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**Abstract**

European educational knowledge and practices have been deeply impacted by the colonial experience. While hegemonic knowledge was exported to the colonies, practices of teaching and governing colonial subjects were tested in the periphery and then reimported to the center. This contribution looks at a case of European education outside Europe that did not take place, at least not entirely, in a colonial setting: China. It argues that the (at least potentially) non-colonial encounter with societies that presented possible alternatives to European civilization was as important in refracting and reframing European knowledge, education, and identity as was the colonial encounter. European education outside Europe was enacted not only in settings of hegemony and resistance but also in more subtly nuanced spaces of encounter. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)