The Impact of Global Tendencies on the German Teacher Education System

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The Political Economy of Germany's Education Reform

The structural core characteristics of the German teacher education system developed in the first decade of the nineteenth century under the influence of Wilhelm von Humboldt. Since then, German federal states have demanded that high school teachers undergo a university-based teacher education programme leading to a state examination. For Germany, this policy marks the starting point of the teaching profession as a special career (for more details, see Blömeke, 2002). The introduction of state exams was not a detached innovation but part of a fundamental modernization of the public administration after Napoleon had defeated Prussia in 1806 (Führ, 1985, pp. 418ff.). A new humanism had become influential with Humboldt as one of the most prominent educational philosophers. General education of all children was the most important value underlying educational policy ('enlightened absolutism'). Regarding the teaching profession, Humboldt's goal was a state-controlled training of civil servants with high qualifications.

This idea of teacher education survived the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries in spite of important changes in German society. Industrialization, the First and Second World Wars, Nazism, the division of Germany into two countries – none of these events resulted in fundamental changes in the teacher education system (this was true in West Germany, and the developments in East Germany were dissolved as a consequence of reunification). Throughout this time, only gradual modifications were made. Two examples are: the introduction of one-year, on-the-job training as a second phase of teacher education in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and the reform of teacher education for elementary schools to a more academic level in the second half of the twentieth century (for more details see Blömeke, 1999). A number of historical, socio-economic and political reasons for this long-lasting stability are discussed below.

Historically, Germany (like France, Greece, Italy and other states in 'Old Europe') has a strong and early philosophical tradition, which influenced the development of its social system. With regard to teacher education and schools, this tradition led to the development of educational features around 1800, which were – in comparison to other countries – very advanced at that time. The problem at present is that these traditions have meanwhile turned into limitations. In several aspects the traditional features are no longer appropriate since they were part of a society with high social immobility. For example, in the 1800s, less than 5% of the pupils of a cohort took the *Abitur* (the high school exit exam after grade 13). In contrast, a modern knowledge society needs a more democratic school system, which leads a far higher percentage to the *Abitur* and as a consequence to higher social mobility. As the results of TIMSS and the PISA show, the German school system fails completely in reaching these goals (Baumert et al, 1997, 2001) – but since the traditional features of the school system have existed for a long time and are embodied deeply in the German mentality, they can only be changed very slowly.

Socio-economically, there has traditionally been a close connection between educational degrees and social status in Germany. The German school system and consequently the German teacher education system have been highly stratified. This stratification follows a 'theory' according to which three different kinds of natural talent exist (manual, technical and intellectual) that must be developed in three different kinds of schools (Spranger, 1974). The three types of schools lead to separate levels within society (working class, middle class and upper class). This is an anomaly when compared to many other school systems in the world, and has persisted although Germany has been profoundly criticized for this during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The forces of persistence have been strong enough to maintain this structure even after it was faced with empirical findings disproving the basic theory of talent (Roth, 1969).

Politically, the stratification of the German school system has been subject to highly controversial clashes with ideological connotations as long as political parties have existed (Herrlitz et al, 2001). Conservative-oriented parties have more or less wanted to save the triple subdivided social hierarchy. During centuries, they have supported a stratified school and teacher education system. The more socialist-orientated parties have criticized the theory of three stable natural talents using as a principal argument the equality of opportunity and have usually argued for integrated schools. Since both sides had sufficient political power during the two democratic phases in German history – the Republic of Weimar from 1918 to 1933 and the post-war Federal Republic of Germany (since 1945) – these differences have resulted in a kind of stalemate.

The historical, socio-economic and political characteristics described underlie the long-lasting stability of the German teacher education system and probably account at least partly for some other European educational

systems (see the academies in France and the private school system for the English upper class, for example). Two other occurrences in the twentieth century fostered the stability of this situation in Germany once more: the Nazism and the following Cold War. Both occurrences strongly influenced West German post-war politics, especially in educational issues. Between 1933 and 1945 the political influence of the Nazi state on the educational system was very strong (Keim, 1995; Bracht, 1998; Dithmar, 2001). After an examination of these dynamics, one of the most important agreements after 1945 was to never again allow dictatorial influence on educational questions. For West Germany, this implied – among other changes – the formation of a Federal Republic (FRG) in which the rights of each federal state are extensive, especially regarding educational policy, to prevent strong central power.

In most federal states the fundamental characteristics of the regional educational systems dating from the 1920s – including stratification – were reinstalled (Führ, 1998). This stratification was enacted as a direct response to the instalment of a comprehensive school model from grades 1 through 9 in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Since the two German countries represented the frontline countries of the Western bloc and the Eastern bloc, any decision in West Germany was highly political and its repercussion upon the Western bloc was always the subject of critical discussion.

Against this background it has been almost impossible to reform teacher education for a long time because any proposal was compared either to Nazism or GDR politics. Any similarity was used as argument to prevent change. Reform discussions during the 1960s and 1970s are prominent examples of this. Humboldt's idea of a university as a union of educators and students, a union of research and instruction, and as a union of academic disciplines seemed to disintegrate in this period (Anrich, 1962; Schelsky, 1962/1971). More and more high school graduates wanted to enrol at university. Academic disciplines became more specialized and professional studies were integrated into the university. In addition, the traditional hierarchical order of few full professors, subordinated associate or assistant professors and students without any right of participation was questioned. Parallel to this, the efficacy of the school system was doubted. After the so-called 'Sputnik shock' Picht (1964) analysed the German situation as an educational catastrophe: in an international comparison it amounted to a low number of high school graduates of low technical competence. Ten years of heated political discussion followed in which a large number of reform ideas were developed: integrated schools, whole-time schooling, testable learning objectives, and individualized curricula. Some federal states even tried to reduce the former freedom and self-organization of universities which had reached a peak after 1945. The opponents of such reforms successfully rejected these innovations by comparing the reform ideas either with similar state measures during Nazism or with similar school characteristics in the

communist world – disregarding the fact that a large number of Western countries had more state control, accountability systems or comprehensive schools than Germany.

Globalization Influences in German Education

Against this historical, political and socio-economic background, the present process of change is almost surprising given the former stability of teacher education. At present, German teacher education is in a process of transformation from state-controlled to university-controlled teacher education programmes and from informal to formal accountability mechanisms. The ongoing reform is the farthest reaching change in the German education system in the last 200 years. The two most important consequences of the growing globalization are: the adaptation of German teacher education to a form of course organization prevailing in English-speaking countries (which can be seen as an introduction of implicit accountability mechanisms) and the implementation of education standards and evaluation (which can be seen as an introduction of explicit accountability mechanisms). These changes are seen as a result of globalization forces working against Germany's national peculiarities and closely linked with developments in schools (Meyer et al, 1977; Ramirez & Boli, 1987; Kamens et al, 1996). As in other countries the German system has developed in congruency with the image of the ideal citizen, and consequently of the ideal teacher.

During the twentieth century in almost all countries schools emerged as institutions to develop the skills and the knowledge of the next generation. Their institutional characteristics reflect parallels across countries even if the national cultural contexts were different: a requirement to attend school starting at a certain age, state control, diachronical and vertical subdivisions into years and classes, emphasis on core content areas such as mathematics, mother tongue and history, some basic definitions of teaching qualifications, and so on. These universal phenomena were not planned systematically but developed at a number of places at the same stage of social development because of their national value. Parsons (1971) called this phenomenon 'evolutionary universalities' and developed his hypothesis that a society can only reach the next developmental stage if crucial institutional features are formed. Nevertheless, deeper inquiry into the specific features of the school system reveals national peculiarities and a broad diversity (Schriewer, 1992, pp. 25ff.).

For the German education system, this means for example that structural reforms followed global tendencies only partly and turned to internal, culturally bound efforts instead. The same phenomenon of intertwining can perhaps be discovered regarding the structure and content of teacher education. In Germany as in almost all industrialized countries teacher education is at least partly located at universities, it consists of

courses in subject matter and pedagogy, and it is divided into primary and secondary teacher education (with a stress on pedagogy in the first and on subject matter in the latter case). In this respect, the development of the teaching profession itself could be seen as a global phenomenon, again with visible national peculiarities. For Germany this seems to apply especially to the mechanisms of accountability.

Globalization and Teacher Education in Germany[1]

When discussing teacher education in Germany, one has to distinguish between global influences directly affecting its *structure and organization* and global influences on the German society which have led to changes regarding the *content* of teacher education. These two perspectives represent the difference between education *in* a global world and education *for* a global world (Lenhart, 2000).

Teacher Education in a Global World

Internationalization and deregulation are global processes which have heavily influenced national teacher education systems. A number of influences are discussed below by taking a closer look at universities (Scott, 1998; Wächter, 1999), where the first phase of teacher education takes place.

Regarding internationalization, mobility has become one of the most important policies in Europe to be realized by implementing new university degrees, by intensified cooperation between universities and by exchanges of students and professors. Indeed, the European Union has become an important actor in the global context by funding research and studies abroad. An increasing de-nationalization of universities through EU programmes like TEMPUS, SOCRATES and ERASMUS can be noticed (Hahn, 2003, p. 55). In addition, within Europe a new currency for university courses – the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) – has been developed to make student exchanges easier. Since lectures can nowadays easily be credited as a part of the course of study at the home university because of its common currency, students don't lose a semester anymore when studying abroad. The development toward a common education area culminated in the so-called 'Bologna Declaration' of all European ministers of education with the 'objective of increasing the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education.'[2]

These measures have also reached the teacher education system, even though it is more nationally bound by its very nature than courses of study in medicine, engineering or business administration for example. In Germany however, it appears as if teacher education has become the *driving force* for the reforms (Bellenberg & Thierack, 2003). This surprising development is grounded in the state control of teacher education. After the release of the Bologna Declaration, most academic disciplines were very resistant to its

accountability implications for German courses of study (this is explained in more detail below). Since university autonomy is relatively high, it turned out to be more difficult for the ministers of education to influence the implementation process than anticipated. Subsequently, many federal ministers of education took another choice: they used their influence on teacher education institutions to implement some important measures. Decrees were released requiring universities to change the structure and organization of teacher education according to the Bologna Declaration; lack of compliance would result in the states reducing the funding proportional to the number of future teachers graduating. Since teacher education students amount to between 15 and 25% of the whole student body at almost all German universities, this is a strong threat. Furthermore, in English-speaking countries where teacher education programmes mostly take place in separate schools or colleges of education this threat would only mean the closing of one single part of the university. In contrast, in Germany almost all university departments are involved in teacher education programmes. Diploma, magister **WHAT IS THIS?** and state exam candidates are taught together in the same lectures and seminars. Thus, the threat concerns the whole institution with the university departments having a 'choice' between three possibilities:

- To change only the structure and organization of the teacher education programmes and to teach future teachers separately from diploma and magister candidates (i.e. very expensive since all lectures would have to be presented twice).
- To follow up the state decree by changing all degrees into the new Bachelor/Master system (i.e. much cheaper since the university departments could go on teaching all students together).
- To give up teacher education (with the closure of several departments especially in the humanities and in science as a consequence since the majority of students are teacher education students).

Hence, regarding the alternatives and bearing in mind the low funding of German universities the departments did not really have a choice. At present, most universities in most federal states are changing the traditional German degrees into what is worldwide known as Bachelor's and Master's Degrees.

Parallel to this process of internationalization, processes of *deregulation* have to be discussed. In the 1990s universities and schools have been given more autonomy step by step (Atrichter et al, in press **UPDATE?**). The state controls universities on a more global level, defined by goals (connected with evaluation and funding) instead of the former input measures like budgets and regulations. Regarding teacher education, this process has not come very far yet, so I can only speculate on possible effects. In principle, the process could have positive and negative effects. On the one hand, decisions could be made in a more decentralized manner. This would probably result in decisions more appropriate to local conditions. Up to now, the federal states

have enacted budgets and regulations on the state level without consideration of local differences. Hence, weaknesses in teacher education could not be eliminated nor could strengths be expanded. On the other hand, the decentralization would make it more difficult to ensure high-quality teaching and equal standards across the country, especially as market-driven processes are allowed to operate.

At the university level the effects of these measures can already be felt. New mechanisms of funding according to criteria of efficacy – drop-out rates, success in getting research funds, citation index and so on – are common in almost all federal states now. Whether they meet the special needs of teacher education can truly be questioned. In contrast to other university disciplines, research in teacher education is situated in real-life contexts (and not in laboratories). Its applied nature challenges the traditions of strictly experimental research, making it difficult to get scientific funding and to disseminate results in refereed journals. Regarding cost, teacher education is often more expensive than other courses of study, as future teachers not only learn cognitively but by watching professors acting as teachers, making the need for small-group instruction necessary for good-quality teacher education.

Teacher Education for a Global World

Internationalization and deregulation are influences of globalization on teacher education in a structural way. In addition to these institutional changes, content-related issues of teacher education for a global world must be discussed. Globalization is connected to *international migration* as well as to increasingly complex *political and social questions in everyday life*. Schools must respond to these challenges by dealing with a more heterogeneous group of pupils and by preparing them for their role as citizens in a global world. As a consequence teacher education is affected.

Indeed, *international migration* seems to have a dualistic effect on countries. On the one hand, every nation has become more diverse. In Germany, all schools have pupils from foreign countries (Gogolin, 2003). On the other hand, people fear fragmentation and look for cultural or ethnic identity. Teachers have to deal with the consequences of theses dualistic features. Firstly, they have to take into account that their pupils may lack the ability to use their mother tongue and/or German as an effective tool for school learning. This makes the development of language skills necessary in order to ensure the pupils' ability to follow the instruction process (Gogolin, 1994). Several federal states have therefore recently decided to train future teachers in teaching German as a second language. Secondly, the social, cultural and intellectual background of children is becoming more diverse through immigration and this may influence the learning processes. This heterogeneity also poses a real challenge to instructional processes (Krüger-

Potratz, 2004). Most federal states have increased their efforts to make corresponding content compulsory in teacher education.

Instructional efforts toward international phenomena respecting the growing *complexity of everyday life* have been important in Germany for several years now, even if they are not yet a common theme at all schools. Nevertheless, human rights education can almost be counted as a traditional element of lessons in a democracy. Peace education has been part of the curriculum in some federal states since the last decade of the Cold War. Environmental education has become increasingly important as changes in the world climate become more pronounced. Since the UN conference on ecology and development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 Germany has funded corresponding instructional efforts on a broad scale (Bayrhuber & Rost, 2004). Another content-related perspective for teachers is the preparation of pupils for gaining cross-curricular competencies like information and communications technology. Finally, it has to be pointed out that after 9/11 reflections on questions of world ethics as well as an education for more tolerance in religious affairs have become relevant again (Gebhardt, 2003). These efforts are now seen as part of a global education (Tye, 1999; Adick, 2002).

For teacher education this brings the added challenge of imparting the knowledge necessary for future teachers to be able to teach these themes at school and to lay the basis for a lifelong learning process. Responses to this challenge are overdue.

New University Degrees and their Effects on German Teacher Education

In 1999, the European ministers of education decided at a conference in Bologna to unify the European university degrees by changing to a consecutive Bachelor and Master system by 2009. This means to adapt to a system of university organization prevailing in English-speaking countries (including the idea of subdividing the student population into years and classes – in Germany this has only been done at K-12 schools until now). The ministers expect to shorten the traditionally long duration of higher education in Germany, to increase the prospects of European graduates on the job market all over the world and to attract more excellent graduates from non-European countries to Europe. The period between 1999 and 2004 has been seen as a time of probation. In the following, I will explain what this change means for German universities in general. Secondly, I will analyse the consequences for German teacher education.

Implementation of New Degrees at Universities

In Germany, almost all university courses of study comprise five years. Their degrees are highly respected qualifications on the labour market, even if

Germany has had periods when employers could not offer enough and suitable positions to graduates. Nevertheless academics have always had a lower level of unemployment than other sections of society because of the broad and deep training obtained in a course of study that extends over five years. Since five years is also the minimum duration that qualifies for the senior civil service, there have been only very few possibilities for university students to graduate earlier with a lower degree; the idea of consecutive degrees has been completely unknown up to now. To be able to understand the university system completely it is important to know that studying in Germany is highly individualized and self-directed by the students. Every student decides on her/his own how many lectures she/he wants to take in each semester. A common schedule for all students of one year does not exist.

This kind of organization has lasted for almost 200 years. In addition to introducing state exams for the teaching profession at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Wilhelm von Humboldt initiated the system still followed by today's universities. He founded the University of Berlin (the present Humboldt University) in 1810. Its basic characteristics were spread over the German states and they remained – apart from massive extensions in the 1970s – almost unchanged up to now (Boockmann, 1999).

Compared to this tradition, Bachelor programmes are shorter and they do not qualify for the senior civil service. With their subdivision in years they point more at schooling than at university types of organization. This explains why a good number of German researchers had assumed that Bachelor's degrees would not be accepted when the Bologna Declaration was published (Blömeke, 2001). Firstly, employers doubt the quality of the new degrees. Secondly, it is doubtful whether the students will approve of leaving university with only a Bachelor's degree. They are used to getting a degree that enables them to become a senior civil servant or a senior manager, for example, for which a Master's degree is necessary now.

These assumptions turned out to be wrong. Although the implementation of Bachelor programmes was declared to be a pilot scheme and the job prospects of the graduates cannot be assessed yet, it seems at present as if the old system of state examination, diploma, and magister will not survive. This is a result of the reforms which solve a number of organizational problems at German universities as the old system is more and more considered unacceptable in a global world with international competition. As a consequence of the individual responsibility of German students to organize their programme of study on their own, they usually take longer to receive a university degree than the formally prescribed five years. In liberal arts as well as in engineering, business administration, teacher education, law or medicine it is not unusual that students take seven or even eight years on average to finish their studies. At the same time, drop-out rates are very high: 25% on average, and in some subjects up to 50%. Consequently, the subdivision of the student population into years with a

prescribed schedule – which is connected to the idea of Bachelor programmes – is seen as a possible way to solve this problem.

But there are more reasons for the general change in attitudes towards the Bachelor programme. A number of students do not aim at senior positions or they have difficulties with the high standards of a five-year programme. For this group the new Bachelor's degree offers the attractive option of a short but nevertheless academic training (Bensel et al, 2003). Simultaneously, the attractiveness of the new system lies in the reduction in courses that lead to a Master's degree. If students for the most part left university after having taken a Bachelor's degree, the overcrowding of lectures would be clearly reduced. The gains this policy would bring to the currently low budget of German universities made the idea of introducing Bachelor programmes more attractive.

It is not quite clear yet what effects the introduction of BA/MA programmes at German universities will have on teacher education. To clarify the impact of the reform I will therefore analyse the German teacher education system as it is at present and try to sum up some possible consequences of the reform (see also Blömeke, 2001).

The Present Teacher Education System in Germany

It is often said that the outstanding characteristic of Germany's teacher education system is the fact that future teachers have to receive two degrees which build on each other – but as a matter of fact this doesn't stand in contrast with many other states all over the world which demand a university degree first and then a training phase mostly at an institution outside the university (e.g. United Kingdom, Italy, and the USA). What makes the German system so unique is the fact that *both* preparation phases offer specific courses of study for future teachers, the academic phase as well as the practical phase. Whereas in the UK, Italy and the USA students acquire their Bachelor's degrees independent of specific professions, a German student has to decide on her/his professional career immediately after her/his high school exam at the age of 19-20. The teacher education system is (and this is quite different from other European countries like Finland for example) low selective, that is there are no tests carried out before enrolling at university or at the second institution to establish whether the applicant is suited to the teaching profession or not.

The curriculum of teacher education is partly prescribed by the 16 federal governments. Regulations for every course of study and for the final exam exist in which the extent of the studies and the most important themes are fixed. In addition, a central law describes overall characteristics of teacher education to make sure that the degrees of the 16 federal states are comparable. The university courses of study culminate in the first of two state examinations necessary to apply for a teacher's position. The examination is not a university exam – it is carried out by a special state

institution. The head of the examination committee has to be a teacher; the professors who are responsible for preparing the students are hired by the state to carry out the exams. The first state exam consists of a thesis and several oral and written exams in subject matter (of at least two subjects), subject pedagogy (the same), and general pedagogy. The regulations for the second phase of teacher education which are enacted by regional governments are more detailed and the exams are strictly monitored by representatives of the government. This is a consequence of the training institutions being established as a part of the state government.

Compared to the teacher education systems in other countries, Germany's idea of teacher education is based on fragmentation (Blömeke, 2004; Terhart, 2004). Like law and medicine, teaching is seen as a profession that needs broad practical and broad theoretical knowledge. This is mirrored by the fact that the process of teacher education takes place in two different institutions: generally speaking, theory is up to universities and practice is up to state institutes of teacher education independent of the university. Both institutions are once again divided internally, as special departments are responsible for the different content areas of teacher education. In the case of a future teacher of mathematics and sports, this means that she/he has to go to the mathematics faculty for her/his mathematics and mathematics pedagogy lectures, to the sports faculty for her/his sports and sport pedagogy lectures, and to the faculty of arts for her/his lectures of general pedagogy.

At universities, yet another level of fragmentation exists albeit more informal and within the different departments. The teacher educators are regular university professors who are specialists either in a subject (like Theoretical Physics or German History of the Middle Ages), in a subject's pedagogy or in a discipline of general pedagogy (like Comprehensive Education). The benefit of this system is that at any moment of the process experts in the respective field train future teachers. One limit is that no core institution of teacher education exists which allows the students to identify themselves as students of the teaching profession. They are spread all over the university (Rinkens et al, 1999). Another limit is that this high-level specialization does not lead to a broad overview of the field but causes gaps and missing links in the body of knowledge future teachers are expected to acquire. One of the most discussed problems of teacher quality in Germany links the current gap that exists between the long, highly specialized teacher education process on the one hand and poor pupil performance on the other.

Standards and Evaluation in Teacher Education

Up to now Germany has had no explicit control system to assess the educational system's efficacy comparable to those in Australia, UK, the USA and most other English-speaking countries. PISA and TIMSS have been the first attempts to get feedback on pupil performance. Further accountability mechanisms discussed at present in Germany, including these international

comparisons, can be seen as another consequence of global influences on education. In the following, I will concentrate on the present accountability situation first. Then the results of TIMSS and PISA which 'shocked' German educators will be summarized before analysing the accountability mechanisms implicitly and explicitly introduced at the present time.

'Accountability' as it was understood up to now. Germany's outside image is of a centralized, bureaucratic and highly controlled state. At a first glance this seems to be true for the educational system, too. Yet, to get an appropriate impression of the significance control has for German teacher education (and it is widely the same for schools), it is necessary to point out that this control has mostly served to control 'inputs.' That means that the federal states enact educational laws and further regulations like the curriculum (consisting mostly of fundamental guidelines), provide the teacher education institutions with the financing necessary beforehand and hire the staff. In addition, educational policies are always up to the federal states; a nationwide education policy has never existed.

Assessments usually consist of self-prepared assignments instead of testing performance in a standardized manner. This applies for K-12 schools as well as for teacher education. Teachers and teacher educators are regarded as being fully responsible for assessment. Even the state exams are developed locally, and then administered by the state to the institutions in which the future teachers are trained (although the state hires examiners to administer the exams 'externally,' currently these examiners are, for the most part, based in the teacher education institutions).

A number of schools have tried to develop internally working in groups, according to self-developed criteria, and with inclusion of parents and pupils in the past two decades to ensure quality (Altrichter et al, in press). This collaborative approach saw schools as learning organizations and the teaching staff as a learning community who also served as a local informal accountability mechanism.

Since formal accountability in the sense of controlling the efficacy of the education system has always been controversial in Germany and has for the most part been rejected successfully, teachers have enjoyed broad autonomy to design their lessons. Teachers do not generally see the implementation of state guidelines as their responsibility. This rationale goes along with a strong priority of goals over content and methods (Westbury, 1998). The general goal of schooling – *Bildung*, composed of self-determination, participation in society, and solidarity – is seen as a process and a product of human development guided by reason. Teachers have to decide by themselves which contents are useful and relevant to reach these goals. In principle, this also means that a specific content topic can be no more than an example (Hopmann & Riquarts, 1995). There exists *freedom* combined with the *necessity* of interpretation of the rough curriculum guidelines as well as the possibility to combine the guidelines with the teachers' individual ideas. This

rationale has its correspondence in the fact that teachers are employed as senior civil servants. This makes it difficult to *enter* the profession – but those who manage to enter are 'in' for their whole professional life. Civil servants cannot be made redundant unless they commit a serious crime and are sentenced to at least two years in prison. It is this security that offers the possibility to teach freely according to one's own values. It is highly unlikely for a teacher to leave the profession to seek a job in another field.

The university system – where the first step of teacher education takes place – does not differ much from these characteristics of the school system. Universities are financed by the state in a typical input manner. The distribution of financial resources is oriented toward supporting comparable conditions at all universities and not toward rewarding outstanding performance, punishing low quality or supporting efforts of strengthening in weak areas. Regulations concerning content are not very detailed and the broad autonomy of universities includes freedom of teaching with the additional result that the curriculum differs from university to university. Teacher education enjoys relative autonomy to train the future teachers – within the general state guidelines. Even though the second institutions of teacher education which mentor the on-the-job training have to follow regulations that are more detailed, there is no output control in a standardized manner because – as mentioned above – even the final exams are carried out locally.

The 'shocking' TIMSS and PISA results. Germany experienced painful educational deficits in many surveys on pupil learning during the 1990s. Whereas the TIMSS results were known only to a small group of experts, nearly everyone in Germany was shocked when the results of the PISA study were published in December 2001. This international comparison showed that German students only achieved results at the lower end of the scale (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2001). Of the 31 participating OECD countries, the German students came 27th in reading, 28th in mathematics, and 25th in science. More than 20% of German pupils failed in achieving the second competence level which is regarded as the absolute minimum requirement to become a crafts or trade apprentice. In contrast, Asian and Scandinavian countries did very well, especially Finland, Korea, Japan and Sweden. One of the most worrying results of international student assessments like TIMSS and PISA was the uncovering of an unusually close relation between social background and academic achievement in Germany – much closer than in countries like the UK, France or the USA. A close relationship exists with regard to two aspects of social background, namely social class and ethnicity. The higher a student's social class is, the higher is her/his chance of graduating, especially with good results. With regard to ethnicity, native German students have much better chances of graduating with good results than immigrants

(especially in the case where both parents were born in a non-German country).

Another alarming result of the PISA study was the enormous difference between schools and federal states. A discrepancy of up to two years exists in pupil performance between different federal states (Baumert et al, 2002). Viewed against the background of the high unemployment rate in Germany, there is strong competition among pupils to obtain apprenticeships and university admissions. Students need to have very good grades to secure an attractive job; that is, pupils attending schools with stricter systems of examinations and grading than others are put at a disadvantage because they have to work harder to achieve the same grades. At the same time, pupils attending low-level schools do not have the possibility to acquire the competencies necessary for succeeding in everyday life.

To sum up, these results show that Germany has missed the two most important goals of school systems: to reach high scores in pupil learning and to reduce socioeconomic, ethnic and gender-associated diversity in these scores.

Implementation of explicit accountability mechanisms. Since the PISA results became known, a number of possibilities have been discussed to improve the quality of schools. Among other measures the development of nationwide standards – for example, performance expectations at the end of primary and lower secondary school in the core subjects of mathematics, German and English (Klieme et al, 2003) – as well as corresponding standardized tests of pupil performance seem to be necessary. At the same time a whole number of changes concerning teachers have taken place. Steps on the career ladder shall no longer be distributed along the lines of seniority but along qualifications. Exams for promotion which were seen as formal and superficial obstacles in former times should develop into tests of knowledge, skills and competencies in the future (Strukturreformgesetz, 2005).

Alongside this, a discussion has arisen about whether it would be possible to introduce a ranking of universities in Germany as it is common in other countries like England for example. In Germany, some rankings exist which were generated by big newspapers like *Die Zeit* or *Stern*. They are supported by the private Centre for University Development (Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung). To compare the quality of German universities instruments like ratings of professors, students and companies are used. These rankings have been discussed controversially from the beginning one decade ago. Up to today, every new ranking triggers many critical comments. The impact of these rankings however, has not been a subject of empirical research – neither by the supporters nor by the opponents.

Introduction of implicit accountability mechanisms. The new Bologna system of B.A. and M.A. degrees also means the introduction of implicit accountability mechanisms. To subdivide the courses of study into years necessarily implies

arrangements between the single university departments to make sure that a specific lecture is offered at a certain time and to a sufficient extent with regard to the number of students enrolled. This is a widely new idea for German universities. Regarding the broad freedom of students to make their own choice of lectures as well as the broad freedom of professors to decide themselves on the themes of their lectures, controlling seemed to be unnecessary. Thus, even if obligations and control existed, it used to be a formality only. Without hesitating one can say that this was a system of 'organized irresponsibility.'

Another accountability mechanism implicitly introduced with the BA programme was the requirement to clearly describe the contribution of particular lectures to specific courses of study. This has become an implicit requirement if the newly developed Bachelor degrees aspire to qualify for the labour market. In the past, even courses of study which *seemed* to point to a narrow area of professions (like law or medicine) were meant to provide broad preparation. In contrast to Bachelor degrees in the USA, for example, German courses were not at all specialized; breadth was always more important than depth.

Outside Germany, the impact of these changes is probably hard to value but it means for example a significant loss of importance of all those academic areas which do not qualify directly for a job. Whereas the philosophy and the history of education had a strong position in teacher education in the general/pedagogy part of the old system, the number of courses in educational psychology and teaching methods has increased significantly in the Bologna system at the expense of more philosophical and historical orientated courses. Within a short time this change has also had consequences for the advertisement of professorships. The number of professorships in the philosophy and history of education was significantly lower in the past two, three **UNCLEAR** years than is usually the case (Tippelt et al, 2004).

Policy Implications and Conclusions

As a consequence of the German TIMSS and PISA results as well as of the European Bologna process, explicit and implicit accountability mechanisms have been introduced into German teacher education within a few years, combined with far-reaching structural changes at universities. This has happened despite the long-lasting stability that had characterized the education system. On a broader level the implementation of the accountability mechanisms seems to be typical of the present globalization process but this could be a too one-dimensional and short-sighted interpretation.

First, international orientation is not a new phenomenon. Political discussions on education were already occurring in the 1960s by international comparisons between the Western and the Eastern world.

Picht's (1964) warning of an educational catastrophe if school quality was not improved has been heard widely because of the success of the former Soviet Union. That the USSR – as the leading nation of the Eastern Bloc – was able to send a satellite into space first raised doubts about the level of technical knowledge in the Western world. In Germany, this led to inquiries on the quality of the school system as well (even though without leading to deeper reforms).

Second, the general thesis of borrowing global ideas to push local interests (Schriewer, 1992; Cowen, 2002; Steiner-Khamsi, 2002) can be demonstrated in the field of German teacher education. This process has important actors at the national level which use global discussions and trends to advance their own aims. For example, one group is the Association of High School Teachers. Since the philosophy and history of education is valued much less compared to subject matter and also to subject pedagogy, high school teachers expect to regain the former social status this profession had by turning to a subject matter orientated kind of teacher education. Another group is for example the group of empirical researchers that will be in charge of developing the standardized tests. They can expect more power, more funding and more acknowledgment. One can possibly generalize this phenomenon; in a pluralistic society like Germany there will always be a group of people profiting from any development. If this group has enough influence, global tendencies can spread and be implemented by its members – in effect enacting the phenomenon known as 'globalization.' Further inquiry requires exploring whether this thesis applies to more countries other than Germany and to more historical periods than the present one. The well-known phrase 'think globally, act locally' could then be changed into 'think locally, act globally.'

Notes

[1] Most of the data used for this chapter are taken from existing literature in Germany. During the past decades research on teacher education, the teaching profession and the school system was one of the main fields of inquiry in German history and sociology of education. To a vast extent these data are of a descriptive character. A gap exists especially in trying to connect German developments to developments elsewhere and to broader theories. To overcome this deficit, the existing data are systematically analysed according to the research questions guiding this book. That means that the linkage of global influences to German teacher education and the specific reception process will be the first focus of the following analysis. The second focus is directed more specifically to the accountability mechanisms introduced by this development.

[2] http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/bologna_declaration.pdf

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