

# The Culture of Work and the Transfer of Elements of Vocational Education and Training to Other Countries

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## Introduction

Observing and examining educational processes between nation-states has a long tradition in Europe. As far back as the beginning of the nineteenth century, German entrepreneurs and civil servants travelled to fast developing industrial countries such as France and England to survey the swift advances in economic progress. These early travels can be placed in the tradition of educational and cultural journeys of European courtly society and were already shaped by the modern scientific travels made by Georg Forster or Alexander von Humboldt. Knowledge gained on these travels was brought back, assessed, and implemented in order to further the success of the domestic economy. This also included the educational initiatives of advanced industrial countries; the French professional schools (Produktionsschulen) were of particular interest to observers (Meysner, 1996). This common practice of monitoring the cultural activities of one's neighbours continued after the rapid industrialisation of Germany at the end of the nineteenth century. This time English experts took the lead. The inception of World Exhibitions or Fairs in the mid-nineteenth century had a significant role to play in the display of industrial and technological progress (Lawn, 2009; Großbölting 2008). With the rise of Japan as the leading power in East Asia, Japanese experts too began travelling to western, industrialized countries to study advances in technology and educational systems (Harms, 1997; Phillips, 2000). This mutual transfer of successful experience with educational policies between industrial countries has long been the subject of scientific studies (Schriewer, 2006; Schriewer & Holmes, 1988; Thelen, 2003; Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Phillips, 1997). Phillips and Ochs (2003) developed a four-level model to examine the complex process of the borrowing of educational elements from one context to another. Basing their work on the findings of various theoreticians (Moehlmann, 1963; Holmes, 1981; Bray & Thomas, 1995; Watson, 1998) in comparative education, Phillips and Ochs stress that, „Education is embedded in context.“ (Ochs & Phillips, 2002, 327f.) This clearly also applies to the transfer of educational aspects.

Despite the intensive collaborative work, on-going since the 1950s, between the Federal Republic of Germany and developing countries, studies in this field advanced by the English-speaking scientific community specifically in the area of policy transfer in vocational education has not been taken up. Instead, German experts have mainly relied on their own practical experiences rather than that of other countries. The following paper picks up on the English-speaking debates on policy transfer and links them to the German experiences with vocational training cooperation. The paper proposes an instrument of analysis to systematically analyze the complexity of any given context in which aspects of vocational training are embedded. Through an understanding that is won by the application of this suggested instrument, it is fair to say that possibilities of a successful educational transfer can better be assessed. If it is known how the interrelation between transferable aspects and the surrounding order is achieved, then one can make a qualified assessment as to how the transferable elements in a new and different order can be successfully integrated. .

First, a short overview of the Federal Republic's vocational education cooperation with developing countries will be provided. Following that, this paper will outline the four-level tool of analysis for educational policy transfer as developed by Phillips and Ochs to reveal how the context of vocational educational aspects can be integrated into the study. Including the context of vocational training into the analysis remains a complex matter. To simplify the matter, and to have a heuristic tool available, this paper suggests the concept of the background of work culture in VET for an analysis of the context of vocational training such as the transfer of activities in vocational training. This novel analytical instrument will then be revealed in two steps. Firstly, the paper will describe the fundamental considerations of a dynamic concept of culture that serve to illustrate the basic correlation between vocational training and culture. Building on this, the background of work culture of vocational training will be made clear based on six criteria. Lastly, this analytic instrument will be applied to the basic training course for metal workers, a vocation that holds a special position in German cooperation in the field of vocational training.

### **Vocational Education and Training Cooperation with Developing Countries**

In the long history of cooperation between the Federal Republic of Germany and the developing world, the transfer of vocational training elements, long established in Germany, for decades was by far the most comprehensive of development activities (Groß, 1981; Wolf, 2009). Not until the end of the twentieth century did its significance decrease dramatically.

In the 1950s and 60s, German vocational pedagogy abroad concentrated mainly on graduates of the intermediate and advanced levels of general schools given that limited aid money was promised to benefit the large economic and business operations. The objective of the vocational training in the developed world was to secure the economic foundation that had contributed to the postwar German „Economic Miracle.“ Stockmann (2003, 57) wrote: „Die Ausgebildeten sollten Schlüsselpositionen in Betrieben des modernen Sektors einnehmen und so dafür sorgen, dass sich das Know-how, und die dafür nötigen Arbeitsweisen und eine entsprechende Arbeitsmoral am besten verbreiten.“<sup>1</sup> This task was implemented in a specific type of vocational schools (Facharbeiterschulen) that, in addition to providing vocational education, were meant to contribute to the improvement of supplying human capital in developing countries, a task which still recalled the tradition of nineteenth-century Prussian vocational training (see Maslankowski & Pätzold, 1986, 7; Greinert, 1994, 417f). A number of factors such as an inadequate infrastructure, a small number of enterprises with a limited capacity to provide vocational training prevented success of this strategy (see Wolf 2009, 49ff). The 1970s saw German funds continuing to flow into the further establishment of trade and technical schools, while the supervision of these schools was handed over from the respective education ministries to the labour and industry ministries. Not surprisingly, the structure of the established vocational services in industrialising countries, particularly in Latin America or the SENAI in Brazil, greatly resembled the cooperative vocational structures of the Federal Republic (Lanzendorf 2000; Wallenborn, 2001).

The shift away from a single project approach to a systemic project approach was officially anchored in 1992 with the sector concept as a system advice approach of the exported VET pedagogy. This concept furthered a notion that vocational education could no longer just be regarded as an instrument to train a skilled labour force, but also as means for the personal development of individuals. The modified concept of vocational training from 2005 drastically diminished the previously high value placed on vocational education in the German development work. Since vocational education is now only one part of promoting economic progress in development work, German experts pursue a strategy of implementing the apparent successful features of the existing German dual system (Greinert, 2001; Wolf, 2007, 2009; Stockmann, 2004; Wallenborn, 2007; 2010).

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<sup>1</sup> Skilled workers should have key positions in enterprises of the modern sector and see to it that the „Know-how,“ the necessary methods of operation, and the corresponding work ethic is best disseminated.

The lasting effect of this transfer is repeatedly (Stockmann, 1992, 1997) estimated as negative. Particularly, attempts to transfer an entire regulatory patterns as well as institutional order, like the dual system, are sharply frowned upon by the experts. The transfer of elements on the level of didactic-methodological arrangements, or the micro-level of the actual vocational training is generally better fitting. In this way, Wiemann (1992) could demonstrate that the basic training for metal crafts men, the so called “Grundlehrgang Metall” was successfully applied in more than one hundred countries. Whether and how these basic training courses in those one hundred countries were applied on an on-going basis remains unclear. Moreover, the basic question of a general transferability and implementation of a German model has not been adequately answered. To get closer to some answers, this paper takes into consideration the general conditions of transfer measures by introducing the analytical category of the background work culture in VET.

### **Conceptual Considerations and Theoretical Foundations**

In the late 1980s, David Phillips and Kimberly Ochs introduced the concept of policy borrowing and focused their research on the reasons of adoption of one context of educational policy as observed in another context (Phillips, 1989; 1992; Ochs & Phillips 2002). The main actors on both sides of this transfer was the primary focus. A successful policy transfer can be assumed when both sides (importers and exporters) equally consent to the transfer (disclosure of knowledge – reception and processing of knowledge). As Tanaka (2005) has stressed, the respective actors involved must be cognizant of the political interests of the other parties, so too must the cultural practices and motives for the adoption of specific policies. Phillips and Ochs (2003, 452) identified four stages in the policy adoption process of educational elements. The cross-national attraction of specific educational components is the point of departure. This could include (1) the leading educational philosophy, (2) the educational objectives or expectations that exist in the exemplary national context. (3) Educational regulations and the procedures of implementing educational measures are of cross-national interest could be a starting point for transfer activities. Also met with interest (4) are the structures that make education possible, such as administration, financial allocation, and human resources departments. (5) The educational processes (that is, the method of instruction and evaluation are closely interwoven with education technologies (6), how teachers instruct, their pedagogical principles and teaching methods (Ochs & Phillips, 2002: 329f).

The search for educational models in other national contexts is often triggered by an internal impulse, for example, a shift in the political landscape or an unsatisfactory external assessment like the PISA survey. Depending on the civil strengths or the composition of an engaged group of actors in a given respective country, the next step is the decision to borrow specific educational aspects from other national contexts. The third step is the implementation of the borrowed educational policies. Here these policies are either welcomed or rejected. In the best case, the welcomed policies are integrated into the existing educational structures. Indeed, the process of policy transfer is a complex issue. The issue is further complicated in that the research on policy transfer must take into consideration the various socio-political contexts in the receiving society. The context „at home’ must also be considered in comparative research (Ochs & Phillips 2002, 331). In order to make this highly complex issue of policy transfer more accessible, this paper proposes to build upon Phillips and Ochs theoretical approach relating to the transfer of educational aspects by developing the concept of a culture of work as a procedural approach.

#### Conceptualizing a Culture of Work

The concept of a culture of work proposed here relies on the theoretical work of C. Geertz (2003) and P. Bourdieu (e.g. 1997) and complemented by interactive phenomenologists such as Berger and Luckmann (1970), who formulated institutional order for civic regulatory patterns. Consequently, this concept understands the contexts in which the stages of policy transfer processes take effect less as the total of all detectable phenomena of social processes as the „background of those elements of context by which they (the different foci of externalising potentials in cross-national attraction) are shaped and which in turn determine whether they will be adaptable to a foreign situation“ (Phillips & Ochs, 2003, 453), but rather as a stronger background with implicit or explicit effectiveness. More so as culturally specific rules that shape the concrete form of vocational training and elements of vocational education in a reciprocal relation. Based on this coupling of vocational education and a culture of work, it is possible to assume that the background of work culture influences tremendously the transfer of aspects of educational policies from one national context to another (Wolf, 2009; Greinert, 1999; Greinert, 2004). By adopting the concept of work culture, the context of attraction can succeed in isolating vocational training and reduces the concept to six dimensions of work culture. The concept of work culture should not be understood as a final, static, and empirically verified concept, but rather as a theoretically grounded research approach that complements and refines Phillips and Ochs’ concept. Before assigning work

culture as a category of analysis of comparative research in vocational education, we will illustrate what this encompasses. Firstly, we will discuss fundamental reflections on how culture functions (Wolf, 2009) and secondly, to illuminate the backgrounds of work culture in vocational education.

### Fundamental Reflections on Culture and Vocational Training

In contrast to common culturalist reductions, we understand culture as a dynamic social process, a process in which social actors in a highly competitive social arena of negotiation compete in order to secure a position in society. To guarantee a capacity of social governance, social actors are required to interpret and process external influences, both material and cultural, individual and collective. If necessary, external influences are newly formulated provided that there is progress of social processes. Here, social actors create new systems of meaning, a new symbolic order or also an innovative individual style. A number of scholars have described this mechanism of re-formulating cultural meanings (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2003; Caglar, 1995; Auslander, 2008).

The mechanism outlined here is drawn from the active social interactions, analytically divided into the cultural and material worlds, refers to individuals as well as for collective social actors (Wolf, 2009, 92). It should be assumed that collective actors too must manage cultural meanings and symbolic order in a social context. Thus, one can identify this pattern and method of argumentation in the history of trade unionism in attempts to influence societal processes (Webb & Webb, 1959 [Orig. 1898]). Furthermore, symbolic worlds and meanings become socially valid by way of concretely shaping and defining already accepted social rules. Thus in France, within the framework of rules and culture around work-related conflicts, it is possible for the staff to imprison the employer inside the factory or company without any fear of major state intervention or public outcry as would be the case in Germany.

People operate in highly competitive social arenas of negotiation. Cultural meanings structure the sphere of activity so that the actors are not completely free to shape their own influences from the external environment. Rather, they move inside the context of a pre-structured sphere. Thus there is an inter-relationship between cultural systems of meaning and the symbolic order with other social processes. For example, historically the dogma of an

adequate wage led to „enabling health and safety standards in the workplace (..), as well as moves to reduce working hours, (...)“ (Webb & Webb 1959, 182).

The social actors („who“) as well as the social sphere of activity („where“) of social processes, in our case the shaping of aspects of vocational education or the transfer process from one context to another, interact with the social surroundings. Cultural and material influences act upon both sides. Likewise, social actors act on and interpret the social influences around them. Thus, they construct new or altered symbolic worlds and structures of order. With these new symbolic forms, they (re)-interact with and introduce change to the social world. In this way, the social field of negotiation is also altered and influences the inter-relation between the material and cultural worlds (Wolf, 2009).

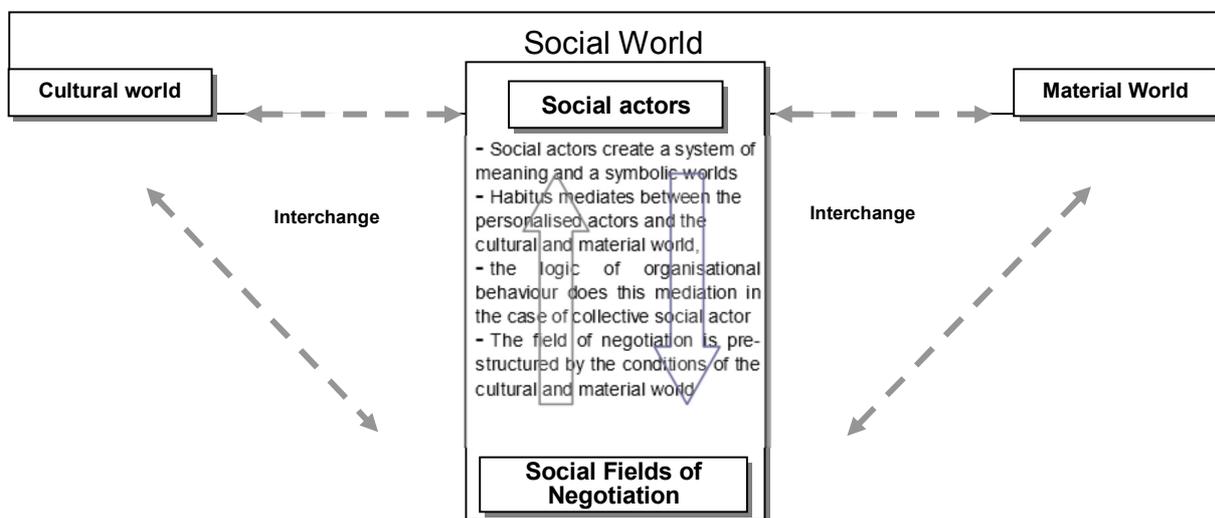


Figure 1: A Dynamic Concept of Culture

What is interesting in the context of vocational education and training is the empirical evidence related to the mechanism of cultural production and representation in comparative studies of the three major industrial powerhouses of Europe: England, France, and Germany (Lutz, 1976; Maurice et al., 1980). A marked difference in rules of industry production between France and Germany, to take one example, can be identified when it comes to sorting out work-place conflicts. Germany has a reputation of being moderate, strictly regulated and thus conflicts are dealt with in a socially appropriate way. In France, on the other hand, work-place conflicts are less institutionalised and consequently more volatile (Iribarne 1991, 106ff). Cultural systems of meaning and symbolic order have an obvious impact on vocational education as well as concretely shaping VET pedagogy and occupational regulatory patterns.

## **The Background of Work Culture in VET**

How can one describe the symbolic structures of order and the system of cultural meaning of a society at the interchange with vocational education and training? Starting from a cursory remark from Greinert on important features of work culture of German vocational education, the next section will break down and complement the essential interrelations between economic activities and vocational education (Greinert 2007, 161ff). As already mentioned, vocational education or training interrelates with other social areas of society. It is important in terms of social education and in the production of goods and services. For the purpose of this paper, we will focus here on the latter and the economy's impact on cultural mechanisms and the interrelationship with vocational education (Georg, 1997; Greinert, 2004). The impact of a system of cultural meaning on a business or company and its related regulatory patterns are closely linked to the vocational educational system and the recruiting capacity of a work force – be it in the general schooling like in France or in vocational training like in Germany – and at the same time cause/require other regulatory patterns and forms of organisation in company action (Regini, 1997, 11ff; Sorge, 1995, 243ff; Maurice & Warner et al., 1980, 59ff). This brings about changed forms of how work is organised that, in Germany, is characterised as dull and task-oriented and in France a strict hierarchy informs forms of organisation with extremely detailed task descriptions (Wolf, 2009, 97ff).

A similar interdependency/interrelation between cultural meanings and rules of the working world also apply to the labour law (Mückenberger, 1998, 33ff; Supiot & Mückenberger, 2000, 100ff). Law studies show that effective cultural systems of meaning, created by social actors, are the result of historical and social experience. According to Mückenberger, they accumulate in societal visions of guaranteed social security and freedom. While in England these rules are mediated by market relations, that is, freedom and social security are understood as unencumbered by the state, in France the state is the decisive authority. The state here guarantees the freedom of political articulation. In Germany, social security is a result of societal arrangements, whether it be in the sphere of free collective bargaining or in collective labour law. However, the emphasis on seeking agreements in the German labour market has also led to a loss of freedom since it is not achieved in discussions free of forms of state domination. Rather, these conversations occur under the authority of powerful state actors and lobbyists (Wolf, 2009, 96f).

A further area that has relevance for vocational education is the production of development and application processes of new techniques and procedures. Workers at the level of production are directly involved in these processes and must, therefore, be trained for them. Several scientific studies have revealed that the decision-making processes and the operational implementation are dependent on cultural meaning. This dependency is not rational. It is not objective but rather this is about a social interaction whose rules determine the behaviour of those participating (u. a. Stinchcombe, 1965; Selznick, 1949; Hofstede, 1980). We can assume then that cultural patterns of interpretation take the lead in this process and prevail over rational expectations of an efficient process of organisation. Alongside this outcome of organisational sociology, the social science research on technology discovered that the development of new technical products are also subject to cultural rules. Here, it should not be assumed that the most favourable solution prevails, but rather the one that best complies with the social requirements of the field of negotiation for the technology developers (Ruth, 1995; Lutz & Hirsch-Kreinsen, 1987; Dierkes & Knie, 1989; Hard & Knie, 2000).

The question of central social actors who play a role in shaping relations of production needs to be clarified. It is important to distinguish between collective actors and individual social actors. From a German perspective, the powerful trade unions fall under the category of central collective actors and, historically, have played a primary role in shaping vocational education. These collective actors appear in a variety of shapes and forms, for example, in the state administration of the education ministry and program models for vocational schooling or the traditional apprenticeship system in sub-Saharan Africa (see Greinert, 1999; Nübler & Hoffmann et al., 2009; Adam & Boehm, 1994). Identifying collective actors for a comparative analysis and clarifying their influence on shaping vocational education and training can provide inferences as to the outlook of vocational policy transfer. Alongside the collective actors, it is important to observe individual actors, their worlds, cultural systems of meaning, as well as their imaginations of a “good life” (Wolf, 2009). Without going into detail, it is fair to say that, for a long time, the German dual apprenticeship model, with its gender-specific, male-dominated work biography, represented the norm (Hausen, 1976, 363ff; Baethge, 2001, 23ff). The individual subject is interrelated to vocational education by his/her socialisation, too (Lempert, 2006). The training and succeeding professional activities have a powerful effect on the constitution of the self and identity (Krappmann, 1983; Leithäuser, 1986; Körzel, 1987; Deetz, 2000; Schönberger & Springer, 2003).

A further category worth mentioning is one of social security; that is, how a society approaches its aging, sick, or those socially disadvantaged. On many levels, this category is entangled with the system of vocational education. At the institutional-structural level, the German social security system relies on professional training with permanent and full-time employment that undergirds the overall employment system. Therefore, social security has been designed around a dual vocational system and individuals can access social protection and chances for a stable social and economic position (Reif, 1982). In contexts without these features of the labour and training market, an elaborate system of vocational education and training has a significantly lower importance. Instead, people are trained on the job or attend school full-time. The question relevant for a comparative analysis is whether or not the elaborate form of vocational training is to an individual social actor's best advantage and whether or not imported aspects of vocational education and training would influence this category.

The last feature to mention is the administrative-institutional order taken up in the analysis of the context of such a transfer. The central issue here is who decides on the concrete arrangements of vocational education and which institutions are responsible. For example, in France, it is the National Ministry of Education; in Germany, the responsibility is scattered amongst federal and state-level bodies, including unions. In a large number of other countries, this stream of education is controlled by labour market mechanisms and vary in form from

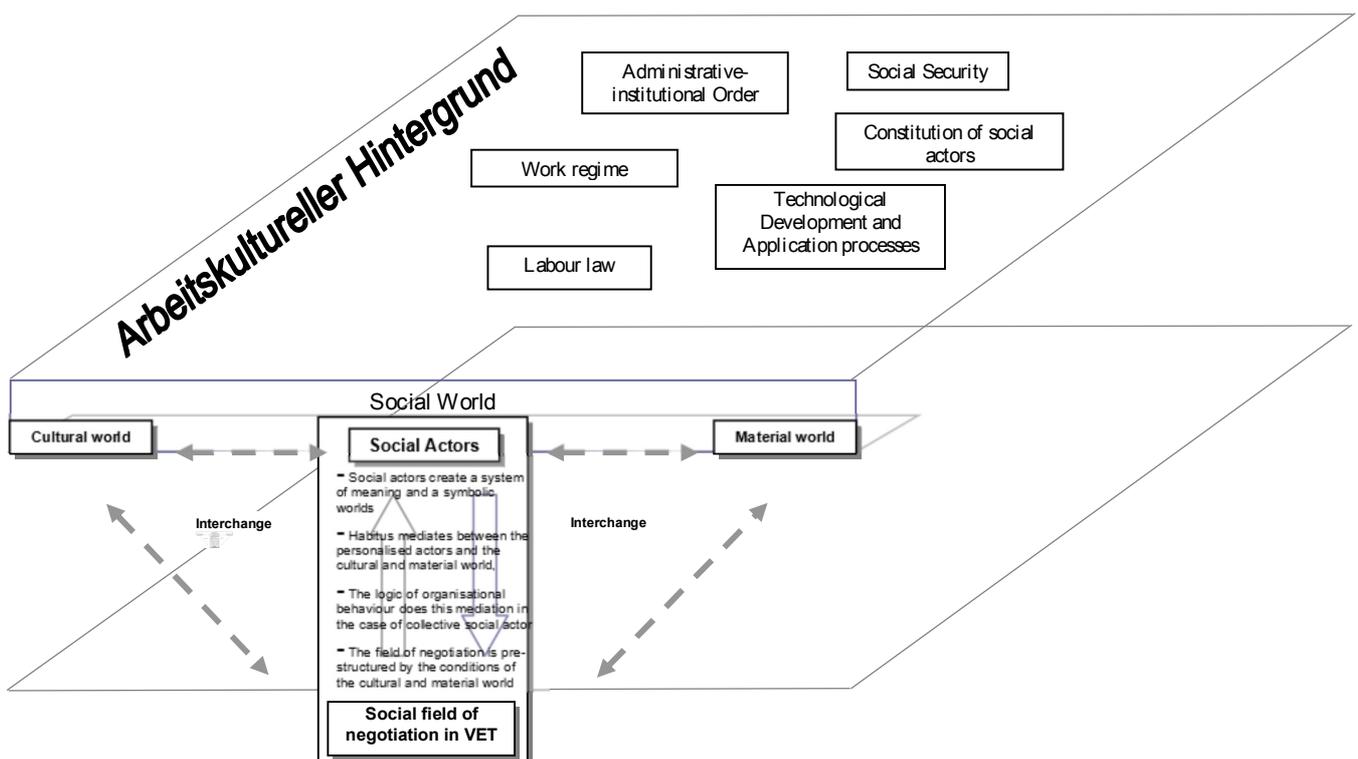


Figure 2: Background of Work Culture in VET

context to context. The three ideal types of administrative-institutional order can be found best described by Greinert (1997).

### **Thoughts on Considering Working Culture in the Context of Policy Transfer**

Now that we have introduced some of the categories that carry meaning in considering the background of work culture in a comparative analysis of policy transfer in vocational education, we can now better classify and examine the complex field of policy transfer and in doing so complement and expand on the work of Phillips and Ochs. If we are to trace the proposed model of work culture, we also have to examine the six categories introduced in the section above in both the „home“ context and the „receiving“ context. Detailed and well-grounded studies are necessary to carry out such a task. Comparative studies are available for one part of this more complex field, namely comparisons between countries in the industrialised world. A more complete comparative study of the backgrounds of work culture should be accompanied by historical analyses that highlight the specific national context. A systematic comparison between industrial and transitional countries from the perspective of work culture are not yet available. Policy transfer research has, until now, only thrown light on certain facets of work culture. Using Germany as an example, the remainder of this paper will demonstrate more facets of this transfer process in the context of vocational education and training cooperation work with developing countries that focused on apprentice training for the metal work sector. It is, however, important to underscore that a simple cause-effect analysis is not possible to detect given the complexity of the interchange between vocational education and background of work culture.

#### **Basic Training for Metal Crafts Men from a Culture of Work Perspective**

The establishment of vocational schools in developing countries dominated the German vocational education and training cooperation until the 1980s. Thereafter, the approach of setting up model schools was replaced by a system approach that set out to implement the dual system as a whole in developing countries (Stockmann, 1993, 75ff). The former approach transplanted German classroom methods in metal work to other contexts without a serious consideration of local conditions (Wiemann, 2002, 131; Schelten, 1983). The training programme in metal working is a typical industrial education model, one that in its zenith was implemented principally in vocational workshops. The programme is characterised by a straightforward and direct set of times, rules, and guidelines determined by the instructors that churn out random, and frequently just display items of usable artefacts. Learning and training takes place in the context of a complex organisation of learning with the support of an

extensive collection of media and teaching aids (Wiemann, 1989; ders. 2002, 85ff). One quick glance at the past reveals a classic example of educational policy transfer (Ploghaus, 2003). The training course method was developed and formulated at the Imperial Technical School in Moscow starting in the 1860s and inspired by polytechnic examples primarily in France (Meysner, 1996). The training course method quickly became known in Europe and in the USA by way of the World Fairs and Exhibitions. From the end of the nineteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth, the adoption and integration of this method developed in various ways in the industrial countries. The training method became a vocational training method during the period of industrialisation, while handicraft remained to a large extent held back by learning by imitation. In this time, the training course method was shaping itself to be a leading method (Wiemann, 2002), but in the USA the adoption of this method took a different path. It was introduced to the USA in Philadelphia in at the 1876 World Fair and used initially for training engineers. From there, it was applied generally in vocational education and training in high schools as Manual Training System. Training for industries remained largely untouched by this method. Thus, a systematic vocational training, such as in Russia, was not embraced by the USA. Education generally in the USA was heavily influenced by a holistic practical approach as advanced by John Dewey's philosophy of education (Ploghaus, 2003, 166ff; Knoll, 1991; 1993).

For the purpose of this paper, it is not possible to delve into such factors as social security and labour rights, but one comment on labour law is worth highlighting. The pupils or apprentices were (and are) subjected to the employment regulation of an industrial worker and with that also the factory's disciplinary measures and sanctions that threaten one's existence. Indeed, the possibilities for collective labour law were, in theory, made available to the workers, but the power of the factory owner was often overwhelming. Social and labour legislation in Germany, particularly the strong position of social partnership after 1945, contributed to a more solid legal and social position for vocational apprentices. In regards to work culture, it is probably fair to say that it was mentally and physically often demeaning (Lempert, 1989; Wiemann, 2002, 102ff; Seubert, 1993, 58ff), and one managed to persevere when (a) if there were decent role models available (Reif, 1982) and (b) the promise of a secure social existence was in sight. It is reasonable to view these social mechanisms as secular promises of salvation in the Weberian sense (1999) that contributed to the constitution of a social subject. Alongside other social processes, a training course in metal working provided the training and

socialisation of the individual subject for the modern factory production of the twentieth century (Siebel, 1984; Großewinkelmann, 2004; Hanf, 1987).

The industrial training of skilled workers enabled a large number of youth to access modern life and modern industry production (Wiemann 2002, 100f). The metal work sector played a crucial role in bringing German industry to the front lines of the world market. The collective actor learned the social form of skilled work, how to gain access to or shape unions or internal communities of understanding extending to vocational training (Wolf 2009, 77f) from the period of training.

A look at the background of work culture from the perspective of administrative-institutional order it can be determined that the internal composition of German VET-education is made up from a specific social constellation of actors. This constellation is shaped by consensual cooperation between employers and unions and accompanied by a procedure of moderation on the side of the state. This combination vis-a-vis vocational education and training makes for remarkable inertia of institutions and tradition (Herkner, 2003). Despite shifts and changes to industrial capitalism in the last three decades, the staying power of German VET institutions was revealed in the late 1990s when the German vocational concept was transplanted to China in the context of a German-Chinese vocational education and training cooperation (Wiemann 2002, 131).

When considering one further category of the background of work culture, the work regime of the company, is it interesting to note that the course training method is suitable for company organisation that is sequential and whose work stages are sharply controlled in accordance with the ideas of company management of F.W. Taylor. It also leaves behind the task-oriented work of pre-industrial times. However, there is a contradiction here when one compares company organisation to the USA. Both countries began at similar starting points concerning the implementation of the course training method (Ploghaus, 2003), but diverged according to the work culture traditions specific to each context. In Germany the system of vocational education and training for skilled workers led to a specific work regime with a strong opposition to the Taylor system of production in German companies ( Homburg, 1978; Kocka, 1969), the development of the work regime in the US led to a strong Taylor system without only a small part of systematised skilled worker training. Yet with the changes to company work organisation as a result of the structural shifts to the economy in the 1970s, Germany's apprenticeship training too was becoming obsolete. As of the mid-1980s, the

vocational programme as it was known was altered and was replaced step-by-step by problem and process-oriented learning methods. Advances in technology had a significant role to play in re-hauling the older, pre-structured methods of vocational training. Thus, manual skills in many vocational sectors is falling far behind cognitive capacities and independent learning and problem-solving skills (Clement, 2010).

## Conclusion

As this paper has shown, through the model of work culture it is possible to systematically examine aspects of VET in the context of its design background. In this way, it is possible to gather qualitative statements on the success of transfer measures. This relatively short and incomplete depiction of the background of work culture in VET using an example from the metal sector provides some initial insights into a very complex field. This brief discussion on the possibilities of integrating the analytical concept of the background of work culture in VET into comparative studies of VET programmes illustrates its potential in furthering the existing studies on policy transfer. More detailed studies are needed to enlarge the knowledge about the interrelations of VET system with the societal context in the societies. The her presented approach is useful to start investigations by case studies of several countries and to clarify its background of work culture. With the ground on this case studies we can give better assumption of the success of policy transfer activities in the VET field.

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