

The New International Historiography: Research Perspectives¹

Simonetta Polenghi

Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan, Italy

The topic assigned to me is of particular significance, but also of considerable breadth. It may be approached in different ways, by focusing on geographical areas, specific themes, or privileged sources. Aware of the partial nature of the perspective I have chosen, I nonetheless believe that it provides a useful - albeit certainly not exhaustive - interpretative key.

I shall therefore use as the guiding thread of my discussion the themes proposed over the past thirty years by ISCHE, the *International Standing Conference for the History of Education*². ISCHE was founded in 1978 and organises an international conference every year (only in 2020, due to the Covid pandemic, was it impossible to do so, and the event had to be postponed by one year). ISCHE includes both individual and institutional members, namely national societies for the history of education (both CIRSE and SIPSE are affiliated). Each year the General Assembly elects two members of the Executive Committee (on a three-year rotation), and every three years it elects the President for a three-year term. The President, in agreement with the Executive Committee, co-opts a representative of early-career researchers who are not yet permanently appointed - ISCHE indeed encourages research by younger scholars, as well as promoting five-year, multinational research groups (*Standing Working Groups – SWG*)³.

The first presidents came from the Anglophone area and from Northern and Central Europe until 2000, when the Portuguese scholar António Nóvoa was elected⁴. In 2022, the election of Inés Dussel - born in USA, but raised in Argentina and working in Mexico, in the Department of Educational Research at CINVESTAV - testifies to ISCHE's global openness, which today is less centred on Europe and the United States, although both remain represented on the Executive Committee. After years of debate, in 2019 Portuguese was introduced as conference language alongside English, German, French, and Spanish.

Participation in the conferences follows the approval of a submitted abstract through a double-blind peer-review process. The call for papers is presented to the Executive Committee two years in advance by the Convenor of the host university and is extensively discussed within the Committee itself. Analysing the themes proposed over the past thirty years by the annual ISCHE conferences is therefore indicative (though not exhaustive) of international research trends⁵.

1. “Traditional” themes

A number of conferences have been devoted to what might be defined as “traditional” themes, that is, themes reflecting the more consolidated tendencies of historical-educational research. Several conferences focused on the history of schooling and basic education: the history of schooling from a

¹ This essay is the English translation of the text of a lecture delivered at the University of Padua on 15 October 2024, as part of a seminar series on Italian educational historiography, then published with the title *La nuova storiografia internazionale. Prospettive di ricerca*, in *La storiografia educativa in Italia dal dopoguerra ad oggi*, Callegari, C., Zago, G. (ed.), Studium, Roma 2025, pp.61- 72.

² <https://www.ische.org/> (last retrieved in May 2025).

³ <https://www.ische.org/about-ische/standing-working-groups/> (last retrieved in May 2025).

⁴ <https://www.ische.org/about-ische/history/> (last retrieved in May 2025).

⁵ Two years after each ISCHE conference, *Paedagogica Historica*, the prestigious international journal, publishes a special issue that brings together a selection of significant articles, in addition to the editorial by the Convenor(s). For a more in-depth analysis, reference should be made to these sources. Here, only a limited number of issues will be mentioned.

comparative perspective (1996, ISCHE 18, Kraków, *Schooling in Changing Societies: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*); the history of popular education (2009, ISCHE 31, Utrecht, *The History of Popular Education*); and the relationship between school and society (2011, ISCHE 33, San Luis Potosí, Mexico, *Education and Society: New Perspectives on an Old Debate*). In 2003 (ISCHE 25, São Paulo, Brazil, *Education and Modernity*), emphasis was placed on the dynamics of modernisation and schooling, linking the history of education to social and political transformations. This theme was revisited in various ways in subsequent years. In 2008 (ISCHE 30, Rutgers University, USA, *Education and Inequality: Historical Approaches on Schooling and Social Stratification*), attention was focused on the issue of social inequality and its repercussions on schooling, an issue taken up again in 2013 (ISCHE 35, Riga, *Education and Power*), addressing the theme of political, economic, and social power and its influence on education.

In 2017 (ISCHE 39, Buenos Aires, *Education and Emancipation*), the intention was to emphasise the emancipatory dimension of education and literacy, also - and strongly - in a political sense, with particular reference to their capacity for resilience in the face of dictatorships, in clear connection with the situation in Latin America.

In 2006, by contrast, attention had been focused on processes of literacy, including the techniques of reading and writing employed over time (ISCHE 28, Umeå, *Technologies of the Word. Literacies in the History of Education*)⁶. The theme was closely linked to the research interests of Daniel Lindmark, Convenor of the conference and a well-known Swedish scholar, and reflected the interdisciplinary advances of historiography in the fields of literacy, orality, and writing. In 2024, an SWG of Iberian–Latin American scope began its work, dedicated to practices of written culture⁷. Sweden hosted ISCHE once again in 2021, when, for the first time, the conference was held not in person but online, due to the Covid pandemic (ISCHE 42, Örebro, *Looking from Above and Below: Rethinking the Social in the History of Education*). In this case too, the research pursued by the Convenor, Johannes Westberg, fostered renewed sensitivity towards the reconsideration and updating of the nexus between school, society, and economy⁸.

A short time apart, two conferences were devoted to the history of childhood, a central theme within the discipline (2007, ISCHE 29, Hamburg, *Children and Youth at Risk*; 2010, ISCHE 32, Amsterdam, *Discoveries of Childhood in History*). In 2014 (ISCHE 36, London, *Education, War and Peace*), the themes of peace education, militaristic education, and childhood and schooling in times of war were addressed. The wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan, Somalia, Syria, Lebanon, and Mexico had brought a dramatic issue back to the attention of historians, one that the new century had not eclipsed. The conference, also owing to London's centrality for intercontinental flights, was highly successful (with 500 participants), attesting to the extent to which the topic was keenly felt.

If, in these conferences, the history of schooling and education was examined in relation to social, economic, and political transformations, a more pronounced attention to the history of pedagogy can be found in two events: one devoted to the New Education movement (2004, ISCHE 26, Geneva, *New Education: Genesis and Metamorphoses*), and the other to reform pedagogies and their underlying ethical values (2023, ISCHE 44, Budapest, *Histories of Education and Reform: Traditions, Tensions and Transitions*). The organisers, from ELTE University in Budapest, are attentive scholars of

⁶ D. Lindmark, *Technologies of the Word: Literacies in the History of Education*, «Paedagogica Historica», XLIV, 1-2, Special issue, 2008.

⁷ This refers to the SWG *Teacher Education and Written Culture: History of Libraries, Books, and Practices (2024-2029)* che ha come Convenor Ana Laura Lima (Brasile), Jordi Garcia Farrero (Spagna), Gerardo Garay (Uruguay), Ana Paz (Portugal).

⁸ J. Westberg, *Funding the Rise of Mass Schooling: The Social, Economic and Cultural History of School Finance in Sweden, 1840-1900*, Springer International Publishing, Cham 2017.

Reformpädagogik and *Lebensreform*, and are particularly sensitive to highlighting the connections between philosophy, art, the human sciences, pedagogy and politics, and school and educational reforms.

Present across all these events - if one pays close attention to the calls for papers and the books of abstracts - is the history of the school in its various components, which have been foregrounded in certain conferences, such as that of 2025, which thematises the figure of the teacher and the history of teaching (2025, ISCHE 46, Lille, *Teachers and Teaching*), to which I shall return later. In 2000, Spain hosted a conference specifically devoted to school and educational textbooks (ISCHE 22, Alcalá, *Books and Education*), thanks to the sensitivity of the Convenor, María del Mar del Pozo Andrés, who articulated the strong interest of Spanish scholars in the history of textbooks. This line of research, which now boasts an extensive bibliography but still offers significant scope for further investigation, has been cultivated in many countries; nevertheless, pioneering studies are to be found precisely in Spain, France, Germany⁹, and Italy. It has also led to the creation of databases such as *Emmanuelle* in France and *Manes* in Spain and Latin America, as well as research centres such as CEINCE in Spain¹⁰ and the Georg Eckert Institute in Germany¹¹.

2. Less explored topics

The conferences recalled above developed themes that were already present within the field of international historiography. There are, however, also cases of conferences that have rightly brought into the spotlight a number of much less explored topics which, despite the impetus that such events invariably provide, have not subsequently received the degree of expansion that might have been expected.

In 1997, in Dublin, attention was focused on religious faiths and education from a historical and comparative perspective (1997, ISCHE 19, Dublin, *Faiths and Education: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*). However, the history of religious education - which in Italy has always been at the centre of numerous studies, particularly by Catholic scholars¹² - has not received attention comparable, for instance, to that devoted to secular education¹³. In 2020, Stephen G. Parker, Sophie Allen, and Rob J. K. Freathy reflected on the decline of interest in the religious dimension in the history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century England: "Why there has been this hiatus in scholarly interest in the religious dimensions of the founding period of education in England is somewhat puzzling." One possible explanation they identify lies in the academic separation between departments of ecclesiastical history and those of modern and contemporary history, as well as in the fact that historians of education are generally based in departments of education. Alternatively, the strong focus on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries may have led to a neglect of the extent to which the religious dimension permeated people's lives in the medieval and early modern periods (and, of course, in antiquity as well). The British scholars conclude: "Whatever the reasons for the shift away from taking into account the religious dynamic in educational history specifically, here we urge a commitment to its permanent value"¹⁴. Indeed, it is studies of the modern age that tend to emphasise more strongly the importance of religious

⁹ In 1997, the *Internationale Gesellschaft für Schulbuch- und Bildungsmedienforschung* was founded by Eva Matthes at the Universität Augsburg.

¹⁰ <https://www.ceince.eu/> (last retrieved in May 2025).

¹¹ <https://www.gei.de/en/institute> (last retrieved in May 2025).

¹² It suffices to mention the national conferences promoted by L. Pazzaglia, in addition to his studies on the history of the teaching of religion.

¹³ For instance, one SWG focussed on the *History of Laic Education: Concepts, Policies and Practices around the World* (2016-2021), Convenor Felicitas Acosta (Argentina), Adelina Arredondo (Messico), Bruno Poucet (Francia).

¹⁴ S.G. Parker-S. Allen-R.J.K. Freathy, *The Church of England and the 1870 Elementary Education Act*, «British Journal of Educational Studies», LXVIII, 5, 2020, p. 542.

education¹⁵; one may think, for example, of works on the religious dimension of the Enlightenment, too often interpreted as an exclusively secular or atheistic movement¹⁶. It is also worth recalling studies on the secularisation of contemporary society, which underline its strong links with the religious dimension¹⁷.

The conference held in Paris in 2002 addressed the history of secondary education (2002, ISCHE 24, Paris, *Secondary Education: Institutional, Cultural and Social History*). This represented an important historiographical effort, since historians of education tend to concentrate their attention on elementary schooling, partly because of their institutional location within departments of education, which train primary school teachers or educators. This circumstance often encourages scholars to focus on topics that are more readily applicable from a didactic perspective, as they are of greater immediate interest to their students. Studies in early modern history have long produced significant work on the colleges of teaching congregations - above all the Jesuits; nevertheless, the imbalance between the volume of research devoted to basic schooling and that devoted to secondary education remains considerable. In 2022, precisely in order to strengthen this field, a specific ISCHE SWG (2022–27) was established, with Convenors Luís Grosso Correia (Portugal), Felicitas Acosta (Argentina), and Antonio Canales Serrano (Spain).

3. New fields of enquiry

Some editions of ISCHE have proved particularly innovative, as they have embraced ongoing impulses for historiographical renewal and have contributed to advancing them. Especially significant was the 2015 edition, devoted to the broad theme of culture and education (2015, ISCHE 37, Istanbul, *Education and Culture*), which reflected the so-called cultural turn - that is, the intention to examine not only socio-economic and political history, but also to place at the centre of historiographical investigation language, representations, values, symbols, communication, emotions, in short, the complex facets of human cultures¹⁸. The congress, hosted by Istanbul University, also formed part of the efforts of Turkish scholars to broaden their international dimension and to be recognised as a substantial academic community. These were the years in which Turkey's accession to the European Union was being discussed. The subsequent repression under Erdoğan significantly slowed this process.

In 1998, an important conference devoted to the *visual turn* was held in Belgium (1998, ISCHE 20, Kortrijk, *The Challenge of the Visual in the History of Education*). It contributed in a significant way to stimulating the study of visual sources, opening up a broad field of enquiry that remains highly productive to this day. Among the new sources employed were paintings, photographs (including class photographs), comics, images in textbooks, and new media (television, cinema), among others. It is worth recalling that the ISCHE President for 2022–2025, Inés Dussel, is a recognised specialist in this

¹⁵ J.J.H. Dekker, *In search of multiple compatibility: Modernization, secularization, religion, and education in history*, «Bildungsgeschichte. International Journal for the Historiography of Education», 2, 2021, pp. 171-175.

¹⁶ D. Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment. Protestants, Jews and Catholics from London to Vienna*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2008; J.D. Burson-U.L. Lehner (eds), *Enlightenment and Catholicism in Europe. A Transnational History*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame 2014; D. Lindmark, *Technologies of the word: literacies in the history of education*, cit.

¹⁷ M. Buchardt, *The political project of secularization and modern education reform in "provincialized Europe". Historical research in religion and education beyond Secularization, R.I.P.*, «Bildungsgeschichte. International Journal for the Historiography of Education», XI, 2, 2021, pp. 164-170; M. Buchardt (ed.), *Secularization within Europe and Beyond: The Political Projects of Modernizing Religion through Education Reform*, De Gruyter, Berlin/Boston 2024.

¹⁸ S. Polenghi, *ISCHE 37, Istanbul 24-27 June 2015. A short report*, «Historia Scholastica», I, 1, 2015, pp. 94-99.

field¹⁹. The visual turn has led to a major expansion of horizons in the history of education, also fostering greater sensitivity towards the history of children's literature - an area of study that in Italy is included within the history of pedagogy, but which in other countries is linked to literary studies and therefore tended to be excluded from ISCHE.

Partly connected to the visual turn was the Portuguese conference of 2019 devoted to educational spaces (2019, ISCHE 41, Porto, *Spaces and Places of Education*), which likewise represented an important moment in educational historiography. It encouraged scholars to focus their attention on the places of education, from school buildings to classroom furnishings, while also devoting attention to extra-school spaces - for example, places of youth aggregation, oratories, or children's bedrooms. To what extent have these places, their dimensions, and their furnishings influenced teaching and educational processes, in more or less conscious ways? This question, posed in the wake of Foucault's well-known reflections, gave rise to a series of new studies²⁰.

Three years later, the first post-pandemic congress was held in Milan at the Università Cattolica, inaugurating the dual format of in-person and online participation. The author of this paper served as Convenor and sought to strengthen research devoted to the so-called *material turn*, a field closely related to the visual and spatial dimensions, but also to the economy and to the cultural and symbolic - no less than pedagogical - significance of educational objects (2022, ISCHE 43, Milan, *Histories of Educational Technologies: Cultural and Social Dimensions of Pedagogical Objects*)²¹. The conference, which recorded more than 500 participants, reflected the developments of this area of enquiry, cultivated in particular in Spain²² and in Italy, thanks to the pioneering studies of Juri Meda²³ and linked to the concept of school culture²⁴.

¹⁹ M. Depaepe, B. Henkens (eds), *The Challenge of the Visual in the History of Education*, «Paedagogica Historica», XXXVI, 1, 2000, pp. 10-17; U. Mietzner-K. Myers-N. Peim, *Visual History. Images of Education*, Peter Lang, Berna 2005; F. Comas Rubí (ed.), *Fotografia i història de l'educació*, «Educació i Història», 15, 2015, special issue; M. del Mar del Pozo-S. Braster, *Exploring New Ways of Studying School Memories: The Engraving as a Blind Spot of the History of Education*, in *School Memories. New Trends in the History of Education*, C. Yanes-Cabrera-J. Meda-A. Viñao (eds), Springer, Cham 2017, pp. 11-28; J. Meda, *Invisible Schools. The public image of rural schools in southern Italy in photographic inquiries and photo-reportages (1925-1955)*, «Historia y Memoria de la Educación», 8, 2018, pp. 347-396; S. Polenghi, *Film as a source for historical enquiry in education. Research methods and a case study: film adaptations of Pinocchio and their reception in Italy*, «Educació i Història», 31, 2018, pp. 89-111; I. Dussel, *The Visual Turn in the History of Education: Four Comments for a Historiographical Discussion*, in *Rethinking the History of Education*, T.S. Popkewitz (ed.), Palgrave Macmillan, New York 2013, pp. 29-49; I. Dussel, *Visuality, Materiality, and History*, in *Handbook of Historical Studies in Education*, T. Fitzgerald, ed, Springer, Berlin 2020, pp. 137-152.

²⁰ F.J. Rodríguez Méndez-C. Manique da Silva, eds, *Architecture and school space*, «Historia y Memoria de la Educación», 13, 2021, special issue; L. Grosso Correia, *Spaces and places of education: prelude*, «Paedagogica Historica», LVII, 1-2, 2021, special issue, pp. 1-10.

²¹ S. Polenghi, *Histories of educational technologies. Introducing the cultural and social dimensions of pedagogical objects*, «Paedagogica Historica», LX, 1, 2024, special issue, pp. 1-17.

²² A. Escolano Benito (ed.), *La cultura material de la escuela*, CEINCE, Berlanga de Duero 2007; A. Viñao Frago, *La historia material e immaterial de la escuela: memoria, patrimonio y educación*, «Educação», XXXV, 1, 2012, pp. 7-17; A. Jénez Eguizábal et al., coord., *Etnohistoria de la escuela. Actas del XII Coloquio Nacional de Historia de la Educación (Burgos, 18-21 de junio de 2003)*, Universidad de Burgos - Sociedad Española de Historia de la Educación, Burgos 2003; M. Lawn-I. Grosvenor (eds), *Materialities of Schooling. Design, Technology, Objects, Routines*, Symposium Books, Oxford 2005; V.L. Gaspar da Silva-J. Meda-G. de Souza (eds), *The Material Turn in the History of Education*, «Educació i Història: Revista d'història de l'educació», 38, 2021, special issue.

²³ J. Meda, *Mezzi di educazione di massa: saggi di storia della cultura materiale della scuola tra XIX e XX secolo*, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2016.

²⁴ M. Depaepe-F. Simon, *Is there any Place for the History of 'Education' in the 'History of Education'? A Plea for the History of Everyday Educational Reality in- and outside Schools*, «Paedagogica Historica», XXXI, 1, 1995, pp. 9-16; S. Braster-I. Grosvenor-M. Del Mar Del Pozo Andrés (eds), *The Black Box of Schooling. A Cultural History of the*

In 2016, another important conference was held in Chicago, addressing the so-called *corporeal turn* (ISCHE 38, Chicago, USA, *Education and the Body*). Here too, the visual and spatial dimensions intersected, and an underlying Foucauldian heuristic framework was evident. Attention was focused more explicitly on pedagogies of control or liberation of the body, both within and beyond the classroom. Disciplines such as gymnastics or physical education were privileged, but attention was also paid to the “different” body, and thus to the history of special or decolonial education²⁵.

Two years later, these themes were taken up again in Berlin (2018, ISCHE 40, Berlin, *Education and Nature*), where greater emphasis was placed on environmental issues (city–countryside; nature–culture; science teaching; school meals and nutrition; gender; decolonisation, etc.)²⁶.

By contrast, it is rather striking that over the past thirty years no conference has been devoted specifically to the history of female education, even though, as is well known, the history of women teachers²⁷ as well as that of female pupils, girls’ schools, and books and magazines aimed at girls have all been the subject of research and have always been present transversally in conference papers and calls for papers. Nevertheless, in 2018 an SWG dedicated to the transnational history of female education was established - *Gendering Local, National, Regional, Transnational and Supra-National Histories of Education (2018–2023)* - with Convenors Nelleke Bakker (the Netherlands), Deirdre Raftery (Ireland), Stephanie Spencer (United Kingdom), Tali Tadmor-Shimony (Israel), and Kay Whitehead (Australia).

Another theme that has been the object of recent research in Italy as well as internationally concerns the history of emotions and education²⁸. In this case too, there has not yet been a conference specifically devoted to the topic, although it does appear in papers presented at the most recent editions.

The theme of the “transnational” likewise runs through the conferences. In 2012, the conference was devoted to internationalisation (ISCHE 34, Geneva, *Internationalization in Education*), but in more recent years the term *transnational* has also been adopted, to denote educational phenomena that transcend national borders and, in so doing, become hybridised and adapted to national contexts. The ISCHE series *Global Histories of Education* was inaugurated in 2019 with a volume devoted precisely to transnational perspectives in the history of education²⁹. Other volumes in the series fit squarely within this line of enquiry, also examining the history of women’s education³⁰.

Classroom, Peter Lang, Bruxelles 2011; P. Smeyers-M. Depaepe, *Educational Research: Material Culture and Its Representation*, Cham, Springer International, 2016; D. Gonçalves Vidal-A. Paulilo, *School Culture*, in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2018.

²⁵ S. Polenghi-A. Németh-T. Kasper (eds), *Education and the Body in Europe (1900-1950), Movements, public health, pedagogical rules and cultural ideas*, Peter Lang, Berlin 2021, Italian translation: *Corpo ed educazione in Europa (1900-1950). Movimenti socio-culturali, salute pubblica, norme pedagogiche*, Junior, Parma 2022.

²⁶ Cfr. M. Caruso-S. Reh-E. Fuchs, *Education and Nature*, «Paedagogica Historica», LVI, 1-2, 2020, special issue, pp. 1-8.

²⁷ C. Flecha Garcia et al. (eds), *Las maestras de la República*, Catarata, Madrid 2012; M. del Mar del Pozo Andrés, *Justa Freire o la pasión de educar: biografía de una maestra atrapada en la historia de España (1896-1965)*, Octaedro, Barcelona 2013.

²⁸ C. Covato, *Pericoloso a dirsi: emozioni, sentimenti, divieti e trasgressioni nella storia dell’educazione*, UNICOPLI, Milano 2018; A. Escolano Benito, *Emociones & educación: la construcción histórica de la educación emocional*, Vision Libros, Madrid 2018.

²⁹ E. Fuchs-E. Roldán Vera, *The Transnational in the History of Education. Concepts and Perspectives*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham 2019.

³⁰ C. Mayer-A. Arredondo (eds), *Women, power relations, and education in a transnational world*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham 2020.

Finally, another highly relevant theme is decolonisation, already addressed in 1999 in Australia (ISCHE 21, Sydney, *Education and Ethnicity*), taken up again in 2024 in Brazil (ISCHE 45, Natal, *(De)coloniality and Diversity in the Histories of Education*), and present in many papers across different conferences. Post-colonial Africa is the focus of a volume in the ISCHE series³¹, and since 2024 it has also been the subject of a new SWG, *History of Education in African Societies (2024–2029)*, led by Pierre Guidi (France), Ellen Veia Rosnes (Norway), Florence Wenzek (France), and Orlando Chemane (Mozambique). Religious education, which has been somewhat neglected, as noted above, is instead addressed within decolonial studies, beginning with the seminal work of Marc Depaepe³². Another field of enquiry that has not received specific conference attention, but is present in several papers and is the focus of an SWG, is that of Public History (*Public Histories of Education, 2023–2028*), with Convenors Gianfranco Bandini (Italy), Sjaak Braster (the Netherlands), Francisca Comas Rubí (Spain), Karin Priem (Luxembourg), and Sian Roberts (United Kingdom). This is a theme on which two academic societies, the Spanish SEPHE and the Italian SIPSE, have concentrated their research efforts.

4. Conclusion: intersections and repercussions

As has been shown, an analysis of the themes of ISCHE conferences makes it possible to retrace the most significant strands of international educational historiography and to identify emerging trends. Since the themes are linked to the scholarly interests of the proposing Convenors (while, as noted, requiring the approval of the Executive Committee), they may correspond either to well-established lines of research or to more innovative impulses. It should also be recalled that the proposed titles must be broad in scope in order to attract scholars; it is the calls for papers that articulate and specify the themes. By way of example, a few passages from the call for ISCHE 46 (2025, Lille), devoted to *Teachers and Teaching* - a traditional theme in the history of schooling, yet approached in the light of new research trends - may be cited.

“Teachers’ career paths and identities: recruitment, qualifications, training, retraining, advancement; gender, social, ethnic, and geographical origins”: here the themes of gender and ethnic issues, discussed above, clearly emerge. “Teachers’ working and living conditions: official requirements, daily life, working hours, salaries, retirement, health, vulnerabilities.” Here attention is paid to teachers’ health – a theme linked to corporeality and to the conditions of school buildings - alongside daily life, a topic characteristic of *Annales* historiography. Other passages indicate as possible lines of research both the internationalisation of teachers’ associations and their politicisation. The role of teachers in times of crisis, such as wars (the theme of ISCHE 2014, London) and epidemics (a theme emerging in the wake of the pandemic), is also highlighted. An entire strand of research is devoted to the material culture of the school (ISCHE 2022, Milan): “Teaching tools and school artifacts: the socio-materiality of teaching through the creation, production, and dissemination of technologies for teaching.” Educational spaces, including extra-school settings - from prisons to hospitals - as well as nature, are also present. Another strand addresses the theme of schooling in collective memory, a topic particularly dear to Spanish and Italian scholars: “Representations of teachers and teaching in literature, cinema and mass culture and their impact on collective memory.”

³¹ D. Matasci-M. Bandeira Jerónimo-H. Gonçalves Dores (eds), *Education and Development in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa. Policies, Paradigms, and Entanglements, 1890s-1980s*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham 2020.

³² B. Hellinckx-M. Depaepe-F. Simon, *The Educational Work of Catholic Women Religious in the 19th and 20th Centuries. A historiographical survey*, «Revue d’Histoire Ecclésiastique», CIV, 2, 2009, pp. 529-549; M. Depaepe, *Colonial education in the Congo - a question of “uncritical” pedagogy until the bitter end? La educación en el Congo, ¿una cuestión de pedagogía “acrítica” hasta el amargo final? L’education coloniale au Congo - une question de pédagogie “non-critique” jusqu’à la fin?*, «Encounters in Theory and History of Education», 18, 2017, pp. 2-26; D. Raftery, *Irish Nuns and Education in the Anglophone World. A Transnational History*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham 2023; U.L. Lehner, *The Catholic Enlightenment. The Forgotten History of a Global Movement*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2016.

It is thus possible to discern fruitful intersections among the various research directions, bearing witness to the ways in which, over the past thirty years, international historical-educational research has opened up new avenues of enquiry through the use of new sources.

Finally, one may ask what impact these changes have had in Italy. It is impossible to provide a full account here, but it suffices to recall that Italian scholars have made a significant contribution to the development of several of these themes, as attested by the recognition some of them have received within ISCHE's Executive Committee itself³³. Two points, however, merit particular emphasis. First, the strong influence of Anglophone terminology has contributed to a heightened interest in the history of education, alongside the history of schooling and pedagogy (also linked to other factors, ranging from didactic requirements in degree courses in Educational Sciences - addressed not to future teachers but to aspiring social educators - to the abandonment of a neo-idealist cultural framework). This has led to a redefinition by ministerial decree of the disciplinary field from *History of Pedagogy* to *History of Pedagogy and Education*.

Within this broadening of horizons, however, there is also an inherent risk, namely the neglect of the history of educational theories, which must always provide the conceptual foundation for historical-educational studies.

³³ In 2016, the present author was elected in Chicago as a member of the Executive Committee for a three-year term and was subsequently co-opted until 2022. In 2022, Juri Meda was elected in Milan for a three-year term. In 2025, Veronica Fonte, of the Università Cattolica, was co-opted as the representative of early-career researchers.