Universität Hamburg
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DGfE Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft
Sektion Historische Bildungsforschung

Call for Papers
Conference by the Division for Historical Educational Research of the German Educational Research Association 2027

Colonialism and Coloniality in the History of Education
September 13-15, 2027, University of Hamburg, Von-Melle-Park 8

Local Organising Committee
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In recent years, colonialism and its influence on lived realities today have become an increasingly relevant topic of public discourse. Educational Science is confronted with fundamental questions of its own discipline as well, as colonial endeavors were legitimized as educational objectives and as decolonial educational approaches require a critical reflection of fundamental principles of our field. The postcolonial challenge (Baquero Torres 2012, Castro Varela 2016) is likewise crucially relevant for the history of education. Therefore, the main purpose of the conference is to analyze the topics colonialism and coloniality through the lens of educational history and to interpret and discuss them against the backdrop of current postcolonial debates.

Since the 1990s, the field of the history of education has started to examine the relation between upbringing, education, socialization and colonialism. This was largely due to the intersection of several turns in educational and historical research, namely the reception of postcolonial theories, impulses by New Imperial history and the integration of global and transnational history approaches. At first, the topic was mainly discussed by international research (Swartz 2023), where it has become a central theme to this day, which the *International Standing Conference for the History of Education* 2024 on the topic of „(De)Coloniality and Diversity in the Histories of Education“ illustrates (Paedagogica Historica 2026). The German-speaking scientific community picked up these developments somewhat hesitantly. Individual works were conducted, such as on colonialism and school (e.g. Adick/Mehnert 2001; Rösner 2023), mission history (e.g. Hölzl 2021; Id. 2016, Habermas/Id. 2015), from intersectional, gender and history of knowledge perspectives (cf. Gippert/Kleinau 2014; Walgenbach 2005), on childhood and adolescence (e.g. Heyn 2018; Kleinau 2023) as well as recently within research on the GDR (e.g. Dalljo et al. 2026; Schenk 2023; Raposo/Schenk 2021). Despite the increase in research in recent years, the research landscape remains fragmentary; a wide-ranging trend towards decolonialization in the history of education, in the sense of critically examining one’s research

concepts, theories and terms, can't be attested. Therefore, it seems imperative to assess and discuss colonialism and coloniality as well as to develop them further.

Colonialism and Coloniality address a wide range of perspectives, which should be explored through a history of education lens at the conference. Colonialism is defined as a „Herrschaftsbeziehung zwischen Kollektiven, bei welcher die fundamentalen Entscheidungen über die Lebensführung der Kolonisierten durch eine kulturell andersartige und kaum anpassungswillige Minderheit von Kolonialherren unter vorrangiger Berücksichtigung externer Interessen getroffen und tatsächlich durchgesetzt werden" (Osterhammel/Jansen 2012, p. 21). Thus, on one hand, contributions to the history of upbringing, education and socialization during the colonial period are welcome. This does not only include research on the colonies themselves, but also on colonialism within the societies of the colonial powers – as found, for example, in textbooks, lessons, or in consumer habits and ways of life related to upbringing, education and socialization. On the other hand, contributions may explore the long-lasting effects and impacts of colonialism on models of thought, structures of power and knowledge, commonly referred to as coloniality (Quijano 2024).

With this in mind, a limitation to early modern colonialism, which was characterized by „sendungsideologische Rechtfertigungsdoktrinen, die auf der Überzeugung der Kolonialherren von ihrer eigenen kulturellen Höherwertigkeit beruhen" (Osterhammel/Jansen 2012, p. 21), is not productive. Instead, contributions on all periods of history are welcome, for example on: the inner societal treatment of social groups, the German-speaking world in its global intertwinements as well as imperial relations outside the major overseas empires, such as Eastern Europe and Turkey. The main focus is not descriptive depictions of colonization in the sense of land grabbing and settlement, but rather education, upbringing and socialization within the entanglement of (post)colonial power and rule.

This leads to the following topics for submissions:

- theoretical and methodical reflections on the conditions, possibilities and limitations of decolonializing the historiography of education
- historization of educational theories and concepts with regard to their colonial context and origin, including colonial education
- sources and source-related issues in research on colonialism and coloniality in the history of education
- postcolonial perspectives on the development of education systems and the universalization of the modern school, as well as international education organizations and regimes
- labour and education migration under (post)colonial conditions
- functions of institutions and places of education such as schools, adult education centers ("Volkshochschulen"), universities, museums or zoos during and after the colonial period
- colonialism in educational, children's and youth media
- role of education, upbringing and socialization for emancipation, anti-colonialism and resistance, as well as in overcoming colonialism

- biographical perspectives on (post)colonial actors and networks in the field of education, as well as on childhood, adolescence and family
- culture of remembrance and reconciliation

Hamburg is a particularly suitable location for exploring these topics. During the era of the German Empire, the city served as a "colonial metropolis"; to this day, its urban landscape is shaped by numerous (post)colonial sites of remembrance (Zimmerer/Todzi 2021). This applies not only to the economy, politics, and society, but also to education, academia, and research. For example, the University of Hamburg, our conference venue, emerged from the Colonial Institute founded in 1908, where professionals were trained for the German colonies. Today, the University of Hamburg (UHH) serves as a hub for the scholarly examination of Hamburg's colonial history, a cause championed by the Hanseatic city and civil society initiatives; for instance, the city's Senate recently adopted a remembrance concept for addressing Hamburg's colonial legacy and its societal consequences (Decolonizing Hamburg 2024).

The conference languages are German and English.

Deadline for abstract submission: February 28, 2027. Please submit your abstract (2,000 characters) at tagungkolonialismus2027.ew@uni-hamburg.de

Notice of acceptance: April 30, 2027

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