

7. Nationalist New Education

A Wallersteinian Approach to Education in the World-System

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Sometimes it is worthwhile to take a second – or even a third – look at things that are known to almost every scholar involved with the history of alternative educational thought in Europe. New theoretical perspectives can help to understand long-term developments better.¹ They might also shine a new light on the peculiarities of a history of educational practices as we are used to them nowadays. Before this chapter connects history and theory, it must travel back roughly 120 years into the past. In 1896, the German educator Hermann Lietz² stayed at the boarding school of Cecil Reddie called Abbotsholme in the East Midlands of England. Lietz, who was a student of Wilhelm Rein³ at the teachers' seminary at the University of Jena and a reader of the anti-Semitic and deeply racist writings of Paul de Lagarde, developed a new, supposedly better, alternative way of thinking about education based on his Protestant beliefs and

1 I would especially like to thank Frank Jacob, Riccardo Altieri, Stephen Shapiro, Marcus Emmerich, and all participants of the workshop "Migration, Nationalism and World System Theory" (online workshop, November 2020) for their helpful comments and fresh takes on Wallerstein.

2 Hermann Lietz (1886–1919) was a German educator. Lietz is known for being the founding figure of the *Landerziehungsheime* (country boarding schools) that gained a high degree of popularity at the beginning of the 20th century and are part of the German *Reformpädagogik*, which will be discussed in more detail in the next pages.

3 Wilhelm Rein (1847–1929) was Professor of Pedagogy at the University of Jena. Rein was responsible for the teachers' seminary that made teacher education at the university well-known internationally. Furthermore, he was one of the most prominent Herbartians – educators who read and further developed the ideas of Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841).

desire to develop the German nation. After his return to Germany, Lietz published a work titled *Emlosstobba* (1897). The term “*Emlohestobba*” is an anagram of the name of his old school, Abbotsholme. In his text – fully titled “*Emlohestobba: Fiction or Fact? Images from School Life of the Past, Present and Future*” (*Emlohestobba: Roman oder Wirklichkeit? Bilder aus dem Schulleben*)⁴ – Lietz processed his experiences in Abbotsholme in a partly belletristic, partly theoretical writing. Here, some of Lietz’s first ideas for a pedagogy that emphasizes the potentiality of individual human nature while tying individual development to the development of the nation emerge at the turn from the 19th to the 20th century from the dense descriptions of the orderly coexistence in the school state. His reflections on the experienced pedagogical arrangement in which pupils were allowed to take on numerous tasks and were themselves involved in the governance of “their” school state ultimately led to further theorizing and adaptation to the circumstances in the schools later founded by Lietz in Germany.

In these schools, the values implicit in the narrative about the students of Abbotsholme are made explicit and became the foundation of the educational arrangement later called *Landerziehungsheime* (country boarding schools), the first of which was founded by Lietz near Ilsenburg. Telling the story this way, it almost seems like Lietz found a democratic way to deal with the problems of his time.⁵ This, so to speak, can be understood as one of the starting points of institutionalized New Education in Germany, as it is discussed in various comprehensive publications⁶ and recurring approaches to the topic with regard to specific questions.⁷

4 See Hermann Lietz, *Emlohestobba: Roman oder Wirklichkeit? Bilder aus dem Schulleben* (Berlin: Dümmler, 1897). In 2017, Ralf Koerrenz, Annika Blichmann, and Sebastian Engelmann provided an introduction to the ideas and biography of Lietz in their book on European concepts and models of Alternative Education. The thoughts in this chapter elaborate on and criticize these ideas while also using the ideas brought forward in Ralf Koerrenz, Annika Blichmann, and Sebastian Engelmann, *Alternative Schooling and New Education: European Concepts and Models* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). All quotes from German sources were translated by the author, while bibliographic information for the original sources is provided in the footnotes.

5 Sebastian Engelmann, “Konflikt als Movens,” *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik und Theologie* 71, no. 2 (2019): 132.

6 Wolfgang Keim and Ulrich Schwerdt, eds., *Handbuch der Reformpädagogik in Deutschland (1890–1933)* (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2013).

7 Sebastian Engelmann and Mathias Dehne, “Pädagogisierung der Zeit als Antwort auf die Sündhaftigkeit der Welt – Landerziehungsheime nach Hermann Lietz,” in *Lernen zwischen Zeit und Ewigkeit: Pädagogische Praxis und Tranzendenz*, eds. Alexander Maier,

How does the foundation of New Education as a vivid discussion of ideas on schooling relate to the theoretical writings by Immanuel Wallerstein? And how does the theoretical framework of Wallerstein add to the discussion in historical education studies? This chapter tentatively tries to grasp the emergence of a New Education regime – understood as a specific mode of education that aims at the universalization of itself – from the perspective of Wallerstein's writings, primarily those relating to world-systems theory.⁸ Therefore, it reflects on the development of alternative modes of education around the world as a positive story of emancipation and, at the same time, as a story of the consequent transfer of specific ideas related to nationalist attitudes and capitalist production logics. New Education and the manifold alternative modes of education, nowadays still discussed under the umbrella term "Alternative Education," are by no means inherently better or more critical than other modes. However, they offer much-needed criticism of an authoritarian system of schooling without solving the problems of power dynamics and the potential abuse of educational settings at their time. Even though there is still a positive aura around these alternative concepts for education, recent research has pointed to the fact that precisely the contrary can be the case, too. Alternative models for schooling, such as the infamous Odenwaldschule in Germany, must be considered as potentially dangerous institutions that perpetuated ideas of closedness and elitist exclusion and prepared the ground for sexual violence. Understanding this ambivalence of New Education as inherent to its theory and practice – as Jürgen Oelkers and others have pointed out⁹ – must be considered a promising way to engage anew with Alternative Education in a fruitful and critical manner. All in all, the chapter hints at a new reading of the emergence of New Education at the beginning of the 20th century by combining Wallerstein's perspective with ideas from the history of education, political sociology, and political science. Thereby, it tries to offer a new perspective on the relationship between New Education, the world-system approach, and the omnipresent educational demands for inclusion

Jean-Marie Weber, Anne Conrad, and Peter Voss (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 2018), 130–133.

- 8 In this chapter, I understand Wallerstein's writings as a perspective, not as a coherent theory. Instead of talking about a world-systems theory, I follow Stephen Shapiro's argument, reflecting on the world-system approach as a knowledge movement that proposes new ways to think about the world in which we live.
- 9 Jürgen Oelkers, *Eros und Herrschaft. Die dunklen Seiten der Reformpädagogik* (Weinheim: Beltz, 2011).

which, at the same time, transport nationalist narratives. To understand this ambivalence, one must not ban the ideas of educators such as Lietz from the discourse but critically examine and newly contextualize them.

To sketch out this approach and to make the argument plausible, this chapter, in a first step, engages with more recent discussions of Wallerstein in education studies. The results are not that spectacular, but they point to the need for further approaches to world-systems analysis in education studies. Even though Wallerstein's world-systems perspective was vividly discussed for a short time in the field of comparative education, his ideas are not present in the general discussion, even though working with Wallerstein's concepts might be useful to explain the relationship between the emergence of neoliberalism and education systems. Education studies seem to struggle with the work of Wallerstein, making new approaches to it an experiment in itself that engages with thinking coined as "Marxist" or "realist" in recent years. Nevertheless, various authors have already pointed to the potential of world-systems analysis.¹⁰ In a second step, this chapter offers an abridged collection of Wallerstein's thoughts on the relations between education, nation-building, and the necessary construction of exclusive dichotomies in this process. This introduction prepares the ground for using world-systems analysis to rewrite the history of Alternative Education as a history of struggle with inclusion, exclusion, and identity formation. In a third step, the chapter develops this specific reading by elaborating on the ideas of Hermann Lietz in a short case study. Here, Lietz is introduced as a German educator who used various educational ideas from around the world, which in itself must be understood as a migration of ideas that would not have been possible without the infrastructure of a capitalist world system. Moreover, he is also introduced as a nationalist thinker who tried to foster nation-state building through education and can be understood as a part of the centrist liberal regime Wallerstein saw emerging at the beginning of the 20th century. Finally, the chapter closes with a hint toward a revitalization of the world-systems perspective in edu-

¹⁰ I agree with them. Since at least the Covid-19 pandemic that started in 2020, we have been confronted with the nation-state and a realist, conflict-oriented understanding of society again. Leaving aside this conceptualization of the world does not solve any problems but creates new ones. Even though realist accounts of world politics are sometimes marginalized, they still offer a valid way to explain what is happening in the political arena.

cation studies in both research and the practice of education in a world still struggling with nationalist attitudes and a negative stance toward migration.

Wallerstein in Education Studies: Fragments of a Discussion

Even though direct comments by Immanuel Wallerstein on the education system are quite scarce – some scholars in education studies even suggest that there is no such thing as a Wallersteinian perspective on education¹¹ – one can use his ideas on world-systems to talk about the development of education systems on a broad scale. Education studies have already dabbled with Wallerstein but left his thoughts aside in recent years. Instead of referring to his ideas about the world-system, more contemporary research engages with neo-institutionalist theory as put forward by the team around the sociologist John W. Meyer.¹² World-systems analysis is nowadays still mentioned in contemporary discussions in comparative education, understood as an idiosyncratic part of the education studies discourse more concerned with criticizing policies and market-related state action than the discussion of developments throughout the history of education. More recent research in comparative education addresses, for example, the global education industry and the commodification processes that led to its emergence without reference to Wallerstein, even though an analysis motivated by – but not limited to – his approach might be useful.¹³ Instead of working with world-systems theory, Wallerstein's differentiated historical and sociological work is often reduced to a mere reference without further elaborating on the influence or value of applying the perspective.¹⁴ Nevertheless, world-systems analysis is one of many attempts that try to engage with the exploitative dynamics of class relations, whether this is understood in terms of groups stratified according to race or class within a

11 Christel Adick, "Globale Trends weltweiter Schulentwicklung: Empirische Befunde und theoretischer Erklärungen," *Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft* 6, no. 3 (2003): 181.

12 Robert R. Arnove, "World-Systems Analysis and Comparative Education in the Age of Globalization," in *International Handbook of Comparative Education*, eds. Robert Cowen and Andreas M. Kazamias (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 102.

13 Marcello Parreira do Amaral, Gita Steiner-Khamsi, and Christiane Thompson, eds., *Researching the Global Education Industry: Commodification, the Market and Business Involvement* (Cham: Palgrave, 2019), 9.

14 Marcello Parreira do Amaral, *Emergenz eines internationalen Bildungsregimes? International Educational Governance und Regimetheorie* (Münster: Waxmann, 2011), 16, 55.

single society or as similarly structured relations of exploitation on a nation-state level. This involvedness of the theory in very concrete political discussions might be a problem of its own kind, as world-systems analysis in the way Wallerstein thinks it cannot be understood without grappling with societal issues, as Karin Amos laid out in the Anglo-American debate on the reproduction of societal differences in schooling.¹⁵ Christel Adick summarized Wallerstein's ideas when she stated that he assumed an undivided world-system, understanding its specific modernity as constituted by its shared division of labor and simultaneous absence of shared control mechanisms in the political arena.¹⁶ The goal of the non-intentional movements in the world-system is the accumulation of more capital and the reproduction of its own hegemony. The expansion of the capitalist mode of production, cyclical rhythms, and general structures are patterns for analysis that Wallerstein's world-systems approach has to offer. Adick points to the fact that this reference to reoccurring structures in the process of commodification in particular might help historical comparative education studies to grasp changes in the structure of education systems. However, this might result in the application of a theory mainly aimed at explaining economic development to processes of educationalization while taking for granted that education is a result of the aforementioned economic process¹⁷ and applying a perspective that is "too economicistic as well as overly focused on nation-states as the principal actors in the global economy."¹⁸

Additionally, Adick points to the gap in the theoretical architecture, the missing micro-foundation of world-systems theory, raising new awareness of the problematic connection between structure and action present in this theory and others. However, world-systems analysis is not as monolithic as she describes. Taking into account the fact that a micro-foundation is missing and some orthodox readings of Wallerstein's ideas might lead to the impression that the whole development of a world-system is deterministic, we can still work with world-systems analysis in an innovative way. As such, studies in comparative education based on world-systems analysis are strictly linked

¹⁵ Karin Amos, "Aspekte der angloamerikanischen pädagogischen Differenzdebatte: Überlegungen zur Kontextualisierung," in *Unterschiedlich verschieden: Differenz in der Erziehungswissenschaft*, eds., Helma Lutz and Norbert Wenning (Wiesbaden: Springer 2001), 71.

¹⁶ Adick, "Globale Trends," 181.

¹⁷ Ibid., 183.

¹⁸ Arnove, "World-Systems Analysis," 105.

to critical inquiries of the social debates that take place elsewhere in social sciences or the humanities. Therefore, new approaches to world-systems analysis must not ignore post-Marxist readings of classical Marxist texts. In more recent texts and interviews, Wallerstein distanced himself from orthodox readings of Marx; therefore, all kinds of criticism that understand the world-systems approach as economically deterministic do not grasp the concept itself correctly.¹⁹ Wallerstein rejected this orthodox interpretation of his own approach. Instead of favoring orthodox Marxism and a determined history, Wallerstein understood Marxist approaches to history as an open discourse with many voices. So, instead of considering world-systems analysis as a closed and deterministic system, this chapter tries to offer connections that might help to re-read world-systems analysis, critically engaging the understanding of world-systems analysis as a “model with universal applicability, purporting to explain global developments from the Neolithic Revolution to recent times.”²⁰

By applying the lens of world-systems analysis, scholars in education studies might gain further insights into the relations between states, education systems, and educational policy on a global scale that are also connected to 1) the historical development of education systems, and 2) the rise of educational regimes, the individual fighting for their nation’s success, and capitalism. Applying this perspective can “document the systemic ways in which hegemonic powers in core countries extract surplus labour from the coerced or semi-coerced labour of the noncore regions with consequent deleterious consequences for their education systems.”²¹ Even though world-systems analysis does not seem to be widely considered in comparative education right now, taking it into account can help to understand phenomena such as commodification or marketization differently.²²

19 Immanuel Wallerstein, “Immanuel Wallerstein’s Thousand Marxisms,” *Jacobin Magazine*, November 11, 2019, <https://jacobinmag.com/2019/09/immanuel-wallerstein-marxism-world-systems-theory-capitalism/>.

20 Andreas M. Kazamias, “Reclaiming A Lost Legacy: The Historical Humanist Vision in Comparative Education,” in *International Handbook of Comparative Education*, eds. Robert Cowen and Andreas M. Kazamias (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 1272.

21 Arnone, “World-Systems Analysis,” 105.

22 For further ideas on the application of Wallerstein’s ideas in comparative education, see Thomas G. Griffiths and Liza Knezevic, “Wallerstein’s World-Systems Analysis in Comparative Education: A Case Study,” *Prospects* 40, no. 4 (2010): 447–449.

Wallerstein on Education: World-Systems Analysis Operationalized

Since the so-called pedagogical 18th century, education must be understood as one of the main modes of keeping power in a state harnessed by those in economically superior positions, the ruling class. Schooling in particular is always connected to the current economic and political system, which leads to the conclusion – as brought forward by Austromarxist educator Siegfried Bernfeld – that education must be understood as conservative in its nature. It only reproduces the current structure of society.²³ The same goes, according to Wallerstein, for the relation between weak and strong states. Education – which is elaborated most intensively in the fourth volume of Wallerstein's epochal work *The Modern World-System* – must be understood, as an explicitly mentioned cultural practice, as an element of this relation. This has already been pointed out in more general remarks on the relations between core and periphery, respectively, strong and weak states. As this forms the most important element of Wallerstein's thinking in realistic dependencies between nation-states, it also serves as a starting point for understanding the role of education: "Strong states relate to weak states by pressuring them to accept cultural practices-linguistic policy; educational policy, including where university students may study; media distribution-that will reinforce the long-term linkage between them."²⁴

Following this line of thought, Wallerstein leads us to the conclusion that education is important in itself when it comes to transporting ideology, i.e., to stabilizing and reproducing the present system. Therefore, world-systems analysis – like most theories and approaches in sociology, political sciences, and psychology – implicitly relies on an understanding of learning: "In general, world-system scholars contend that educational assistance provides a vehicle for the transmission of ideologies from core to and, subsequently, for the 'intellectual socialization' of periphery."²⁵

Without education and the governance of learning processes in various forms, there would be no reproduction of ideologies. In consequence, there

23 Siegfried Bernfeld, *Sisyphos oder die Grenzen der Erziehung* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1967).

24 Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 55.

25 Thomas Clayton, "Beyond Mystification: Reconnecting World-System Theory for Comparative Education," *Comparative Education Review* 42, no. 4 (1988): 485.

would be no foundation for the exchange of ideas and the often-forceful expansion or diffusion of modes of production. In a nutshell, education is used as a mediator to control individuals by introducing or reproducing certain aspects of ideology. This obviously leads to the result that education itself becomes a recurrent topic of political fights. Therefore, more conservative positions were always aware that educating individuals and offering them the chance to participate in a changing society might negatively affect the hierarchy: "Conservatives thus abhorred democracy, which for them signaled the end of respect for hierarchy. They were furthermore suspicious of widespread access to education, which for them ought to be reserved for the training of elite cadres."²⁶

Education is thus always understood as a mode of keeping discriminating differentiations at work to control a society. Those differences, however, were not new to the daily lives of humans: "Difference and inequalities of persons of different social origins – orders (*Stände*, Estates), class, gender, race, and education – were not invented in the nineteenth century. They had long existed and had been considered natural, inevitable, and indeed desirable."²⁷

When it comes to citizenship – as we will see later in the writings of Hermann Lietz – education becomes an integral element of constructing citizens. It can be understood as essential for the dichotomous construction of inside and outside because, throughout the history of emancipation, it became necessary for the ruling elites to distinguish between those who are "worthy" of participating in society and those who are to be excluded: "The attempt to circumscribe the meaning of citizenship took many forms, all of them necessarily involving the creation of antinomies that could justify the division into passive and active citizens. Binary distinctions (of rank, of class, of gender, of race/ethnicity, of education) are ancient realities."²⁸

Following this argument, educational thought must be considered a crucial element of replicating the operations of inclusion and exclusion that allow nation-states to reproduce the dominant power relations. As various authors have claimed from sociological perspectives, this kind of exclusion is necessary

²⁶ Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis*, 62.

²⁷ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, vol. 4: *Centrist Liberalism Triumphant 1789–1814* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), 217.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 164.

to realize inclusion.²⁹ Categories such as race, class, and gender were radicalized in education to control the masses via targeted education practices or their exclusion from them. Especially in educational theory, talking about equality in pedagogical settings simultaneously creates inequality because there simply is no way to educate individuals in the same way. This structure of educational processes is only leveled out by pointing to specific aims of education or focusing on a specific group of students, as will be seen later in the writings of Hermann Lietz. As mentioned above, educational aims are derived from dominant ideologies. They are not generally “humane” or detached from certain philosophical discussions or socio-economic interests. The project of educating “good” citizens for the nation-state is described by Wallerstein as a Western project driven by the values of the middle class:

In the nineteenth century, the so-called middle classes came to dominate the Western world, and Europe came to dominate the world. When one has achieved the top position, the problem is no longer how to get there but how to stay there. The middle classes nationally, and the Europeans globally, sought to maintain their advantage by appropriating the mantle of nature and virtue to justify privilege. They called it civilization, and this concept was a key ingredient of their effort. In the Western world, it was translated into education, and education became a way of controlling the masses.³⁰

Education as a means of control, however, always came in disguise. Civilization, as mentioned above, was not presented or even understood as a potentially suppressive force established by the Europeans but as a project beneficial for all human beings. Instead of unveiling civilization as the exclusive concept that solidified borders between people at the same time as it offered them the possibility to transgress them, education took off as a project closely related to the liberal center. Offering “republicanism, secularism, popular self-education, co-operation, land reform, internationalism,’ and all these themes had by now become part of the litany of the liberal center, at least of its more progressive flank.”³¹ All those mechanisms are marked by Wallerstein. By describ-

²⁹ For the argument, see Marcus Emmerich and Ulrike Hormel, *Heterogenität – Diversity – Intersektionalität: Zur Logik sozialer Unterscheidungen in pädagogischen Semantiken der Differenz* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2012).

³⁰ Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, 156.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 176.

ing the rise of centrist liberalism and its matrimony with what has since been coined the “neoliberal agenda,” he undoubtedly touches on the cornerstones of the history of education.

Alternative Education as a Nationalist Project: A Wallersteinian Reading

As Wallerstein points out, new perspectives are better understood if we consider them “a protest against older perspectives.”³² Thinking with the categories of conflict and oppression rather than with ideas of harmonious and non-forced travel of ideas in politically engaged and comparative historical education studies is key to further developing theory and our representation of history alike: “Understanding the world is a key to changing it for the better – a goal much in accord with scholarship in the field of comparative education and its missions of contributing to theory building, more enlightened educational policy and practice, and ultimately to international understanding and peace.”³³

If science is not only about an assumed objective representation but also about making the world a better (understood) place, theories that aim at criticizing unjust social realities, such as those of Wallerstein, have a place in historical analysis. Their theoretical frame of reference allows scholars to identify the character of their own research object as a political one. Insight into this connection between researcher and research forces individuals to act in three ways: “as an analyst, in search of truth; as a moral person, in search of the good and the beautiful; and as a political person, seeking to unify the true with the good and the beautiful.”³⁴

One case to apply this method with a specific focus on how the theory produced in educational thought influences the production of categories such as “citizen” or “nation” is the thorough examination of New Education in light of Wallerstein’s writings.³⁵ Instead of grasping the alternatives offered at the turn

32 Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis*, 1.

33 Arriove, “World-Systems Analysis,” 114.

34 Immanuel Wallerstein, *European Universalism: The Rhetoric of Power* (New York: The New Press, 2006), 80.

35 Tom G. Griffiths and Lisa Knezevic, “World-Systems Analysis in Comparative Education: An Alternative to Cosmopolitanism,” *Current Issues in Comparative Education* 12, no. 1 (2009): 66–67.

from the 19th to the 20th century as normatively better, they can be marked as small steps in the process Wallerstein describes in his books. New Education – in Germany called *Reformpädagogik*, in Japan, e.g., *Zenjin Education* – generally aimed at establishing a child-centered education that not only addressed the children via direct instruction but also fostered their individual experiences as the privileged mode of learning. New Education criticizes the assumed “old” education as dull, repetitive, and missing individual needs. So, instead of instruction in class, experiencing and learning in other environments was preferred, thereby making real life the educator of the child. New Education is normally understood as an international movement with various lines of thought and variations that developed all over the world, even though its diversity is often reduced to some key thinkers or to a non-specified idea of a different form of education.³⁶ Bearing in mind, however, the implications of world-systems analysis, one can also argue that New Education emerged as a capitalist project in a Western state that tried to dominate the global pedagogical discussion. Nationalism – or at least the melioration of the nation-state’s pedagogical system – served as the motor of the global movement of ideas. This is especially true for Lietz, but it can also be assumed for various other examples of Alternative Education.

Hermann Lietz’s thoughts on education are all based on his deeply rooted nationalism. They manifest in a declamatory and often romanticizing way of speaking about education, as Jürgen Oelkers pointed out in his ground-breaking criticism of Alternative Education.³⁷ Lietz’s basic idea was that people are born into a specific cultural context, which continues to influence them. Education plays a special role in this, namely, in ensuring that the specifically national religious ethics subsumed in the national context will be transmitted to the next generation as effectively as possible. Education, in Lietz’s sense, was not about changing society first and foremost but about conserving what would help the German nation prosper. His ideas on schooling were about schooling in and for the German nation. As such, the arrangements for school reform needed to serve the evolution of national strengths. School reform was also required to support and advance the fight against deficiencies in one’s own national cultural context. Like many of his contemporaries, Lietz

³⁶ Winfried Böhm, *Die Reformpädagogik. Montessori, Waldorf und andere Lehren* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2012).

³⁷ Jürgen Oelkers, *Reformpädagogik: Eine kritische Dogmengeschichte* (Weinheim: Juventa, 2005).

criticized the vices of his time, especially everything related to an assumed natural human being: "All German schools have to fight the bad habits of drinking alcohol and smoking, which are harmful to health and strength."³⁸ This shows that, to Lietz, the context of educational thought is also defined by national traits – in contrast to a progressive position, with its vision of one single humanity, universally uniting all people. The valorization of one's own nation is inevitably connected to the depreciation of others. Resonant in this respect is the saying, "*Am deutschen Wesen soll die Welt genesen*" ("German ways will cure the whole world").

His "love" for his nation becomes evident in his description of the ideal teacher. In an appeal to the body of teachers, Lietz characterizes the role and position of teachers as follows: "Spark understanding and excitement for the character and future challenges of the nation; practice with the young people in your small community to learn civic virtues, let everyone within the community serve the whole with full force, let them carry out duties, exercise their rights."³⁹ He also described the teacher as "[a] priest of humanity and of God in the true meaning of the word,"⁴⁰ thereby contrasting the teacher with the "instructor or even the drill master"⁴¹ and offering deep insights into his religion. Even though Lietz's educational thought was based on firm beliefs in the superiority of his nation and the importance of an ordered state, he also aimed at establishing a relationship between teachers and students that fostered the use of the latter's own reason: "The teacher of the past viewed the student first and foremost as someone subordinate that he could command, backed up by the authority provided to him by his office and his superior age."⁴² However, when discussing the contrast between the old and the new teacher, Lietz says: "The teacher of the new school and the parents of the new family are completely different [from the old types of teacher], who rely only (!) on the natural au-

38 Hermann Lietz, *Die dringendsten Forderungen der deutschen Schulreform: Das fünfzehnte Jahr im DLEH. Beiträge zur Schulreform, Zweiter Teil* (Leipzig: Voigtländer 1913), 95–96.

39 Hermann Lietz, "Beiträge zu einem pädagogischen Programm für die Zwecke der DLEH-Stiftung" in *Das vierzehnte Jahr im DLEH*, ed. Hermann Lietz (Leipzig: Voigtländer, 1912), 52.

40 Hermann Lietz, *Emlohestobba: Roman oder Wirklichkeit? Bilder aus dem Schulleben der Vergangenheit, Gegenwart oder Zukunft?* (Berlin: Dieck, 1897), 53.

41 *Ibid.*

42 Hermann Lietz, "Art. Landerziehungsheime," in *Encyclopädisches Handbuch der Pädagogik*, ed. Wilhelm Rein (Langensalza: Beyer, 1906), 298.

thority that comes with intellectual, ethical superiority.”⁴³ The idea of a “natural authority” is Lietz’s expression of the values one needs to reform society via schooling.

Yet, next to his emphasis on German values, he also presents us with a set of quite different ideas: striving for international contacts, international understanding, and an understanding of civilization – as mentioned by Wallerstein – depicted as universal, generally humane ethics. What remains in Lietz’s work is an unrelieved tension between a sense of nationality and a vision of universality. The struggle to deal with this tension is not only evident in Lietz’s work but also in Wallerstein’s theory when he points to the interconnection between nation-building in terms of universality while, at the same time, mechanisms of exclusion are at work. Therefore, one can argue that the development of New Education in the 19th and early 20th centuries parallels the development of capitalist hegemony pointed to by Wallerstein.

According to Ralf Koerrenz, it is possible to understand the work of Hermann Lietz in two entirely different ways.⁴⁴ One very plausible view is that Lietz was politically right-wing; this is supported by his critique of urban culture mixed with his prejudices against and religiously motivated hatred of Judaism and socialism. Taking this position into account, Lietz’s educational thought seems to be, on the one hand, irrelevant to today’s discussions. However, on the other hand, Koerrenz points to the systematic aspects of Lietz’s work that perfectly align with Wallerstein’s ideas about the triumph of centrist liberalism and the neoliberal agenda. This creates turmoil in the categories ascribed to Lietz. When applying the perspective of Wallerstein’s world-systems analysis, however, the categorization of Lietz as a national conservative is deconstructed. His ideas – e.g., the new relation between teachers and students or the emphasis on universally applicable ethics that tries to understand all humans as equal – are similar to liberal motifs realized in today’s schooling. They are also present in politically different educational concepts of his time and, later on, are even found in communist approaches to alternative modes of education.⁴⁵ However, those assumptions are eminently flawed when one consid-

43 Ibid.

44 Ralf Koerrenz, *Hermann Lietz: Einführung mit zentralen Texten* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2011), 9.

45 Sebastian Engelmann, “Edwin Hoermle: Communist Education and Revolutionary Antimilitarism,” in *War and Communism*, eds. Tobias Hirschmüller and Frank Jacob (Paderborn: Brill/Schöningh, 2021).

ers Wallerstein's ideas on differences and the role of schooling in this process. From the perspective of world-systems theory, the national-conservative curricula of Lietz or his emphasis on national values are emerging centrist liberal patterns that developed over the next 100 years into the present-day capitalist schooling system.

All in all, reading the ideas of educators in the context of New Education from the perspective of Wallerstein's world-systems approach sheds light on the precarious of categories and capitalist land-grabbing in educational practice. Lietz's ideas on New Education ultimately influenced a variety of educators in Germany and other European states. The New Education movement finally institutionalized itself in the early 1920s. The exchange – mostly restricted to the European context, although newer publications hint at Asian influences⁴⁶ – was institutionalized through the establishment of the New Education Fellowship, the oldest international organization for promoting progressive education, which, during the 1920s, became a forum for the international exchange of experience. Leading members included, among others, Beatrice Ensor (England), Elisabeth Rotten (Germany), and Adolphe Ferrière (Switzerland). It is mostly understood as an international project.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, it was based on nationalist ideas that aimed at proclaiming its educational goals and their virtues as the most humane and universal ones.

This first attempt to understand New Education from the perspective of world-systems analysis produced the insight that there might be more to the assumption that education since the 18th century – especially individualization and the appeal to individual reason in an experience-based learning environment – catered to the rise of centrist liberalism. Even though Lietz offered ideas in conflict with the capitalist mode of production in his time, his thoughts are nowadays incorporated in capitalist schooling practices that rely on individualized learning and harvesting the results of individual reason. Added to this general insight into the fragility of categorical ascriptions is the fact that Lietz's ideas were altered throughout their history in various contexts. For example, Lietz influenced the socialist thinker Minna Specht, who learned at one

46 Elia Horn, *Indien als Erzieher: Orientalismus in der deutschen Reformpädagogik und Jugendbewegung 1918–1933* (Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt, 2018).

47 Hermann Röhrs, "Die 'New Education Fellowship' – ein Forum der internationalen Reformpädagogik," in *Die Reformpädagogik auf den Kontinenten: Ein Handbuch*, eds. Volker Lehnhart and Hermann Röhrs (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 1994), 191.

of his country boarding schools and later opened her own school.⁴⁸ Furthermore, there are still boarding schools that use Hermann Lietz's name while also developing his ideas and integrating learning experiences that try to decrease nationalism and foster international learning.⁴⁹ It seems that the ideas of Hermann Lietz are not limited to one interpretation but instead are flexible. Therefore, they can easily be claimed by the capitalist logic of a spreading world-system. The recurrent discussions about New Education itself can be understood as the epitome of capitalist education – change is structurally incorporated, keeping them flexible until there is nothing more to resist.

World-Systems Analysis and the Emergence of a New Education Regime: A Theoretical and Practical Outlook

Even though the emergence of New Education as an international movement is nowadays mostly understood as a person-driven network phenomenon on an international scale, using the world-systems approach can help to understand the rise of New Education differently. It is most definitely not an innocent case of migrating ideas. Instead of this positive interpretation, world-systems analysis marks Alternative Education as a possible element of the ever-increasing call for more *mobile* human capital and slow-and-steady economization of the educational system.

This chapter offered a new reading of selected texts of a prominent representative of the New Education movement enriched with the theoretical perspective of Immanuel Wallerstein. It made plausible the assumption that New Education can be understood as one of the elements of Wallerstein called "centrist liberalism" in his later writings. To elucidate this argument, the chapter first introduced fragments of the discussion of world-systems analysis in German and international comparative education studies. On the one hand, it pinpointed the discussed problems and, on the other hand, it emphasized the benefits of world-systems analysis. In a second step, world-systems analysis was

⁴⁸ For further information, see Sebastian Engelmann, *Pädagogik der Sozialen Freiheit: Eine Einführung in das Denken Minna Spechts* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2018).

⁴⁹ Sebastian Engelmann, "Sprache, Weltgesellschaft und Globale Bildung: Das Modul Sprache im Bildungsjahr des Hermann Lietz Gymnasiums Schloss Bieberstein," in *Globale Bildung auf Reisen: Das Bildungsjahr an der Hermann-Lietz Schule Schloss Bieberstein*, ed. Ralf Koerrenz (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2015), 93–97.

discussed with a focus on Wallerstein's ideas on education, using his remarks on education that correspond with the rise of mass schooling and bourgeois educational policies in the 18th and 19th centuries. In a third step, the context of New Education and the writings of Hermann Lietz were introduced and discussed, thereby also offering insights into these mostly untranslated texts for an international audience. These texts provide the evidence for this text's central argument: Lietz's educational thought can be considered an element of the capitalist, liberal centrist project Wallerstein described in his later writings. There is scope to write a more coherent and extensive history of New Education while applying the ideas of Wallerstein's world-systems analysis. However, considering the world-systems approach in education studies (again) has more to offer than a fresh perspective on history: it helps us to understand the dominance of certain practices, ideologies, and concepts, such as the almost obsessive focus on citizenship education or the constant renewal of education for the nation-state in educational theory and practice. Further, it shines a light on the ambivalence of educational practices discussed under the umbrella term "citizenship education." Often, these endeavors mask themselves as universal and ethical. However, they can also be understood as part of the history of nation-building, and they still rely on inclusion and exclusion – as Wallerstein and others have pointed out.

As I have suggested elsewhere,⁵⁰ New Education invented and radicalized the idea of the individual learner and forced individuals to act on their own. It also supported the development of concepts such as life-long learning, which is based on the assumed plasticity of the learner, and perfectly serves the ideas of the *project polis* or the *entrepreneurial self*, which are vividly discussed in ongoing critical research following the ground-breaking work by Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello.⁵¹ Without the rise of New Education, schooling nowadays would not be as it is. Various concepts such as *individualization*, *project learning*, or even *service learning* would not be part of the didactic repertoire of teachers and educators. Additionally, current ideas on the *mobility of learners* and the *strive to internationalization* might not be on the agenda. It is this connection between and within its core that began to move the nationalist project to the periphery,

50 Sebastian Engelmann, "Transhumanismus und Erziehungswissenschaft: (Un)heils geschichten über die Entfehlung des Menschen," in *Transzendenz zum Transhumanismus*, eds. Sabrina Lausen, Martin Dröge, Richard Janus, and Martin Fromme (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, forthcoming).

51 Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Verso, 2017).

was implemented there, and changed the educational landscape forever that needs to be analyzed from the perspective of world-systems theory to hint at the economic results of the emergence of a New Education regime as part of a centrist liberal project.⁵²

One final point is still up for discussion. Besides the possible positive outcomes for research in the history of education, world-systems analysis might become even more interesting for dealing with recent and urgent issues in education studies, especially regarding the latter's new-found interest in post-colonial settings. More and more researchers are engaging with postcolonial writings and trying to offer decolonial options for education studies. However, it seems like the discussion still lacks a sound theoretical foundation. The perspective of world-systems analysis brought forward by Immanuel Wallerstein may be helpful to understand both the history of education and educational practices anew. It is sensitive to the driving forces of capitalism while at the same time hinting at the patterns of history. Education studies need to enter this discussion, newly addressing topics such as citizenship, nationality, and migration without falling for the rhetoric of flexibility and novelty. Applying the perspective of world-systems analysis will contribute to and help to start a new knowledge movement. Rewriting what we already know seems to be a good start to this process, which will not end with academic discussion. Accordingly, the history of education and the practice of education are inseparably entwined.

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52 Wallerstein, *World System*, 321.

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