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Kulturgeschichte der Erziehung und Bildung:
Warum und wie?

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Inhalt

Editorial 129

Beiträge – Articles (*Mette Buchardt, Guest editor*)

Mette Buchardt and Stephanie Fox

Social histories of *Bildung* between universal and national ambitions and global emergences 133

Rebekka Horlacher

Schleiermacher's educational theory as a social concept of *Bildung* 138

Sophie Pia Stieger

The alleged universality of *Bildung* –
A brief history of a hidden national grammar 153

Toshiko Ito

The German concept of *Bildung* in Imperial Japan.
Reception through the prism of the Kyoto School 170

Mette Buchardt

Between *dannelse* and “real life”. National Cultural Christianity in a
Nordic Cold War education reform process 188

Debatte – Discussion

Cultural history of education: Why and how?

Kulturgeschichte der Erziehung und Bildung: Warum und wie? 203

Gary McCulloch

Revisiting the cultural history of education 204

William J. Reese

Whither the history of education? 215

Tanya Fitzgerald

Revisiting and rewriting histories of education 218

Kate Rousmaniere

Revisiting the cultural history of education 221

Marc Depaepe

An ambitious cultural history of education – yes please!
But hopefully one that will transcend the boundaries of its own culture 225

Julie McLeod

What's not cultural history (of education) now? 229

Rezensionen – Reviews

Klaus Dittrich

Lothar Schilling/Jakob Vogel (Hrsg.): Transnational Cultures of Expertise 233

Carmen Flury

Gary McCulloch/Ivor Goodson/Mariano González-Delgado (eds.):
Transnational Perspectives on Curriculum History 236

James Miles

Marko Demantowsky (ed.): Public history and school 240

Andreas Oberdorf

Peter Gemeinhardt (Hrsg.): Was ist Bildung in der Vormoderne 244

Kolumne – Column

David F. Labaree

What we missed when schools closed 247

Editorial

Manchmal verzaubern einzelne Wörter (fast) die ganze Welt und stellen sogar die nüchterne Forschung auf den Kopf. „Globalisierung“ war so ein Wort, das just nach dem Fall des Eisernen Vorhanges derart an wirtschaftspolitischer Prominenz gewann, dass man – ähnlich wie heute beim Covid-19-Virus – selbst im pädagogischen Feld nach den Konsequenzen fragte. Es gab natürlich die Kritiker, die eine weitere Ökonomisierung der Bildung befürchteten, und es gab die Trittbrettfahrer, die nach kulturell indifferenzen Evidenzen von Schuleffizienz fragten, und es gab die dritte Gruppe, die gelegentlich etwas gar erhaben vor allem den gesellschaftlichen Wandel, der mit „Globalisierung“ verbunden zu sein schien, analysierten, die forschend, reflexiv und kritisch den Menschen klar zu machen suchten, in welcher historischen Situation wir uns befinden.

Keine der drei Gruppen, die Kritiker, die Advokaten und die Aufklärer, rechneten je damit, dass „Globalisierung“ vielleicht gar nicht so existierte, wie sie sich das dachten. Heute zeigt sich die Welt jedenfalls auf eine ganz andere Weise. Wir sehen an vielen Orten extreme Nationalisten am Ruder politischer Entscheidungsfindung, die sich einer erstaunlichen Popularität erfreuen. Die globale Realität ist, so die Folgerung, eher national als universal, und kaum etwas hat dies deutlicher gemacht als die globale Herausforderung einer Pandemie. Nicht nur ist sie pejorativ nationalisiert worden („China-Virus“) um von der eigenen Handlungsinkompetenz abzulenken, die Staaten schlossen auch ihre Grenzen, zählten die Kranken und Toten unterschiedlich und organisierten „Repatriierungsflüge“ um die in der Welt verstreuten Bürgerinnen und Bürger „nach Hause“ zu bringen.

Vor diesem Hintergrund erstaunt es nicht, dass einzelne Wörter auch nationale Bedeutung haben und sogar nationale Identität auf den Begriff bringen können, auch wenn sie „nur“ diskursive Konstruktionen sind. Einen solchen Begriff ist *Bildung*, der als pädagogischer Begriff kreiert wurde, als in den fortschrittlichen Staaten des Westens, vor allem in Frankreich, aber auch in England und den neu gegründeten Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika Wissen und politische Organisation in einer Art und Weise aufeinander bezogen wurden, die in Deutschland nur auf Ablehnung stoßen konnte. Relevante Realität sollte hier nicht „äußerlich“, das heißt politisch oder wirtschaftlich, konnotiert sein, sondern „innerlich“, und entsprechend konnte es in Erziehung und Unterricht nicht um Wissen gehen, und schon gar nicht um „nützliches Wissen“. Nicht die soziale oder politische Ethik, sondern die ästhetische Transformation des Inneren, der Seele, stand im Zentrum des Interesses und das war genau das, was man mit *Bildung* bezeichnete. Das Ideal war auch nicht die Gegenwart, die zum Wohle der Menschen gestaltet werden sollte, sondern die (überhöhte Interpretation) der griechischen Antike und allenfalls ihre Nachahmung. Dieser Begriff der Bildung wurde dann, nach dem Ende des Heiligen Römischen Reiches Deutscher Nation (ausgerechnet durch den Erzfeind Frankreich)

zum Inbegriff deutscher nationaler Identität, und wirkt als solcher bis heute nach. Kein Wunder also, dass der Begriff in Deutschland kaum je Kritiker, dafür aber um so mehr Befürworter und Verteidiger hatte. Allerdings blieb er vage, denn was das „Innere“ ist, ist ebenso unklar wie die griechische Ästhetik als reales pädagogisches Ideal der Gegenwart. Genau diese Vagheit war aber der Schlüssel zum Erfolg: Je nach Kontext konnte der Begriff neu und in der Regel pathetisch, als Lösung zur Bewältigung aller Arten von Problemen definiert werden, welche die deutsche Nation in Frage stellten. Diesem kulturellen Phänomen widmet sich der Beiträge-Teil dieser Ausgabe, der von Mette Buchardt als Gast-Editorin betreut und verantwortet wurde und der der Frage nachgeht, wo und in welchen (auch ausländischen, von Deutschland beeinflussten) Kontexten der Begriff der Bildung wie definiert und propagiert wurde.

Damit ist eine Art von Begriffsgeschichte angesprochen, die Teil der Kulturgeschichte ist. Und wie Kulturgeschichte der Erziehung und Bildung verstanden und wie sie geschrieben werden kann, wird im Debatten-Teil diskutiert. Gary McCulloch, Herausgeber einer im Herbst 2020 erscheinenden sechsbändigen Kulturgeschichte der Erziehung und Bildung hat die für diese Reihe relevanten metatheoretischen und methodologischen Grundsätze formuliert, die von international herausragenden Kolleginnen und Kollegen diskutiert werden. Vielleicht ist unter heutigen Voraussetzungen ja gar nicht mehr die Frage, ob man Kulturgeschichte, Sozialgeschichte oder Ideengeschichte schreiben, sondern „nur“ noch, wie man das am Besten tun soll.

Mit dem Stichwort „besten“ kommen wir zu einer Verabschiedung in eigener Sache. David F. Labaree hat, wie zuvor Heinz-Elmar Tenorth, Richard Aldrich, Marta Maria Chagas de Carvalho und Joyce Goodman für diese Zeitschrift zwei Jahre lang die Carte Blanche geschrieben und die Leserschaft mit seinen unnachahmlich unorthodoxen Gedanken unterhalten und motiviert, gerade auch die jüngere Generation von Forscherinnen und Forschern. Wir danken Dir, David, für diese wunderbaren Ideen, Provokationen und Anregungen und freuen uns auf weitere Beiträge in anderen Rubriken der IJHE!

Die Redaktion

Editorial

Sometimes single words enchant (almost) the whole world and even turn sober research upside down. “Globalization” was a word that gained such prominence in economic policy after the fall of the Iron Curtain that – similar to the Covid-19 virus today – even in the field of education people asked about the consequences. There were, of course, critics who feared a further economization of education; and there were the freeloaders who asked for culturally indifferent evidence of school efficiency. There was also a third group, who, at times, analyzed the social change that seemed to be associated with “globalization” in a somewhat sublime manner, who sought to make it clear to people, in an inquiring, reflective and critical manner, in what historical situation we find ourselves. None of the three groups, the critics, the advocates, or the enlighteners, ever reckoned that “globalization” might not exist as they thought it did. Today, at any rate, the world presents itself in a very different way. We see extreme nationalists at the helm of political decision-making in many places, and they enjoy amazing popularity. The global reality, so therefore the conclusion, is national rather than universal, and little has made this clearer than the global challenge of a pandemic. Not only has it been pejoratively nationalized (the “China virus”) to divert attention from their or the countries’ own incompetence of action, states have also closed their borders, had differing ways of counting the sick and dead, and organized “repatriation flights” to “bring home” citizens scattered around the world.

Against this background, it is not surprising that individual words also have national meanings and can even bring national identity to them, even if they are “only” discursive constructions. One such concept is *Bildung*, which was created as an educational concept when, in the progressive states of the West, especially in France, but also in England and the then newly-founded United States of America, knowledge and political organization were related to each other in a way that could only meet with rejection in Germany. Here, with the German creation/origination of *Bildung*, relevant reality should not be connoted “externally,” i.e. politically or economically, but “internally.” Accordingly, education could not be about knowledge, and certainly not about “useful knowledge.” It was not social or political ethics, but the aesthetic transformation of the inner being, the soul, that was the focus of interest, and this was exactly what was called *Bildung*. The ideal was also not the present, which was to be shaped for the benefit of mankind, but the (exaggerated interpretation) of Greek antiquity and, at best, its imitation. This concept of “education” then became, after the end of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (by its arch-enemy France, of all countries), the epitome of German national identity, and as such it has continued to have an effect in the German-speaking realm until today. No wonder, then, that the term has hardly ever had any critics in Germany, but rather advocates and defenders. However, it remained

vague, for what is meant by “interior” is as unclear as Greek aesthetics have been as a real educational ideal of the present. Yet it was precisely this vagueness that was the key to its success: depending on the context, the term could be redefined in new and usually pathetic ways, as a solution to all kinds of problems that challenged the German nation. This cultural phenomenon is the focus of the article-section of this issue, which was supervised and edited by Mette Buchardt as guest editor, and which explores the question of where and in which (including foreign, German-influenced) contexts the concept of education has been defined and propagated, and how.

This addresses a kind of conceptual history that is part of cultural history. How the cultural history of education can be understood and how it can be written is discussed in the debate-section. Gary McCulloch, editor of a six-volume set of work concerning cultural history of education to be published in fall 2020, has formulated the meta-theoretical and methodological principles of this set, which are being discussed by internationally outstanding colleagues. Perhaps under today’s conditions, the question is no longer whether to write cultural history as opposed to other approaches to history, but “only” how best to do so.

With the keyword “best” we come to a farewell in our own cause. David F. Labaree, like Heinz-Elmar Tenorth, Richard Aldrich, Marta Maria Chagas de Carvalho, and Joyce Goodman before him, has had two years *carte blanche* for this journal, entertaining and motivating the readership with his inimitably unorthodox thoughts, especially the younger generation of researchers. We thank you, David, for these wonderful ideas, provocations, and stimulations and we look forward to further contributions in other sections of the IJHE!

The editors

Mette Buchardt and Stephanie Fox

Social histories of *Bildung* between universal and national ambitions and global emergences

Sozialgeschichten der Bildung zwischen universalen und nationalen Ambitionen und globalen Erscheinungen

The educational concept of *Bildung* emerged during the 18th century in a German language context, a prescriptive philosophical concept denoting human development by means of inner self-formation as an individual quest for an indefinite perfectibility. The concept of *Bildung* aims at directing a process to achieve “something” the individual is not considered to be or have from the outset but has to “become” through an educating process happening in the inner soul. Thus, *Bildung* can be understood as the goal, way and ideal of as well as the “tool” for a cultivation process that the human being has to go through in order to become an individual and to gain “personality”. That this cannot only be stimulated or achieved through scholastic education can be observed e.g. in the romantic and today still world-widely known phenomenon of the *Bildungsroman* (*Bildung* novel) – a literary genre for personal and moral growth – and also by the fact that this concept is concerned about the soul of the human which in the pedagogical sense alone is not really tangible.

While proponents of the value of the concept and its theoretical and intellectual traditions often argue for its uniqueness, *Bildung* can nevertheless be seen as a German language sibling and alternative to as well as overlapping with the concepts of Enlightenment and ideas about bringing up “into civilisation” and “raising into the culture” for which the late 18th and the 19th centuries formed a fertile ground: From the late 18th century as part of reform- and modernization-ambitions and during the 19th century as part of attempts to institutionalize such ideas in the context of the upcoming nation states and increasingly nationally framed empires, where crafting of state school systems became a central tool (Ther 2015).

As the concept of *Bildung* became part of the ideologies circulated within the state education systems which were established across Europe during the 19th century, it did as well become part of the process towards modernizing states and making the states, including empires, national. Ideas of *Bildung* can thus be seen as from its emergence on the one hand aiming at a decontextual universalism and “eternity” directed towards the individual, and on the other hand connected to exactly particularistic national projects under construction, something that also mirrors e.g. Northern European education political debates from the 2000s onwards. As pointed to by Historian of Education Rebekka Horlacher, “today, *Bildung* serves as a catchword in the fight against PISA and the logic of quantitative assessment” (2016, 1). This has been the case in discussions in the German context since the 2000s pro and con

OECD-imposed standardization of national education, something which is also the case in e.g. a Nordic context (Tröhler 2011; Bucharadt 2020). This has led to increasing claims about the uniqueness of the concept compared to other national concepts (of e.g. France or England) while its universal relevance is simultaneously proclaimed. On the one hand, proponents of the concept insist on its universal and thus also global relevance, while on the other hand, its allegedly unique cultural and thus also national character is used to argue for the necessity to save it from Anglo-Saxon epistemological invasion (e.g. Stieger 2020).

At present, *Bildung* is used as *Kampfbegriff* against competence orientation, and thus claims to celebrate knowledge-for-the sake-of-knowledge and knowledge-for-the-sake-of-the-individual. Dating back to e.g. liberal Jewish philosopher and enlightener Moses Mendelsohn's definition of the concept, the concept of *Bildung* is, however, itself tool- and skills-oriented. Like the concept of competence, *Bildung* can be understood as a concept of applied knowledge, directed towards creating useful – in the form of self-“perfecting” – human beings for the state and “the culture” (Mendelsohn 1784; Sorkin 2008; Horlacher 2016).

The present situation and the paradoxes between this situation and the historical layers of the concept that are revealed call for renewed historical explorations that approach the history of the concept of *Bildung* from new methodological angles. This special issue aims at contributing to a reopening of the historiography of the conceptual traditions of *Bildung* with a selection of papers which all work with the history of *Bildung* in the intersections between intellectual history and social history, dealing with the social and political use of the concept and the national practices and spaces which it developed within globally.

1 Social histories of a concept

Such new directions of research that the contributions in this special issue strive to take up are not least inspired by Rebekka Horlacher's comparative cultural history on *The Educated Subject and the German Concept of Bildung* (2016). Rather than doing a conceptual history of *Bildung* and as such staying close to previous work within the history of educational ideas, this scholarly work is situating the concept in its cultural and social history. Taking the German Enlightenment and early liberal subject-oriented theology as one of the central points of departure, Horlacher's comparative cultural history follows and contextualizes the concept of *Bildung* in shifting public intellectual debates including its not so solemnly “German” roots, e.g. the inspiration from the English notion of Politeness, as well as its directedness towards “usefulness”. Such historical scholarship makes it possible to understand *Bildung* as a strategy for organizing knowledge in ways that aim at transforming human beings into self-perfecting individuals, and thus to consider the potential similarity with other educationalized concepts of applied knowledge, such as its – in the PISA debates – alleged counterpart and evil twin: the Anglo-Saxon concept of competence.

In this issue, Horlacher contributes with a study of Protestant theologian and state crafter Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and his social contextualization of the concept of *Bildung* as it was developed in the context of Prussian education policy making. By focusing on Schleiermacher's writings from the first two decades of the 19th century, Horlacher situates his ideas of individual and social *Bildung* as a private matter rather than a stately one within the context of the central discussion at the time in Prussian education reform politics. This process took place during the time when the Prussian empire was “liberated” from the French troops and the Vienna congress redrew the borders between the states of Europe and thus a period which in Prussia was framed by stately crisis followed by national restoration.