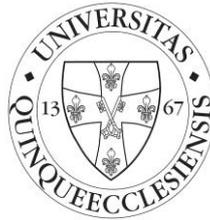


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SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE TRESSPASSABILITY BETWEEN SECONDARY SCHOOLS BASED UPON
EXAMPLES FROM BAVARIA AND SAXONIA

Theses of the Doctoral (PhD) dissertation

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1. Topic of Discussion

The level of education basically determines one's place in the society. In order for schools to become an actual channel of social mobility, it is necessary to improve the set of conditions of education and to make its operation more open and efficient. What is worth considering today are development nodes that support the obtainment of the highest possible school qualification for students motivated in different ways. By our days, secondary education has become a part of basic public services since almost every young person enters a type of secondary educational institution (Forray-Kozma 2011). Lack of success, any possible drops-out or a progress without the acquisition of proper knowledge has an adverse influence on the individual career and the success on the labour market. As a consequence, the choice of the appropriate school type is of high importance to everyone in order that the improvement of one's abilities be efficient. Today, it is worth considering development nodes which support the obtainment the highest possible school qualification for students motivated in different ways. The improvement of the system of conditions of education, the flexibility of changing schools and openness may make an education system more efficient.

The issue of the tresspassibility of the education system is a relevant but barely researched topic in Hungary. This issue is so underprivileged in the Hungarian education that school changers are not even recorded in the education statistic. This is why the study of the átjár6óság in the system of secondary schools in Bavaria and Saxony may provide important experience for the Hungarian education affairs. During the examination, consequences may be drawn as to in what way secondary schools support students having already entered the system in selecting the school type appropriate for them. The possibility of obtaining a higher qualification is also available to children having entered the system with greater disadvantages. This means finding the appropriate profession or trade in the world of labour thus it is both economic and cultural interest of the state in the respect of providing the required human resources.

2. Topic and Structure of the Dissertation

The most important aim of the research is to present how the tresspassibility within the education system influences students' careers. In the selected provinces, as compared to Hungarian conditions, the author examines how different secondary schools help students having already entered the system in the choice of school types appropriate for them. This is crucial since today's secondary schools are to be considered the last station of the basic education system, its aim being to provide young people with learning and working skills that fulfil the requirements of the labour market. At

the same time, schools are expected to make young people to accept and implement the concept of life-long learning not only in economic and social but anthropological aspect as well (Horváth H. 2011.).

The structure of the study supports the realisation of the objectives according to the following aspects:

- For the presentation of the two German provinces as the examined educational environment, in which the size of areas, the density of population, the GDP per capita as well as employment and unemployment indicators are worth considering in comparison with Hungarian conditions;
- Characteristics of the education systems in the provinces examined, as compared to that in Hungary, pointing out any differences;
- The author analyses the legislative background of the transition between and the changing of schools in Saxony and Bavaria compared to the relevant Hungarian legislation;
- In reflection of statistical figures, the author examines how many students were able to take the opportunity of changing schools;
- Based on information obtained from a questionnaire, the author analyses the experiences and opinions of students regarding the tresspassibility of the education system from the aspect as to what extent everyday practices correlate with options provided by the relevant legislation;
- Analysed interviews with students and teachers present the reasons for and experience gained from changing schools from a practical point of view;
- The results obtained from the research throw a spotlight on whether or not the possibility of changing schools positively influences the development of students' careers in the examined provinces.

3. Research Methodology

The selected topic requires the comparative pedagogical approach, a method used both in the empiric and the theoretical branches of educational research. This approach draws conclusions about the development of education systems of certain countries or regions based on international comparisons. The comparative pedagogical approach involves two basic methods of which (Kárpáti

2002) the present research applies the systematic approach, i.e. focuses on each partial problem (tresspassibility) of the education system. The comparative examination aims at two provinces of Germany (Bavaria and Saxony), as well as at Hungary.

During the examination of the tresspassibility within the education system, the author selected the deductive, analytic research strategy since this method serves the analysis of topics in the fields of law, public education policy and comparative pedagogy (Szabolcs 2001). The author followed the logical steps of the process of research work of analytic nature: searching for resources, review of resources, interpretation of resources than composition of generalizations and reasonable correlations. During research the author was interpreting concepts in pedagogy, analysed texts of laws and legal provisions (as resources) and conducted a comparative analysis not only with regard to pedagogical phenomena (tresspassibility) but also to in geographical respect since the examinations were carried out within the education systems of partly different geographical-economic entities.

From the point of view of the approach of the problem, the author put the emphasis on the analysis of documents since this method is suitable for collection of data and the foundation and drawing of conclusions regarding a certain education system or subsystem and the functioning thereof as well as provides the opportunity of comparisons with other international models (Nádasi 2000). The author was aiming at applying several different methods. Thus, in the present research, the author combined the approach of analysis of documents with that of interviewing; this is a well-established solution widely used within the scope of empiric methods. Interviewing proved to be an efficient research method since it was suitable to detect individuals' opinions, attitudes, experiences and motivations. Individual interviewing was conducted in two ways: in written (questionnaires) and oral forms, the latter by means of semi-structured interviews. The main strength of the latter method lay in the fact that there was a personal interactive relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, which positively influenced the depth and content of the interviews. From methodological point of view, the research applied the qualitative approach: it did not aim at quantification but at the presentation of correlations behind the data. The application of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews vignette the picture reflected in the statistic figures. The questionnaires contained closed-ended and open-ended questions and the answers were summarized in contingency tables.

4. Research Questions

The author's research examined the tresspassibility between secondary schools and the possibilities for the realisation of equal opportunities/ inclusion in correlation thereof. The subject of the research was the structure of secondary education and the possibility of changing between the different school types in Hungary, Bavaria and Saxony. Besides the review of international and Hungarian research history, the author deemed the presentation of European models of secondary education as reasonable. The author was aiming at identifying the connecting points between the Bavarian, Saxon and Hungarian education systems as well as between the education system and the legal regulations. Based upon consequences drawn from theory, the author was searching for answers to the questions below:

1. *Thus the legal background support the selection and the opportunity for completion of the school type appropriate for each student?*

The issue of equal opportunities / inclusion is relevant from the point of view of the research topic and with regard to the progress within the education system. The German education system – and that of the provinces under review- belongs, at first sight, to the group of early selecting school systems since it makes students face a decision regarding school type selection at an early stage (after the 4th form). In order to compensate this hazard, the education policy integrated the tresspassibility in to the system (Szebenyi 1997). This means that the educational policy provides the opportunity of tresspassibility at lower – intermediate level (5th to 8th forms) as well as after the completion of the 10th form, when there is another possibility to proceed to the upper-intermediate level. Based on this, the author tried to answer the question whether or not

2. *the presence of adequate legal regulations in the Bavarian and Saxon education systems provides for equal opportunities6 inclusion in the field of students' further progress.*

Based on the results of two years of empiric research, the author tries to answer the question and makes comparisons regarding Hungary, Bavaria and Saxony. The issue examined also relates to the basic research topic of the author's how the possibility of tresspassibility affects on students' school careers from a practical point of view. This topic was then broken down to further questions (3, 4 and 5). The author assumes that the completion of the appropriate school type is decisive from the point of view of students' success in the labour market. Based on her observations, the author reckons that the possibility of changing schools positively affects the realisation the goals in the individuals' later lives.

3. *How do students judge the possibility of changing schools; do they regard it as a positive factor within the education system?*

The possibility of changing schools is available to students so they do not regard the decision made after primary school as final. In consequence, they have the chance of conducting studies appropriate to the improvement of their personalities and performance during their secondary education.

3. Do students tend to change for institutions providing a lower or a higher level of education during their school careers?

After primary school, the majority of students tend to continue their studies in institutions providing a higher qualification; they do so primarily upon their parents' pressure. That will bring about the consequence of those not being able to cope with the expectations changing for a school type more suitable to their diligence and abilities.

4. Does the tresspassibility within the school system support students in obtaining their matura examination?

Most students imagine themselves in a profession requiring a college or university degree; an inevitable pre-condition to such a profession is a successful matura examination. It has two forms in the German education system: the general matura examination and the so-called special matura examination, which is "easier" to obtain. In Hungary, there is a standard matura examination.

5. Can we talk about well established tresspassibility in the Hungarian secondary education system, as compared to its Bavarian or Saxon counterparts?

The Hungarian education system seems to be integrative since the long first cycle (8 years) keeps students together for a long time. At the same time, the inter-school tresspassibility has no established and detailed legal regulations but occurs in an ad hoc manner. Provisions in the educational laws are permissive, leaving the decision up to institutions, so great anomalies are experienced among different institutions.

5. Summary of Results

Based upon Bavarian and Saxon examples, the research examined the structure of secondary education and the possibility of changing between different school types in Germany as compared to the characteristics of tresspassibility in Hungary. On the bases of the examination results, it can be concluded that the tresspassibility of the education system can be described by the smoothness of changing schools and the possibility of obtaining the highest qualification achievable in public

education. The research assumed that the inter-school tresspassibility provides inclusion in the field of students' progress.

1.

The analysis of relevant laws proved that legal regulations in force for the education systems in Bavaria and Saxony supports the tresspassibility within the education system, and firm conditions make the opportunities hidden in changing schools clear and straightforward for users. The German education system forces children to select schools at an early stage, after completing the 4th form. However, thanks to tresspassibility provided by established law, the horizontal openness and organisational flexibility are achieved, which is accompanied by harmonised regulation of curricular requirements. The educational laws in Bavaria and Saxony broadens the individual's possibilities of decision-making and choice regarding the issue of absolving the given school type.

2.

The author examined the problem in the respect of the extent to which the accessibility to different educational contents is provided to individual students and how the availability of different educational contents is possible if the individual's needs have changed. Intentions to change can be caused by factors related to progress of studies or personal reasons. Owing to the structure of the Bavarian and Saxon education systems, students face the issue of school type selection at an early stage but this early selection does not hinder movements of horizontal direction. There are no exclusion forces and obstructions to mobility (Varga 2006) because it is possible to change the educational progress in the examined education systems. This is primarily provided for by the supportive legislative basis. The practical realisation of school changes are confirmed by statistical figures, the questionnaires and the interviews as well.

3.

The examination by questionnaires conducted in Bavaria and Saxony proves that students regard inter-school tresspassibility as a positive opportunity to be taken. This is confirmed by the data published by Bellenberg (2012) as well since, among all German provinces, it is Bavaria where the most students take the opportunity of changing schools. Students regard tresspassibility as a strength of the education system but, as they see, changes for institutions providing higher qualifications are not massive. The results obtained from Saxony vignette the picture as well. Here, fewer students change schools than in Bavaria. The reason for this is the bi-divisionality ("Zweiggliedrigkeit") of the education system, which is functioning as a selection screening. According to statistics, it is rather downward school changes that occur in this province. The reason for this is

that parents tend to send their less hard-working children to secondary grammar schools after primary school because they think it is easier to change downwards than upwards. On the other hand, some parents consider their children being forced to a secondary modern school after primary school as a stigmatization so they will do everything to avoid this. Individuals concerned are aware of the possibilities provided by law and used them as necessary.

4.

The presumption is correct for the Saxon education system but not for its Bavarian counterpart. It has turned out that the tri-divisional (dreigliedrig) education system having seemed more selective is in fact less selective than the bi-divisional (zweigliedrig) one. The education system in Bavaria is tri-divisional; after primary school, students can choose between three institutions providing general training (Mittelschule, Realschule, and Gymnasium). Bavaria is the only province in Germany where corrections are rather directed towards institutions providing higher qualifications. One reason is that parents do not insist on their children continuing their studies in a secondary grammar school after primary school. The society does not stigmatize students who continue their studies at a "Realschule" or a "Mittelschule". After the completion of these school types, students also have the practical possibility to obtain the general matura or the special matura certificate later on. Students can obtain the so-called special matura certificate after the completion of the 10th form of the secondary modern school. Having completed the 10th form, students have to pass an examination of their general knowledge sort of general examination (mittlere Reife), based on which they can continue their studies. The education system in Saxony is bi-divisional because two institutions providing general training (Gymnasium, Mittelschule/Oberschule) co-exist after primary school. After primary school, most students wish to continue their studies in a secondary grammar school. The results of the interviews show that most parents regard their children not having been admitted to a secondary grammar school after the 4th form of the primary school as a loss of prestige. Parents whose children do not get an offer for admission to a secondary grammar school in the first instance try to use every subsequent opportunity to arrange a post in a grammar school for their children. As a result, more children receive an offer for admission to a secondary grammar school than can meet the requirements of such schools. Thus students tend to change for institution types providing a lower qualification in higher forms. The surveys conducted by the author do not support these statistical figures. On the contrary, interviews made with parents confirmed these figures, according to which moving in downward direction between school types is typical on intermediate level. For those few wishing to progress in the education system after obtaining their

qualification in the 10th for, there is a way to obtain the matura certificate in the evening grammar school, although this adds another year to the usual length of studies.

5.

The analysed answers show the correlations between the tresspassibility within the education system and the obtainment of the matura certificate. The experience gained from the research conducted in Bavaria show that students do not suffer a disadvantage regarding the obtainment of the matura certificate if they do not set the aim of achieving this directly after primary school. Students' answers show that it is mainly the late-maturing ones (Spätzünder) that can make good use of the advantages provided by tresspassibility. By changing for an institution providing a higher qualification (in most cases it is a secondary modern school), students have the possibility to obtain a matura certificate and go to tertiary education. A disadvantage of changing schools in such a way is that it usually adds another year to one's course of studies. In Saxony, the tresspassibility of the education system is rather a theoretical help in the obtainment of the matura certificate. In practice, however, statistics show that much fewer students are aiming to achieve this than in Bavaria. Apparently, the fact that more than one fourth of the secondary school students interviewed by the author have already considered the possibility of obtaining the matura certificate contradicts this statement.

6.

The Hungarian school system seems to be integrative since 8-form primary schools keep students together at the lower –intermediate level as well and there are no differences in the curriculum, i.e. tresspassibility is provided for. At the same time no flexible tresspassibility is in place either at the low-intermediate or the upper-intermediate level when we consider 6-form or 8-form secondary grammar schools. The fact that there is a demand for corrections in students' school careers in Hungary was proven by the interviews. The low number of samples applied by the author is not adequate for the determination of general this demand is in Hungary. However references can be made to facts in the reference literature, which estimate the rate of those changing educational programs in the first forms of secondary education to be as high as 10 per cent (Imre-Györgyi 2006). It is also a problem that the conditions for changing schools are unknown to students; decisions are made by school principals [section (1), par. 50, Act No.CXC Of 2011 on National Public Education and section (3), par. 22, Act. No. CLXXVII of 2011 on Vocational Training] but it is not clear where and on what conditions any changing of schools can take place. It can be concluded that no well-established but only obligate tresspassibility is in place in the Hungarian secondary school system. The legal regulations currently in force (Act No.CXC Of 2011 on National Public Education) states the principle of tresspassibility but no exact measures are provided as for the execution, and the possibility of

changing between the co-existing school types is not adequately elaborated. At the lower intermediate level, tresspassibility is a general practice since Hungarian students absolve these forms within the framework of primary schools. As for 8-form or 6-form secondary grammar schools, however tresspassibility does not clearly work. At the upper intermediate level, there is tresspassibility, between schools since the majority of institutions have an acceptive attitude (Einhorn 2013). At the same time, tresspassibility incurs serious problems as well since, contrary to theoretical tresspassibility, there are major differences between the practices of individual institutions, as proven by the interviews conducted by the author. These differences are difficult to describe clearly- the author's interviewees could not grasp them, either. The willingness of acceptance of a particular institution is defined by the fact how much it is being forced to increase the headcount of its students. Due to the nature of the financing scheme, no school is happy to reject a student even if the education programmes thus far completed by such student do not match. This results in the fact of obligate tresspassibility i.e. the institution is forced to resolve the issue in an individual manner and at its own discretion because there is no clearly defined procedure for changing schools. In Hungary the regulation of inter-school tresspassibility has no tradition. If a particular institution is interested in increasing the headcount of its students, it makes all efforts to eliminate every obstruction from the way of posterior admission of students. If necessary, school organize individual study groups and differential examinations- school managements show flexibility in handling all difficulties originating from the completion of different programmes.

6. Possible directions of further research

One motivation of the author for conducting the research was to draw the attention on the examination of the tresspassibility of the school system in order to arise scientific interest to focus on the issue. It would be useful if educational legislation would adequately regulate the issue of changing schools, which would result in predictable legal practices. In relation hereto, a clear validation of educational contents acquired would also be necessary because it would enable students to alter their school careers. During such alterations, they could balance out any differences brought from their social environments. In this way, they would have the opportunity to fulfil their planned life goals. In order to clarify and discuss the topic in a detailed manner in Hungary further research and representative surveys would be necessary, which could provide all information required for the elaboration of relevant laws and the delivery of corrective measures.

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