



State Official – Public Official – Pedagogic Official Development of the Teaching Profession in Austria, France and Germany in the 18th Century

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Abstract

What fundamental factors make up the teaching profession? This is a question that is currently at the heart of various pedagogic and also public debates. This work will look at the role, duty and ethics of the teaching profession – subjects that are widely discussed today – in terms of their historical contexts. The focus will be on the 18th century, which was the period when the modern teaching profession began to develop in Europe. With this, three lines of development will be reconstructed, which depict the profession as a state department, a public service and an appointee of pedagogic service; three perspectives that have shaped the profession in a dynamic way to this very day.

Keywords: Teacher, Modernization, 18th century, France, Austria, Germany

1. Introduction

Various modernization processes – with political, cultural, economic, technical and scientific characteristics – led to the first developments of a public schooling system in Europe in the late 17th and 18th century. At this time, the teaching profession took on the shape that it is still based on today.

Just as clearly as the activities and the institutionalized scope of the teaching profession seem to be represented at first glance, the understanding of these varies just as much within pedagogics. While other professions not only develop on the basis of modernization, but rather also take their understanding and their profile from it, pedagogic discussions struggle with such modernization trends that first created the teaching profession. Throughout these theoretical and practical pedagogical discussions, the question always remains unanswered as to what actually constitutes the modern teaching profession. Invariably, a well-known trichotomy is then called upon, and representatives of the practice-orientated pedagogics ask, for example “Is teaching an art, a trade or a science?” (Dreyer 2005). And those in the field of theoretical pedagogics question whether it is a “job or vocation?” (Scheunpflug 1999) and place the teaching profession in a conflicting area of institution, public domain and pedagogical assignment (Heitger 1975 and 1979). The teaching profession emerges as a tension-filled trichotomy, and “professionalization and professional ethics” (Schach 1987) is debated in three perspectives:

- “technical-pragmatic” and “functional” (ibid., p. 44 et seqq.),
- “geared towards society” and “political” (ibid., p. 36 et seqq. and p. 113 et seqq.) and
- “religious” and “idealistic” (ibid., p. 80 et seqq. and 94 et seqq.).

These three perspectives have not only continually developed the debates of the What/Where/Why etc. of the teaching profession throughout history; they also have a relatively clear historical origin. The professionalization of teaching a) takes place within the scope of an administrative state, and the teaching profession develops and places itself b) within the scope and with regard to the public domain and its demands and procedures. ‘Education and teaching as a profession’ thus is unthinkable without system formation and organization, as well as without regard for the problems posed by a public-social context. The state and public development factors are thereby always accompanied by a third perspective. Ever since the teaching profession has existed in an institutionalized form, i.e. for more than 200 years,

public institutionalized education in traditional pedagogics has been a problem. A third well-established, stable perspective on the teaching profession continually plays a role, a perspective that is based on an original, genuine pedagogical assignment and the related value of “*being a teacher*”.

This work shall explore the early stages of the three understandings of the modern teaching profession. For the reconstruction of perspective 1: an explicit administrative program, and for that of perspective 2: a program designed explicitly in and for the public domain we will go back to the start of professionalization in the 18th century. The analysis will look at the institutionalization of the modern teaching profession in “Enlightened Absolutism” Austria, and will then look at a democratic liberal school organizational program in France of the same era, which sees the teaching profession to be *in and for* the public domain. Perspective 3 will be exemplified through pedagogical theory positions, in which, aside from structural, administrative and bureaucratic condition structures, and through skeptical distancing and differential assumptions relating to problems of society and public expectations, the view of the teaching profession is created.

2. Teachers as ‘public service workers’ in enlightened absolutism: A profession with functional competency

In the multi-ethnic state of Austria in the late 18th century, a profound structural change occurred, which is commonly seen as the original point at which the modern Austrian state and the civil society were formed. Internal cultural tensions along with huge structural and financial problems led to an administrative reform, with which virtually all social and economic areas were placed under central control, so that they could be managed and controlled. So it was not “the philosophy” that called for reform, but rather very practical constellations and problems identified a very specific type of modernization as existential necessity. Thus, the Danube Monarchy was transformed into a modern state of administration, law and culture, from *above*, as a reform of the authorities.

The education system played an important role in all this. In the large Theresian reform it was not just the main goal, it was also the medium. On the one hand, in a very practical way, this type of reorganization simply requires well-educated people, the type of person that had not existed in the previous feudal and agrarian state, and above all the large number of public servants who were now needed for the administrative state would need to be educated. On the other hand, it was about educating a “new state awareness”; School became a medium for “guaranteeing the spiritual basis or requirement for the gradual transition from the pre-modern to modern state and society order” (Brezinka 2000, p. 3). The goal of a specific “*Austrian national education*” was “a moral and useful citizen, who is passionately linked to his homeland and the dynasty” (ibid. 2000, p. 8 et seqq.).

An agent was appointed for the extensive reform of the elementary education system: Johann Ignaz von Felbiger. His “General school regulation for the German standard, main and trivial schools in the whole of the Imperial-Royal ancestral countries” from 1774 formed the basis for a standard regulation of the schooling system. Felbiger’s school reform – and that is the interesting thing here – affected teachers. “A key point in his considerations was that only better trained and uniformly acting teachers could improve schooling” (Engelbrecht 1984, p. 106). The ‘general schooling system’ therefore sets standards for teachers in elementary schools and institutionalized teacher training at so-called normal schools. The “characteristics and duties of ‘righteous teachers’ were defined, the elements that were to be taught, the methods that were to be used, maintaining catalogues for inspections” etc. were made binding (ibid.).

In Felbiger’s measures catalogue that relates to this, the direction of the teacher’s profession is depicted in the administrative political system. It is broken down into “properties, sciences and recognition of honest school people” (Felbiger 1780/1958). The “properties” relate to professional knowledge and composure, when it is first requested that the teacher makes the learning material “understandable and comprehensible” and that it “(must) be expertly ascertained, whether they (the pupils) have understood it correctly and whether they can actually make use of the newly acquired knowledge” (ibid., p. 33 et seqq.). The virtue catalogue, which is only mentioned after such profession-related directives, focuses – in addition to “being an honest Christian”, a virtue that naturally applied for the Catholic Felbiger – on “effort”, “accuracy”, “punctuality”, “frugality”, “patience” etc. (ibid. p. 36 et seqq.).

Felbiger’s measures are aimed fully and entirely on the contemporary nation building, which was to bring together ‘state’ and ‘religion’, in the sense “that you couldn’t be a good Christian without being a good citizen” (Felbiger n.d., cited in Krömer 1966, p. 59): “Children (should) in schools and by school teachers... be taught skills..., made into useful assets for the state, sensible people, honest Christians, i.e. become part of temporal and everlasting blessedness” (ibid. p. 35; for more extensive comments on the integration of secular and sacred aspects cf. Binder 2009). In the very sense of the aforementioned enlightened absolutism, Felbiger is also convinced of a specific enlightenment education to reason, as it is supposed to hold together the new state and community structure. For him “without question... the moral improvement depends on the tuition that the young experience in the first use of their *reason*” (Felbiger 1762, cited in Lambrecht 2004, p. 201). “First and foremost in teaching... the ultimate goal should be... enlightenment of the mind” (Felbiger 1776, in Weiß 1904, p. 152).

The “properties ... of honest school people” are followed by the “sciences of virtuous school masters” (ibid., p. 47), and

the enlightened and informative, profane way of thinking mentioned, can also be seen in Felbiger's image of the school master. School masters must therefore first and foremost understand the main object and aim of the lessons. This is followed by notes on how you can "make pupils think in the right way", "how you can get them used to working" (ibid., p. 49), what it "means, to really understand something" (ibid., p. 51) etc. "Clarity" and "order" were indispensable (ibid., p. 53) in teaching, while at the same time "make learning easy and appealing" (ibid., p. 54). All this is not just preamble: his work goes on to provide specific behavior guidelines, for example "teaching through questions" (ibid., p. 62) or the famous "alphabet method" for learning to write (ibid., p. 68 et seq.).

The "third main section" talks about "illustrating a school master in his position". From a management point of view it is, among other things, clearly specified "what a school master should do before school" (ibid., p. 77) and what he should "do during school" (ibid., p. 79) etc. An account should be kept of all activities to guarantee an external inspection.

From this brief outline it is clear that the teacher's profession is strictly defined as a "state position" and is defined according to professional standards. The teaching profession is thus distinguished in this administrative perspective through

- 1 specialist knowledge about school,
- 2 accordingly chosen pedagogical procedures, which above all focus on skills and experience;
- 3 reliability in various regards and accountability (transparency).

It was possible to train and manage teachers in the same way throughout the whole country. Elementary schools and elementary education were to be stabilized and effective management made this possible. This "Order through ordinance" was successful: not only did the "teachers who were in the focus of the school renewal experience (a) considerable revaluation", the "quality of the lesson was also able to be improved, because teaching and education was designed according to standardized, useable methods" (Engelbrecht 1984, p. 116). The "organizational implementation in the Habsburg multi-ethnic state was a mighty cultural deed with effects that stretched beyond its limits" (Brezinka 2000, p. 10). Within a few years, a "'uniformity' and institutionalized level existed, which was also meaningful for the whole of Europe and set an example" (Lambrecht 2006, p. 600).

3. Teaching as a service *in* and *for* the public domain in the French Enlightenment. A profession with a public mandate

Let's move from late 18th century Austria to the same time period in France, to look at a school program that was designed against the backdrop of the French Revolution and which is said to "contain equal shares of regulatory principles of modern school organizations and 'education planning'" (Schepp 1966, p. 7). This refers to Marie-Jean-Antoine Condorcet's work "General organization of the public school system" from 1792. Condorcet's reorganization of the then public, standard and well-planned schooling system was to help to "finally show the world a nation, in which freedom and equality for all is actually a positive reality, which they are pleased about and the value of which they understand" (Condorcet 1792/1966, p. 58). "In Condorcet's work, the school political and school pedagogical ideas of the French, and furthermore the European Enlightenment are composed" (Schepp 1966, p. 8); in this, enlightenment and state would programmatically be brought together under consideration of modern democracy.

At the center of Condorcet's work is the general volition of the intelligent public that discusses all problems openly. Not individual authorities, not the power of disposal of an administrative state, but rather the public domain of free citizens with equal rights including all their specific rational negotiation processes was to be the authority that would deal with all issues of common welfare. Not only is this the basis for all considerations of the education system, the education system also *serves* this, as it is to prepare citizens for participating in such a contractualized society. Through the corresponding democratized and democratizing education, finally the new "democratic sovereign" in the form of the citizens was to be created.

Education is public in every regard: it is geared towards the openness of free and equal citizens, and above all to serving these, which according to Condorcet in particular was to be achieved through spreading knowledge. The public administration and spreading of knowledge was to lead to a participation (opportunity) of everyone in all public needs (including women, slaves and Jews for example). "We do not want", wrote Condorcet, "that even a single person in the whole Empire can say: the law assigns me full equal rights, but I am not given the means to know what these are" (ibid., p. 65).

This also means that the teaching profession positioned itself as a key profession *for* and *in* the public domain. The public adopts the part of the rationally reasoned 'instruction publique'. Condorcet planned, for example, from a development and a national educational perspective, that in "public conferences" of teachers, "which all citizens can attend", there is the opportunity, "to fully develop the principles and rules of morality and to specify the part of the national law..., the ignorance of which must stop a citizen from knowing and using his rights" (ibid., p. 29; p. 24). Also

“parents will be witnesses of the education their children receive”; this way at the same time “the young people would to some extent be exposed to the eyes of the public and... would learn early on to speak confidently, with ease and with manners...” (ibid., p. 45). “The elementary educational books” then “shall be chosen through a competition that all citizens can take part in, all those who would like to add something to public education...” (ibid., p. 56), the “public force should determine the books that it considers right for learning...” (ibid., p. 57). Knowledge of the profession, its contents and how it emerged were not allowed to be virulently separated from public control, this way the influence of individual people – teachers, inspectors etc. – on the whole teaching system was not to fall victim to the “spirit of imperiousness” and “personally-orientated world view” and “market-crier teaching” (ibid., p. 71; p. 73). In contrast, Condorcet focused on the “rational sciences”, that were to form the basis of school education, that for its part had to add to the “advance of sciences, philosophy and craftsmanship” (ibid., p. 74).

In almost every regard, the teaching profession is clearly closely connected to the public. Here it can only be understood in public structure conditions. It is characterized by the following:

- 1 It is a profession that is integrated into the learning processes requested by the public.
- 2 That way, justification and control by the public are also central.
- 3 The basis is rational knowledge and corresponding pedagogical procedures are used, which above all focus on knowledge dimensions.

According to Condorcet’s liberal concept of democracy, the public is the most significant guarantor for maintaining order and freedom: “la liberté de la presse, l’usage presque universel de la lecture, la multitude de papiers publics, suffisent pour préserver de ce danger” (Condorcet 1791/92, cited in Osterwalder 1993, p. 157), and as a consequence, teaching content and goals, teaching methods and means as well as the overall teacher behavior are not separate parts of the profession; but rather they are developed and stabilized through public interest and public control.

4. The teaching profession as *being* a teacher. A ‘pedagogical’ activity within and for itself

Until now, we have seen that the professionalization of teaching occurs as the state and society recognize the importance of pedagogical institutions and the corresponding agents. At the same time, throughout history critics voiced their opposition from widely different fields such as Pietism, Jansenism and Philanthropism, from Herbartianism, Progressive Education (deutsche “Reformpädagogik”) and Humanitarian Science Pedagogic (“Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik”) etc. Institutionalized and public education was altogether opposed in favor of an alleged independent, own-law pedagogical activity and the related professional ethics of the teacher. As different as the discussions relating to this and the levels of critic are, they are unified in their idea that in the teaching profession there is always something “more”, whatever its nature. The professional field of the teacher is here not explained together with the education, but rather with the “devotion” (Zillig) to original pedagogics, to that of the “mission” (Diesterweg) in the “spirit of education” (Pestalozzi).

Accordingly, the ethics of the teacher moves to the forefront of the job description and the ‘personality’ becomes the central variable. Pedagogical theories, which in the early 19th century were closely linked to the teaching profession, have the character of professional ethics, such that it can or should no longer be fixed in the perspectives of before. Accordingly, it focuses positions and opinions with regard to duties and tasks. Such theories are then “a type of knowledge for the teacher or the educator..., just as his theory is for any other artist”, wrote Ziller (1876, p. 51). Education theory gives the teacher duties “that he can’t deviate from, without experiencing an internal accusation as if of a better I” (ibid.). Virtues such as the ‘teacher conscience’ offer guidance in terms of a profession that is characterized by ‘educational talent’, ‘educational virtuosity’, ‘gift of education’ and above all ‘teacher personality’. A consequence of this is the creation oaths (e.g. by Salzmann 1806/1960), which – in the same way as when entering into a religious community – the candidates must take on professional ethics.

In contemporary “Theories of the art of teaching” (cf. e.g. Walsemann 1912), such concepts are concentrated to describe being a teacher. They are ahead of respective expert knowledge and didactics, and go beyond it. “Historically, the complex capacity, professional competence of the teacher, ... was not elaborated with the notion of method, because there was the fear of coming close to a mechanism and the educators... were looking more for the spirit of education to be the mechanism for teaching” (Tenorth 1986, p. 293). Nevertheless, the specific professional knowledge and the competencies that were to be used and arranged were sought. The ‘professional wisdom’ for ‘indeterminable work on the undefined’ is retained in various ‘scientific arts’. From Otto Willmann’s “educational work” and Peter Zillig’s “individual education” to Herbart’s “cycle” and then Diesterweg’s conceptional “natural education”, even to the Pedagogical Reform and Humanistic Theories from the start of the 20th century and far beyond, there have been efforts to find methodical equivalence for the *character* of the teacher.

The individual focuses and consequences may differ; but the connecting force is the expressed opposition between education in and for itself and public state education. The teaching profession is thereby classified outside of a public role and a functional state organization. State institutions and public service in this perspective are regarded as a

guarantee for the profession in several ways, but at the same time they thwarted the pedagogical idea and thus constricted the 'actual' pedagogic activity. This ultimately is/remains in this perspective a religious connotation, if it "justifies the objective sense of the profession" and is based on "thoughts of supra-personal determination of the objective professional tasks" (Schach 1987, p. 36.; p. 45). In this regard, "society and the public... must then not continually try to give the education system new tasks regardless of their pedagogical relevance", because this would then lead to a "betrayal of the pedagogical task" itself (Heitger 1979, p. 134; p. 129). And the state organized school would bring about "institutional constriction... for the educator" (Weniger 1929, p. 76): institutional constraint would have an adverse effect on the "free flow of pedagogical ambitions" (Böttcher/Terhart 2004, p. 7).

This perspective of the teaching profession, as it calls for validity for *all* pedagogical practices, is a perspective that is based on the 'pedagogical idea', which tended to be fixed beyond "proven knowledge, factual constriction, professional standards and specialist training" (Combe/Helsper 1996, p. 19).

5. Conclusion

All three historical perspectives helped develop the modern teaching profession and have shaped it to this very day. It is at one point extensively integrated into organizational structures that are answerable to, administered by and controlled by the state, which results in a clear scope of activity. At the same time, it is embedded into different circles of society and discursive practices, and is thereby always bound to central socio-cultural values and consequently to public problems. Niklas Luhmann/Eberhard Schorr and Talcott Parsons said: The teaching profession is integrated into the organization of learning processes required by society, and it is an expression of an increase and imposition of rationalization for handling social concerns. Thus, both aspects are also an attribute of the modern profession, if the handling of a central scope of duties represents a central character for society.

At the same time – and this is where the profession deviates from of such professional descriptions – being a teacher is considered a product of public social and state functional factors, and furthermore of scientific obligations. It is, in fact, much more commonly seen as a *projection*, as something that is against "depersonalization and inadequacy... objectification, in short: against a contra-pedagogical technification of the teaching profession" (Terhart 1996, p. 449). In the third perspective, the teaching profession nevertheless remains formative, which can be seen just as much in public discussions about the teaching profession (cf. Peagitsch 1983) as in numerous theoretical writings, and not least in the self-image of teachers themselves (cf. Scherling 1983; Dege 2007). A professional culture is developed that is supposed to protect the *individualism* of the teacher from leveling and functionalization and instrumentalization of the 'pedagogical idea' of the time. A lot of questions certainly remain unanswered in this, of which one is how such a *vocation* can be institutionalized and taught, not least also how it can be managed and controlled, but above all, whom it should/can benefit.

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