3 of the analysed studies (Table 3), the segments where the five words occur most frequently present approaches related to multiculturalism. This approach appears particularly when referring to Eastern European societies such as Croatia and Serbia and the multi-ethnic and international context of Southeast Europe (Mitter, 2000).

Table 3 – Frequencies and segments of text where the keywords code was located

Keyword Code	Ranking	Frequency of words		Coded segments (all studies)		Total of studies where KW were located	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
KW-international	1	438	28,50	221	14,44	30	71,43
KW-integration	2	196	12,75	99	6,47	23	54,76
KW-cultural	3	194	12,62	194	12,67	25	59,52
KW-global	4	82	5,34	82	5,36	21	50,00
KW-groups	5	80	5,20	80	5,23	23	54,76
KW-culture	6	79	5,14	79	5,16	16	38,10
KW-foreign	7	78	5,07	78	5,09	18	42,86
KW-multicultural	8	58	3,77	58	3,79	11	26,19
KW-diversity	9	45	2,93	45	2,94	14	33,33
KW-Globalisierung	10	41	2,67	41	2,68	7	16,67
KW-Kultur	11	37	2,41	37	2,42	10	23,81
KW-multiculturalism	12	35	2,28	35	2,29	6	14,29
KW-pluralism	13	34	2,21	34	2,22	14	33,33
KW-globalization	14	29	1,89	29	1,89	8	19,05
KW-migrant	15	22	1,43	22	1,44	10	23,81

KW-Vielfalt	16	11	0,72	11	0,72	7	16,67
KW-Pluralismus	17	8	0,52	8	0,52	4	9,52
KW-Ausland	18	7	0,46	7	0,46	3	7,14
KW-immigration	19	7	0,46	7	0,46	5	11,90
KW-Einwanderer	20	4	0,26	4	0,26	3	7,14
KW-globalism	21	4	0,26	4	0,26	2	4,76
KW-Globalismus	22	4	0,26	4	0,26	3	7,14
KW-immigrant	23	4	0,26	4	0,26	2	4,76
KW-Migranten	24	3	0,20	3	0,20	2	4,76
KW-Fremd	25	2	0,13	2	0,13	2	4,76
KW-interdisciplinarity	26	2	0,13	2	0,13	2	4,76
KW-kulturell	27	2	0,13	2	0,13	2	4,76

Source: data compilation by the authors.

Mitter's studies point to an ongoing concern with the political and social aspects affecting educational policies, systems, and teacher education, especially in Germany, Russia and neighbouring Eastern European countries.

The thematic analysis of the networked content, using the VOSviewer platform as a resource, allowed us to verify that the theme of “Eastern Europe” in connection with comparative analysis of and former the Soviet Union, educational policies, transformation, democratic citizenship and globalisation predominate in Wolfgang Mitter's research (Figure 3).

Figure 3 – Thematic network of the selected works (by VOSviewer)



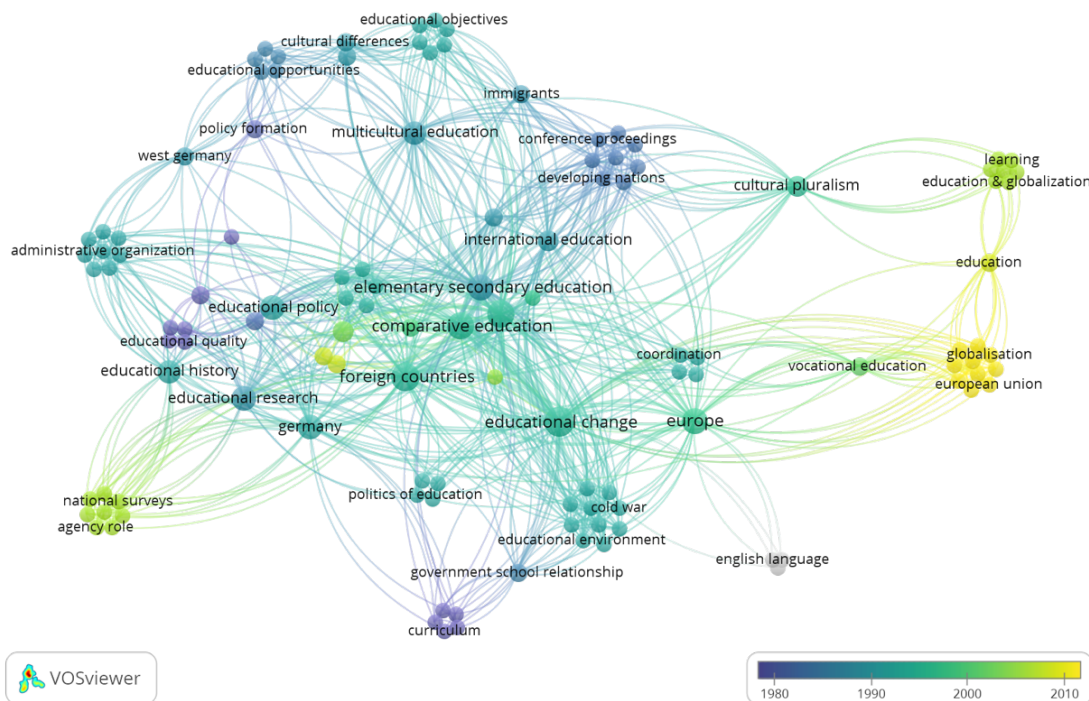
Mitter's approach to Eastern Europe refers to inclusion as a factor for integration and development. Mitter recalls the social and educational landscape and the challenges for Europe due to social, economic and political contexts. Although the topic appears prominently in the thematic analysis, it is not always the catalyst of the discourse.

In Western Europe, the streams of the border-crossing migrant workforce have expanded, for a long time already, by those of refugees and asylum seekers. Central Europe is likely to be included in this trend rather soon. The Russian Federation is worth mentioning too in this connection because it is confronted with the challenge to integrate millions of ethnic Russians 'returning' from former non-Russian Soviet republics. (Mitter, 2007, p. 859).

In the 42 works analysed, words related to multiculturalism in education stood out among the thematic clusters between the years 1980 to 2010, such as globalisation, European union, educational change,

international education, immigrants, cultural differences, cultural pluralism, politics of education, among others (Figure 4).¹¹

Figure 4 – Word clusters (by VOSviewer)



The thematic clusters also allow us to observe that the studies published in the last two decades of the previous century call for reflections on the scope of comparative education, topics such as “developing countries”, “multicultural education”, “cultural differences”, “police formation”, “immigrants”, “educational policies”, “international education” and “educational research”. Meanwhile, studies in the first decade of this century relate, among other topics, approaches such as “education” and “globalisation”, “European union” and “educational change”, “cultural pluralism” and “learning” (Figure 4).

Texts discuss the positive aspects of globalisation [“At first sight we get aware of globalisation that makes the boundaries permeable not only for commodities, but

also for people.” (Mitter, 2004, p. 357)], but also the challenges this context presents for education systems.

Within the shift of paradigm concerning the societal world system, as observed by Cowen and Beck, the emergence of new ‘educational spaces’ can be identified as an essential factor of change. At closer view it is an indicator of the decline of the ‘state (national) education system’. The shift takes place in the regional and global dimensions. (Mitter, 2004, p. 357)

Cultural aspects are highlighted as the approaches reflect on education systems in a macro perspective of definitions of nation and culture (Mitter, 1988). In this sense, the characteristics of cultural, political and economic diversity in the Southern East European region should be observed in an analysis of the impact of multiculturalism on educational systems (Mitter, 2000).

¹¹ Larger circles indicate a larger volume of cluster words.

The approach to multiculturalism seems to focus more on practical issues that inhibit the success of the strategies adopted rather than on theoretical issues. This sense states that the integration of children of different nationalities and cultures almost always needs to be done in an international school. This context is fascinating in the case of families that move for professional reasons so that parents have the resources to invest in better adjustment conditions.

These children often have to cope with individual adjustment difficulties, but these are comparatively easy to overcome through private remedial instruction or special educational measures typical of international schools (individual or small-group language courses, etc.). The success of these schools is rooted in above average teaching/learning conditions, extraordinary financial contributions by parents, and the motivation of students and parents. (Mitter, 1992, p. 432)

Although Mitter does not develop criticisms of this alternative for specific cases, his investigations highlight the importance of looking at multiculturalism broadly, avoiding isolated or individualistic actions in public schools that reveal a counter-tendency to educational pluralism.

Final Considerations

The paper analysed multiculturalism as a topic of interest for the field of comparative education from an exploratory study of the publications of the comparatist Wolfgang Mitter. The exploratory mapping revealed 42 studies published between 1964 and 2017 (the latter being a posthumous publication). Although 14 selected publications were written in German, the theme of multiculturalism was more explored in the English language publications. There is a higher connection between the topics related to the central theme.

The author is concerned not with presenting ready-made solutions but with comparing different educational realities, especially in the case of Eastern European countries. National educational policies do not always balance the various aspects related to cultural diversities and changes in the international scenario. Because of the phenomenon of globalisation, a theme present at many points in the selected studies, the relationship between school and government should be strategically rethought to verify the challenges imposed

on efficient learning in a multicultural context.

It is increasingly observed that individuals in different societies manifest behaviours of isolation and individualism that prevent the development of a shared identity (Cantle, 2012). These two realities represent a small part of the complexity that multiculturalism involves and how challenging this context is for designing policies that consider pluralism in education.

It can be seen that Wolfgang Mitter's studies approach multiculturalism in several aspects, allowing the reader of his works to observe his macro vision of education. In the last century, the author denounces the urgency of developing educational policies that consider cultural diversity a relevant element of the educational systems. As well as the need to increasingly investigate the subject from an international perspective of education.

Although it was not possible to explore all the results obtained in this paper, it was possible to verify how the theme of multiculturalism

emerges as a topic of interest in comparative education in Wolfgang Mitter's studies. At the same time, it also demonstrates the author's innovative and always humanistic thinking, contributing to a macro look at educational systems, educational policies, and the international challenges facing education.

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