



Youth Work and Schools in 'Full-day' education systems International Comparison of Links between Formal and Non-formal Education

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Preliminary Remarks

In this article I will outline the methodological approach of a non-empirical comparative research project which I began in 2003. The project is situated in the context of the research training group "Youth Welfare in Transition" at the universities of Bielefeld and Dortmund, funded by the German Research Council (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft).

In that context I have organised an international conference about the modes of cooperation between school and youth work agencies with colleagues from Canada, France, Finland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Russia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, Israel, and Germany. Meeting in Bielefeld from the 9th to the 11th of October 2003, we compared the respective national arrangements of formal and non-formal education (<http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/paedagogik/agn/ag8/Ganztagsbildung.html>). This note is based on the scheme of comparison which was given to the contributors in order to help them preparing their presentations.

At the moment the scheme is nearing completed with significant data prepared by the contributors/authors (see Otto/Coelen 2004), supplemented with data from research works published in German and English. The next step will be to set up an empirical project about the relationships between schools and youth work agencies in three European countries (probably France, Finland and the Netherlands).

The topic: Full-day-school, -care, -support, or -education?

The topic of both the conference and the research project is the role of social work institutions in and around the 'full-day' school systems of selected countries.

Background

The background of this theme is the internationally very unusual German 'half-day-school' ("Halbtagschule"). The normal school-day in Germany lasts from 8 a.m. only until 1 p.m. This form of school organisation has been subjected to critical scrutiny after the poor results of German students in the "Programme for International Student Assessment" (PISA) in 2000. This international standardised study by the OECD measured the learning performances of 15 years olds in 32 states in terms of Reading, Mathematical and Scientific Literacy. Without any exaggeration it can be stated that the German results - which in all dimensions ranked below the OECD average and pointed out the closest correlation between learning results and socio-economic status among all countries - led to a significant shock in German public and politics. Since the winter of 2001/2002 "PISA" is - along with new legislations on labour-market and social benefits (Hartz-Commission) - *the* topic in German social political debate.

In contrast to Germany nearly all - at least all *European* - countries have education systems which provide formal and non-formal education (roughly: lessons leading to certificates and facultative activities without entitling certificates) from early morning until late afternoon. The German education system - which varies a lot among the 16 federal states - has (along with Austria, Switzerland, Greece and Finland) - very few such institutions (for 4 % or 9 % of all students, depending on definitions).

Therefore one of the main focal points in the political activities following the PISA-shock is the implementation of „Ganztagsschulen” (“full-day schools”). In fact, with the beginning of the school year 2003/04 new day-formats were started, funded by the national government with 4 billions € developed differently by the federal states which are autonomous in their education politics. The two main goals of the investment programme are first, to improve learning performances and second, to facilitate greater compatibility between family life and career.

Social work involvement in this field is comparatively wide-spread within a specialised structure of youth work agencies in Germany which have important social and educational functions. Youth work, separated into services delivered by associations (“Jugendverbandsarbeit”) and Open institutions (“Offene Jugendarbeit”), is - along with kindergarten/after-school care clubs, youth counselling, ambulant and statutory socio-educational provision for children with problems - codified in the national Social Security Code, part 8 (“Sozialgesetzbuch VIII”), named “Children and Youth Welfare Act” (“Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz”). All youth and social welfare services are mainly funded by the communities.

The problem of the implementation of “full-day schools” for youth welfare is three-sided. First, the leisure-time of children and young people (and therefore the time to use youth work services is going to be minimised); second, the traditional topics and methods of youth work are being incorporated into the schools so that the need for non-formal education out-of-school services could diminish; third, youth work agencies are pushed into cooperation with schools in order to provide the afternoon services under financially constrained circumstances. So the new day formats seem to be qualitatively not much more than ‘full-time care’ („Ganztagsbetreuung”) with lessons given by teachers until lunchtime and a meal, help with the homework and some time for playing provided by some freelancers, volunteers and a few professional educators in the afternoon. In opposition to both ‘full-time school’ and ‘full-time care’ the debate in German Social work/Social education prefer the terms “Ganztagsförderung” (full-day support) which stresses the individual need for learning or social support in the afternoons or „Ganztagsbildung” (full-day education) which refers to a concept of integrated formal and non-formal education preserving the autonomy and principles of schools and youth work agencies (see Coelen 2002).

Anyhow, the education systems in the several German federal states will transform into some kind of ‘full-day’ provisions and main parts of youth welfare services (especially kindergarten, after-school care clubs and youth clubs and associations) will change completely through this transformation. Accordingly, the reason for developing a comparative analytical tool is quite obvious in that it is important to examine what role non-formal education organisations, professions and disciplines play in and around the full-day school systems in comparable countries.

State of Research

Besides these more or less theoretical and political debates and questions, there is very little comparative research about the relationship between out-of-school education agencies and schools in the education systems of other European countries. So the conference in Bielefeld 2003 represented a first step to close an astonishing gap in research concerning the international comparative social sciences.

It is true that in the international comparative research on youth welfare services, single studies pick out school-related youth work as a central theme (see Nieslony 1997; Huxtable/Blyth 2002), but a comparative survey about the cooperation of school education and youth welfare service does not exist at all. Analogical to that fact, international comparative studies about full-time-schools are very rare (see Neumann/Ramseger 1990: 9). Regarding descriptions of educational systems in Europe (see Anweiler et al. 1996; Döbert et al. 2002), the part of non-formal education of children and adolescents is totally neglected.

On the primary level, France, Great-Britain, Ireland and Spain have full-day forms on five, Belgium on four and Luxemburg on three days per week, Italy and Denmark for a part of the entire pupil cohort only (see Holtappels 1994: 176). On the secondary level a recent tendency in European school systems can be noticed: Apart from the countries already practising full-day schooling (France, Great-Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium), even in countries with a school-system finishing at lunchtime, the integration of formal and non-formal education gains in importance (see Neumann/Ramseger 1990: 11). Exceptions in this development are still Austria, Switzerland and Germany.

But as I already said, since the shattering results of the PISA-study about German pupils was published and brought to the public's attention, the full-time institutionalisation of school and out-of-school education has become a main topic in politics, on the national, regional and local level. Despite the fact that reorganisations have already begun, concepts about how to realise a durable integration of formal and non-formal institutions do not yet have remarkable influence in Germany (e.g. Deinet 1996; Coelen 2002). The results are more or less patchwork.

Using the approach described here, the research project and the conference follow developments in the international comparative educational sciences. Descriptions of developments considering one country only are no longer that predominant, and comparisons of different educational systems focussing a special problem or topic are gaining prominence.

The research question is situated on „meso-level" (see Treptow 2002):

- The field is – only named in Germany in that way – ‘full-day’ education systems.
- The contexts are the PISA-studies of the OECD and the Unesco-studies about non-formal and informal learning resp. education.
- The type of research is a comparison of organisations and systems.

Functions and Objectives of Comparison

Full-time-school systems should be compared - referring to Esping-Andersen (1999) - ‘to see the wood instead of the trees’ and to point out common tendencies (and maybe, furthermore, to point out causalities). It seems to be helpful to avoid - recalling the metaphor of the wood and the trees - to avoid the thicket of the internal German debates.

I use the term „system” synonymic to the term ”regime” as used by Esping-Andersen (1999). In this form it refers to the way in which education of children and adolescents is allocated between the institutional arrangements of state, civil-society and families. Within the scope of the research project, there are three probable levels of international comparison in the educational sciences (see Schriewer 2000):

1. Theory-building using a comparative design ,
2. Theory-based explanations of the variety between different cultural phenomena,
3. Transfer of practical and political knowledge.

These can't be considered in equal measure. This first step has to be restricted to point 1 (theory building and critique) and point 3 (transfer of knowledge). Regarding the four functions of international comparisons in the educational sciences, this means that the ideographic and the experimental units will be in the centre of interest.¹

Systems integrating formal and non-formal education are compared in regard to three final objectives:

- Under a *scientific* point of view the development of a heuristic typology of education systems is intended, a typology that focuses the four types “full-time-school, -care, -support and -education”.
- Under an *educational*-conceptual point of view it is aimed at the comparative development of a model concerning the integration of formal and non-formal education.
- Under a perspective of *educational policy*, it seems necessary to enrich the actual national school-dominated discussion on full-time-systems by an out-of-school perspective.

Levels of Comparison

The content of the German Youth Welfare Service cannot easily be transferred into other (academic) languages and contexts. Therefore every state, public, private or economic form of non-formal out-of-school education is regarded as comparable to the German so-called „schulbezogene (school-related) Jugendhilfe” (e. g. kindergarten and other child care institutions; youth clubs, associations and centres; ambulant und statutory socio-educational provision for children with problems etc.). As levels of comparison are taken the four central objects of research in German youth welfare (http://www.jugendhilfe-im-wandel.de/dt/e_forschprog.htm):

- organisation
- profession
- user
- discipline/theory

The synopsis of all four levels will lead to an overview of the sorts of linkages between education and social systems. Each of the four levels is differentiated into three or four dimensions with various attributes.

¹ The melioristic function: counselling politicians by „best practise“-examples cannot be provided in a serious manner. Also the evolutionistic function: the explanation of differences and shared tendencies can only point out as a possibility.

Dimensions of Comparison

Core-elements which can contribute to the named types “full-time-school, -care, -support and -education” are considered as dimensions of comparison.

Organisation

Analysing the nature of inter-organisational relations:

1. The set of **providers** for education:

- state (national, regional, local government)
- public (civil-society: voluntary and third sector associations)
- economy (leisure industry)
- family

2. The set of **finance** of education:

- state (budgets),
- civic (sponsoring, funding, contributions)
- economic (charges, incomes)
- by families (fees)

3. The set of **forms** of education:

- formal (compulsory: training; certificates)
- non-formal (voluntary: identity-building; symbolic reproduction)
- informal (incidental: everyday-life competencies; coping)

4. The set of **functions** of out-of-school offers in relation to school

- school-supporting
- school-complementing
- school-compensating

Profession

Characterising the staff structure in full-time-systems:

1. The set of **contents in the training** of the professionals:

- school education
- social education/social work
- leisure-time education
- philosophy of education

2. The set of **formal certificates** among the professionals:

- academic (university)
- on academic basis (college, polytechnics)
- related to a specific field of work (vocational school)

3. The set of **professionals and volunteers**

User

As “users” are considered: children and adolescents from their age of school enrolment (4 or 6 years) up to at least the end of their compulsory school time (15 or 16 years), who attend institutions of the general education system and use offers by youth welfare agencies, as well as their parents.

The following criteria are analysed:

1. The set of **times** (daily, weekly, annually; depending on age):
 - in school (to be differentiated by lesson and out-of-lesson times)
 - in social or leisure-time education
 - in families
 - outside educational institutions
2. The set of **legal conditions** in using full-time institutions:
 - by obligation
 - voluntary
 - with legal claim
 - by demand
3. The set of the **functions** of out-of-school offers in relation to families:
 - family-supporting
 - family-complementing
 - family-compensating

Discipline and Theory

On the disciplinary and theoretical level the comparison deals with the relationship between social and school education in the several academic systems.

1. The **formal level** of study and training programmes for the staff in full-time systems:
 - university: academic
 - college/polytechnics: on academic basis
 - vocational schools: related to a specific field of work
 - outside of formal training institutions
2. The use of **leading terms**:
 - education
 - training
 - care
 - ... work
 - leisure time
 - learning
3. The degree of **networking** between the disciplines in form of:
 - research projects
 - publications
 - conferences

The scheduled levels, dimensions and attributes serve the development and modification of the heuristic typology: „full-day school”, „full-day care”, “full-day support”, „full-day education”.

At the actual step I am compiling a synopsis of selected education systems (France, Finland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, and Russia) alongside the questions pointed out here in this research note. The following step will be to figure out systems which are appropriate to

illustrate the types. Then the empirical phase of the research project can be prepared and implemented (probably in February 2005). The outcomes of this comparative project may serve the further development of the linkages between education and social system in Germany and of international comparative social research.

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