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TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SPACES

Border–Transcending Dimensions in Education

Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a great honour for me to be here and I would like to thank the Rector Magnificus of the University of Salamanca, Professor Hernández, and the President of the Comparative Education Society in Europe, Professor Pereyra, for the invitation to give this lecture. This XXV Conference of the Comparative Education Society in Europe (CESE) is entitled: “Empires, Post–coloniality, and Interculturality: Comparative Education between Past, Post, and Present –The World in Europe, Europe in the World –“.

The University of Salamanca, one of the oldest Universities in Europe, truly provides a formidable setting for exchanging inspiring ideas and thoughts on educational matters referring to this conference’s topics and occupying the international community dedicated to education that go beyond the national scope. In the following I will try to add to this challenging task by spelling out some thoughts on developments in education worldwide that have been characterized as “innovative answers” to internationalization and globalization, and manifest themselves in “new ideas and models emerging transnationally, i.e., beyond national and cultural boundaries and outside of international organizations or scientific communities or crosswise to them” (Adick, 2009, p. 286). In order to be able to identify and analyse such developments, which could also be characterized as border–transcending dimensions in education, I suggest turning to the concept of ‘Transnational Educational Spaces’ that has of late been put forward in the German speaking educational science by Adick (2005, 2009) and Hornberg (2009, 2010). I will outline the major assumptions underlying this concept and in a second step illustrate a case of transnational educational spaces in the worldwide general education system by turning to the International Baccalaureate Organization and educational offers it provides for. I will conclude my lecture¹ by pointing to rewarding research issues going beyond the aforementioned realm and research desiderata.

TRANSNATIONAL SPACES

When referring to matters going beyond the national scope and often with reference to globalization the term ‘transnational’ is quite frequently used for quite different phenomena, for example in architecture, history, or social science. In political science it

has been applied since the 1960's. Among those, who have for many years now worked with the term 'transnational' and 'transnational spaces', offering helpful definitions and further leading work, are the social scientists Ludger Pries and Thomas Faist who both refer to phenomena of transnational and social developments in terms of "transmigration" (Pries, 2001, p. 9). Following Pries (2001), this kind of migration represents "a modern type of a nomadic way of life [that gives rise to] transnational social spaces," or to "transnational spaces," as Faist (2000) puts it. Such spaces can extend across nations or continents and are constituted through the transmigrants' conduct of life. Under the umbrella of the transnational spaces approach, migration is no longer understood "as a singular or two-fold changeover between two sites (areas of origin and arrival), but as a genuine component of definitely continuous biographies" (Pries, 2001, p. 49.)

Although Faist (2000, p. 14) emphasizes the fact that states are not always identical to nation states, their national territories, and governments, both he (2000, p. 13) and Pries (2001, p. 18) pay heed to a discourse initiated at the beginning of the 1990's as a result of ethnographic research by Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton (1992). The first contours of a transnational perspective on migration appeared in the course of their focusing on as yet unconsidered "social areas" created by migrants who link the nation of their origin with the nation of their residence (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1997, p. 81). However, Faist and Pries substitute the term "social area" for the term "space," with Pries (2001, p. 53) defining this expression as follows:

We programmatically suggest, understanding *transnational social spaces* as a kind of pluri-local "interrelations" (Elias, 1986). Thus, *transnational social spaces* are relatively stable condensed configurations of social daily routines, symbolism and artefacts, allocated on various sites or spread between multiple extended areas. *Transnational social spaces* emerge together with transmigrants (and transnational companies); both determine each other.

In this context, the term space is not used in a conventional physical meaning, as in the sense of a location (e.g., town or country), but in the sense of relatively stable, national borders exceeding relationships between protagonists. Both Faist and Pries pick up on the term social spaces according to the sense introduced by Pierre Bourdieu (1982, 1985). The concept of transnational spaces put forward here allows us to recognize the transnational relationships that exist alongside the government level (Faist, 2000, p. 14; Kleger, 1997, pp. 288–292), namely, those that have accompanying consequences for national actions and organizations (the systemic level) and for autonomous individuals (the social-life level). Participation in transnational processes is possible without the geographic mobility of people, such as via internet, provided that, within the context of such communication processes; social closeness develops despite geographic distance. Transnational spaces are characterized by a certain density and steadiness; not all migration processes lead to the emergence of transnational spaces. This perspective on migration is included in the conceptualization of transnational educational spaces that follows.

TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SPACES

In the German-language educational science literature, only a few articles have taken up the concept of transnational spaces (Gogolin & Pries, 2004). Adick (2005, pp. 262–266) conceptualizes transnational educational spaces by linking three previously separate but parallel discourses (Adick, 2005): socialization in transnational spaces, transnational convergences in education, and transnational education.

Socialization in transnational spaces refers to the approaches spelled out by Faist and Pries that were developed against the background of a sociological perspective on migration. Educational science studies located in that sub-area would, for example, consider the question of to what extent multilingualism serves as a resource for transmigrants and/or transnational networks (Fürstenau, 2004).

The term *transnational convergences in education* is represented through worldwide isomorphic developments in education. Such developments have been outlined over the past forty years with reference to the world polity approach by John W. Meyer and his colleagues at Stanford University (Meyer, Ramirez & Boli, 1977; Meyer & Ramirez, 2000). The central feature and particular strength of their works is the linking of theory and empiricism, which is reflected in numerous macro-analytical analyses of empirical phenomena, including those on global developments in education (Benavot, Chea, Kamens, Meyer & Wong, 1991; Meyer, Kamens & Benavot, 1992). The best-known publications of the Stanford scholars are their works on the “mass education” principle, initially enforced in Central Europe, and subsequently throughout the world, in the period from 1870 to 1980 (Boli & Ramirez, 1986; Boli, Ramirez & Meyer, 1985; Ramirez & Meyer, 1980). Today all nations worldwide have – at least in programmatic form – state-run school systems, predominantly financed through public funding, with compulsory school attendance implemented at different times between 1850 and 1950 (Ramirez & Boli-Bennett, 1982).

Furthermore, the organizational structures of the school systems worldwide show similar features, namely the state-run administration of education, the professional training of teachers, and an education system differentiated in terms of various levels of education and educational institutions. These education systems typically award governmentally authorised credentials in terms of certificates confirming school performance (Adick, 1992, pp. 17–124; Inkeles & Sirowy, 1983, pp. 303–333; Ramirez & Boli-Bennett, 1982). In 1992, the Stanford scholars (Meyer, Kamens & Benavot, 1992) also presented data showing that since 1945 all nations worldwide have adopted a global basic curriculum in primary education, mostly lasting for six years, comprising lessons in one or more national languages, mathematics, science and social sciences, art, and physical and religious education. Worldwide, similar amounts of time are dedicated to these subjects. From their data, Meyer et al. (1992) conclude that, since 1945, a global basic curriculum has developed at primary school level, where national and/or regional specifics are considered less important, at least in terms of separately accounted subjects. The Stanford scholars refer to these

empirical findings as isomorphic structures in education worldwide, having evolved in the course of the change from Western pre-modern societies to modern societies.

Transnational convergences such as those identified by Meyer et al. are, at the same time, a prerequisite for and the result of transnational educational spaces. This is because participation in transnational educational spaces relies, to a certain extent, on the connectivity and translatability of educational processes, learning experiences, curricula contents, certificates, and competencies (Adick, 2005, p. 263).

The third term of interest here, *transnational education*, takes into account the economic dimension of education. This term encompasses learning opportunities such as distance (on-line) courses, which are offered, in addition to other provision, by internationally operating educational organizations such as technical colleges, universities, and private service providers. UNESCO and the Council of Europe refer to such offerings as *transnational learning opportunities*. Weber (2004) classifies them as one of the most advanced forms of deregulation in tertiary education. In January 2002, UNESCO and the Council of Europe drafted a *Code of Good Practice for the Provision of Transnational Education*. The code defined transnational education as follows:

All types of higher education study programme, or set of course study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the educational system of a state different from the state in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national system. (Adam, 2001, p. 5)

According to this definition, transnational education takes place only in tertiary education. However, a conception of this term that expands on that provided by UNESCO and the Council of Europe means that we can also take into account developments in the field of general education. But before so doing, we have to also ask, if transnational organizations can be identified, having the potential to act alongside and/or below the nation-state level. Adick (2008, p. 184) has put forward “definitions of terms and a proposal for a typology” of “transnational educational organizations in transnational education spheres”, where she empirically identifies four types of transnational organizations (ibid., pp. 184–193):

1. Transnational educational enterprises
2. Transnational educational organizations in distinct educational systems
3. Transnational educational organizations in the field of migration, and
4. Transnational educational organizations specialised in advocacy

The first type of a transnational organization identified here: *Transnational educational enterprises* is characterised by the fact that these organizations invest in education and offer their commodity: ‘education’ on the world market. Such organizations work in the interest of their stakeholders, they always combine their learning opportunities with economic interests; that is to say, they are profit-oriented. In contrast to Transnational

educational enterprises *Transnational educational organizations in the field of migration* do not first and foremost pursue economic interests, but aim at establishing offers of assistance and support for migrants in the field of education. These offers can be added to the national learning opportunities in the school system, such as Koranic schools, or can replace state schools, as do private Islamic schools (ibid., p. 189). Other than the latter *Transnational educational organizations specialised in advocacy* provide education across borders with reference to general Human Rights – here, the right to education (ibid., p. 192). A typical feature of such organizations is that, as a rule, based in so-called industrialised countries, they lobby for education in so-called third-world countries, for example by supporting the building of schools, the participation in educational programmes, and so on.

Of special interest here is the second type of transnational educational organizations: the *transnational educational organizations in distinct education systems*. Transnational educational organizations of this type do not provide or sell their educational offers outside a given system, but within it. Empirical examples of such organizations are the Lufthansa School of Business, the first Corporate University established in Germany in 1998, and educational organizations working in the field of international schools and international educational programmes such as the International Schools Association or the International Baccalaureate Organization. It is to the latter that I shall now turn to in order to illustrate my argument by an empirical example of transnational educational spaces in general educational systems.

A CASE OF TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SPACES: THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE

Since World War II we have seen an international educational market unfolding in general education that is complemented by a ramified network of educational organizations. Among these are the International Schools Association (ISA), the International Schools Service, the European Council of International Schools (ECIS), and the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), to name but a few of the most influential ones. The range of services provided by these organizations includes:

Organization, counselling and certification of schools, for example as IB World Schools, Organization and running of congresses for schools and teaching staff, supporting of placement of teachers in schools, Organization and implementation of teacher training, Development and provision of curricula and teaching and learning materials for schools and students, Collection of students' data and certification of students' achievement.

Thus, these educational organizations provide services for the international educational market which in public general education systems are incumbent upon the state. The European Council of International Schools (ECIS), for example, organises twice-yearly congresses worldwide where representatives of international

schools and potential teachers of such schools meet; where educational publishers exhibit their teaching and learning material, and teacher training courses are held. Among the manifold providers to this education market, one organization stands out because of the distinct educational offers it provides for: the International Baccalaureate Organization, a non-profit educational foundation founded in 1968 in Geneva. In line with her mission statement and in its own words (<http://www.ibo.org/mission/index.cfm>): The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who can help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

Today, there are more than 900,000 IB students in over 140 countries, attending one of the three programmes the International Baccalaureate Organization offers for students aged 3 to 19; these programmes are (<http://www.ibo.org/mission/index.cfm>):

The Primary Years Programme, for students aged 3 – 12 “focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside.”

The IB Middle Years Programme for students aged 11 – 16 “provides a framework of academic challenge that encourages students to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world, and become critical and reflective thinkers.”

The IB Diploma Programme for students aged 16 – 19 is normally taught over two years and offers examinations leading to the International Baccalaureate, a university entrance diploma, recognised by a growing number of universities worldwide.

In view of the Diploma Programme, the International Baccalaureate Organization claims the following:

Life in the 21st century, in an interconnected, globalized world, requires critical-thinking skills and a sense of international-mindedness, something that International Baccalaureate® (IB) Diploma Programme students come to know and understand (ibid).

The IB and IB Programmes are characterised by international conceptions of educational reform, international education and its advancement in intercultural education and global learning, as well as by a constructivist understanding of teaching and learning (Hornberg, 2010, pp. 147–163). From the outset, the International Baccalaureate and IB programmes were offered by private schools, labelled ‘international schools, but today over half of the schools offering them are state schools (<http://www.ibo.org/history/>). The IB and IB Programmes are genuine and distinct programmes under the authority of the International Baccalaureate

Organization – they have not developed out of a national education system, such as the International General Certificate of Education O–Level, provided by the University of Cambridge.

Looking at the history of the International Baccalaureate and the three programmes we find that other than is usually the case in national education systems, in 1968, with the International Baccalaureate and the IB Diploma Programme, first the university entrance certificate and upper grade programme were designed and became available. It took more than twenty years, before, in 1992, the IB Middle Years Programme, and, in 1997, the IB Primary Years Programme also came into force. All three programmes are offered in English, French and Spanish; the IB Middle Years Programme is also provided in Mandarin, with a German version currently being tested. The IB and IB Programmes as well as all other services, offered by the International Baccalaureate Organization, such as the recognition of a school as an IB World School, the marking of tests and so forth, involve fees which the consumer of such offers has to pay for privately.

Some statistical data may provide a first impression of the spread of IB schools and programmes. In 1975, that is after seven years in existence, only 30 schools with 1,217 candidates worldwide had registered for the IB Diploma Programme; 35 years later, in 2010, this number had increased to 104.999 students attending 1,740 schools (cf. IB, 2010, p. 16). The main gains have occurred since the beginning of the new millennium. The International Baccalaureate Organization includes schools offering the IB Diploma programme according to world regions, distinguishing the following three regions, of which individual branches are in charge: the region of Latin America, North America and the Caribbean, the Asian–Pacific region and the region of Africa, Europe and the Middle East. In 2010 altogether 2.155 schools (100 %) worldwide offered the IB Diploma Programme. 1.115 of these schools (51,28 %), i.e., more than half of them, were located in the region of Latin America, North America and the Caribbean; 733 schools (34,01 %) were located in the region of Africa, Europe and the Middle East, and 307 schools (14,25 %) in the Asian–Pacific region (ibid, p. 7). English is the dominant working language used in class: in 2010 of all schools offering the IB Diploma Programme 88.26 % taught in English, 10.49 % in Spanish and 1.25 % in French (ibid, p. 6). The dominance of English as the working language in class has for many decades been a topic among teachers at international schools and of IB programmes, causing much controversial discussion. From the data presented here it is clear that the consumers of the IB Diploma Programme prefer an English speaking classroom, presumably because they expect to better adapt to a new environment after relocating or a higher compatibility when it comes to becoming accepted at any university worldwide. It is thus a factor that might also be crucial for somewhat sedentary families when picking such an educational offer.

From the data available on the IB's homepage it is possible to retrieve for each country the names and addresses of schools according to the IB programmes they offer, although it is not indicated there, whether a school is a private or a state

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school. To obtain valid information about this issue it is necessary either to turn to the International Baccalaureate for this information and pay for it or to turn directly to the schools listed. In 2010 I asked respective schools in Germany about their legal status since I had observed that the number of schools with such an offer had increased noticeably since the new millennium. This is astonishing because the private school sector in Germany is far from that prevalent in Anglo-Saxon countries: in the school year 2008/2009 there were only 3,057 private schools registered in general education that were attended by almost 700,000 students; these were 7.7% of the roughly 9 million students in the general education system (Weiß, 2011). The IB and IB curricula have been offered for a couple of decades in Germany, although up to the new millennium almost exclusively by international private schools. Since then, however, state schools have also entered the arena with this offer.

Among the 44 schools in Germany offering the IB and/or IB programmes in 2010, 64% were international private schools and 36% state schools, with the latter offering the IB and/or IB curricula in addition to their national curricula and university entrance certificate. How are these curricula allocated to the schools? The most frequent offer in German schools is the IB Diploma Programme; there is no other offer than this at state schools. In private schools we find the IB Primary Years Programme quite often, whereas the IB Middle Years Programme is not that widespread. This might also be attributed to the fact that until 2012 it was not possible in Germany to gain an IB-related General Certificate of Secondary Education.

I suppose assume and have tried to outline that the International Baccalaureate organization and the educational programmes and offers it provides for such contingencies as the authorization of a school as an IB world school, teacher trainings, and so forth, fulfil the requirements for this organization to be categorized as a transnational educational organization in distinct educational systems. These educational systems I assume with reference to the term transnational education can be characterized as transnational educational spaces, presenting border-transcending dimensions in education. While these transnational educational spaces were predominantly deployed in the private school sector, the need to become engaged with them was perhaps not so demanding, but its growing appearance in state school systems worldwide should be of our concern.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

To date, the International Baccalaureate ‘only’ serves about a million students in 141 countries. But as an alternative to national curricula and certificates authorized by the state it obviously comes into sight for a steadily growing number of students and schools, especially since the dawn of the new millennium. The International Baccalaureate organization is responding to and at the same time supporting this process by expanding educational services and educational programmes exhibiting

an international orientation, satisfying the criterion of international compatibility and, moreover, having the great advantage of being able to attend to only parts of such curricula – as with a modular system. This, the data presented suggest, gives rise to their attraction also for state schools, even though the consumers of such offers, schools and students, have to pay for these educational offers in some way privately. This raises questions hitherto not dealt with empirically:

What makes such offers attractive for schools, parents and students? Is it a profit of distinction and competitive advantage on the national and international educational market? Do state schools offer the IB and IB programmes solely in addition to their curricula and the certificates they provide for or as a substitute for these? Will national admission qualifications lose their value with students in state schools opting for transnational certificates instead of state certificates? And how does it affect the inner structure of a state school if transnational educational offers are implemented? What will the consequences be in the medium and long run for the single school and the ensemble of schools of one town or region? What stances do the states take in this process? How much of their influence might they forfeit and transfer to transnational educational organizations? Such and further points wait to be systematically and empirically investigated – the concept of transnational educational spaces offers a frame for the analysis of border –transcending dimensions in education.

NOTES

- ¹ Parts of this lecture are, with minor changes, based on Hornberg (2009, 2012a, b).

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