

Numbers and Knowledge in Education: New Practices of Comparison, Quantification and Expertise

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The 'Irritation'

- Engages in the question on how we think, talk, or write about education in a society embedded in a specific reasoning on education, portrayed in terms of a 'chimera' of quantifications and comparisons visualized in the form of 'numbers'
- The 'chimera' - a necessity in Modernity and Meritocracy?
- When 'numbers' are made the general reasoning, new rationalities and logics appear:
 1. it changes how educational expertise is thought
 2. it brings down contextual barriers between countries and time
 3. makes us think in terms of a universal connectivity within educational settings and thinking
 4. promotes educational appearance in new ways redefining educational subjects as well as objects

Framing of the book

- The hypothesis: a ‘chimera’ of quantifications and comparisons is the dominant reasoning of education and constitutes the *mise-en-scène* of education
- The concept of **Agora** (cf. Nowotny et. al.): Who inhibits an educational Agora today and what kind of activities are taking place? Based on what reasoning?
- The concept of **co-production** (Jasanoff, 2004) of educational knowledge:
 1. *constitutive acts*, which focuses on the emergence and stabilization of knowledge and the framing of these: **Activities for ‘creating’ knowledge** (research-politics-society)
 2. *interactional acts*, trying to solve different controversies framing what knowledge is and should be understood as: **Acting on the knowledge** (research-politics-society)
- The concept of ‘**non-place**’ (cf. Augé): lacking relational and historical awareness as well as having minor concern about identity. A place we *visit*, not a place we *live* in. How are educational activities constituted in this place we visit? Is there any differences from how we live education?

To summarize educational activities embedded in the reasoning of the ‘chimera’

- Today, the ‘chimera’ has developed into a technology of distance where the language of mathematics is used and considered as highly structured and rule-bound making it possible to *talk the same language all over the globe*. Consequently, the use of numbers minimizes the need for intimate knowledge and personal trust
- Accordingly, an international language develops making quantifications and comparisons more accessible leading to new activities and new solutions on old problems
- The ‘chimera’ frames our behaviour and our daily educational lives reduces into a series of commodity exchange which makes it possible for other more market- and policy oriented actors to engage in educational activities
- Making the world intelligible’ in a sort of ‘double gesture’ (cf. Agamben):
 1. ‘the avalanche of numbers’ (Hacking) creates ‘number-intelligent’ actions – we start to act and think within the ‘numbers’, and then develops;
 2. ‘a fear of the darkness’ – a scare of not being ‘included’ or ‘successful’ in the ‘numbers
- The chapters are about how we act ‘number-intelligent’ and what kind of activities we construct and perform in ‘fear’ of being left out