



# Doctoral Studies and the Globalization of Knowledge

Teachers College's international  
dissertations, 1900-1920

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## **What is this study about?**

Analysis of all the dissertations written by international scholars (non-US based) in the first two decades (1900-1920) of the doctoral program at Teachers College, as a way to understand the production of the dissertation as a genre with global, colonial entanglements.

# Framing the Study

- TC's Influence
- Large doctoral enrollment
- Influential international students
- Colonial entanglements
- Dissertation genre as governance

# Three Categories

1. The encyclopedic dissertation
1. The comparative dissertation
1. The psychometric dissertation

# The Encyclopedic Dissertation

- 9/20 dissertations
- Argue modern education:
  - can and should be studied and historicized
  - can and should be implemented
  - requires particular kinds of subjects to lead the effort
- But the archive is never stable

Chamberlain (1900)	Education in India
Coleman (1907)	Public Education in Upper Canada
Barranco (1914)	Mexico: Its Educational Problems—Suggestions for Their Solution
Kuo (1914)	The Chinese System of Public Education
Pandya (1916)	Education in Baroda
Chiang (1917)	A Study in Chinese Principles of Education
Cole (1907)	Herbart and Froebel: An Attempt at Synthesis
Lomer (1910)	The Concept of Method
Lavell (1911)	The Evolution of Greek Moral Education

## Example: Barranco (1914)

“Mexico: Its Educational Problems—Suggestions for Their Solution”

- “It is time for us [white Mexicans] to... go to them [Indians], to raise them up by means of education, extending to them our hand, not as protectors, nor as tutors, not only as friends, but as brothers and fellow citizens” (p. vi).
- Producing an *other*

Mexicans “know your monstrous battleships that are now infesting their ports. It is one of my fond illusions to hope that someday my countrymen will know ‘the other Americans,’ those whom I know, those who are building schools...those who are fighting unselfishly to make humanity a better lot” (Barranco, 1914, pp. 76-77).



Affective attachments to “home” interrupt exposition, and skepticism toward colonial benefactors pierces faith in unfettered progress: “A primitive society has suddenly awakened to find itself face to face with an enemy it is powerless to resist. The modern world, where it does not absorb, destroys. In the East, British Education is an agent at once destructive and constructive” (Chamberlain 1900, 105).

# The Comparative Dissertation

- Require the establishment of norms, and the capacity to isolate the units of analysis to be compared
- Flow of comparison from the metropole to the periphery
- New field: Comparative and International Education

Snowden (1908)	The Industrial Improvement Schools of Wuerttemberg
Kandel (1910)	The Training of Elementary School Teachers in Germany
Sandiford (1910)	The Training of Teachers in England and Wales
Loram (1918)	The Education of the South African Native
Lewis (1919)	The Education of Girls in China
Trueman (1920)	School Funds in the Province of Quebec

## Example: Loram (1918)

Education of  
Black people  
in the US  
South



Problem of  
education of  
Natives in  
South Africa



Establishment of an  
Apartheid system in  
South Africa

# The Psychometric Dissertation

- Education as an experimental science
- Description of tests and results, mechanism for verifying validity and reproducibility
- Outsized role of Edward L. Thorndike

Arai (1912)	Mental Fatigue
Chapman (1914)	Individual Differences in Ability and Improvement and Their Correlations
Rogers (1917)	Experimental Tests of Mathematical Ability and Their Prognostic Value
Steacy (1917)	The Interrelations of Mental Abilities
Lew (1920)	The Psychology of Learning Chinese: A Preliminary Analysis by Means of Experimental Psychology of Some of the Factors Involved in the Process of Learning Chinese Characters

## Example: Steacey (1917)

- 31 pages of tests followed by 40 pages of results
- No framing, narration, or description of relevance
- Who the author claims to be is far less important than when he claims to be able to do

# Production of Expertise

- All dissertations share the understanding of reality as stable and describable (no multiple perspectives)
  - Not necessarily empirical
  - When empirical, positivist (psychometric)
- Today's commonplace practices (theoretical frameworks, citations, "flagging" one's belonging) have histories, and were not intrinsic to the dissertation



# Production of the Expert

1

**Encyclopedic**

Knowledge of the  
"whole" being described

2

**Comparative**

Bridge between  
contexts, gatekeepers

3

**Psychometric**

Contributor to a universal body  
of cumulative knowledge

# The Archive and its Specters

- The archive is never stable. It expresses anxieties and divergences
  - Barranco, Chamberlain, and Lew are good examples
- Need to come to terms with the specters of our own field(s)



# Thank you!

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