

## Summary

### 1 Initial position

For decades, *Vergleichende Berufsbildungsforschung* [*Comparative Research in Technical and Vocational Education and Training*] - German abbreviation: *VBBF* - eked out a shadowy existence in Germany. Encouraging approaches in the 1960's were not developed any further. Due to the changing general conditions, which could be summarized with the slogans *globalization* and *European integration* and which lead to an intensive international and supranational cooperation, the *VBBF*, which accompanies this change with studies of the conditions, processes, and consequences of the acquisition of qualifications and their general settings (e.g. culture, society, politics, history, economy), has again been attracting more attention during the past few years. A quickly increasing need for research is noticeable.

When analyzing selected results of the research within *VBBF*, questions arise in particular regarding the research interest, the objects, the theories, as well as the paradigms and methodologies applied. The development of generally accepted standards has previously quite obviously failed in this regard. Renowned researchers of *VBBF*, such as Abel, Czycholl, Lipsmeier, Georg, Frommberger, or Deißinger, have already confirmed ever since the 1960's that there is need for action in order to systematize the research studies and to analyze the theories and methodologies of the *VBBF* and the related social sciences.

The *Vergleichende Erziehungswissenschaft (VE)* [*Comparative educational science*] - and the *Comparative Education (CE)* present themselves as direct *reference disciplines* due to the fact that their primary educational interest in knowledge and the interlinking of general and vocational education form an excellent basis for this purpose. The *CE*, which is especially well-established in the USA and in Great Britain, naturally deals with objects of research referring to the general and vocational education. The ‚first‘ German (comparative) vocational educationists Kerschensteiner and Fischer were also embedded in the *scientific community* of *CE/VE* and participated in its worldwide discourse up to the 1930's.

The researchers of *CE/VE* are able to base on a wide and deep basis of theories and methodologies that has been developed in the course of a frequently controversial dialog lasting for almost two centuries. In spite of this seemingly clear initial position, the results of the research work must be introduced into a scientific community in which a constant discourse on the leading issues of knowledge, the theories, and the methodological approaches takes place which is mostly fruitful and leads further but which, apart from that, was and still is fierce, viz. especially because researchers of other social sciences and arts, such as pedagogy, sociology, psychology, economics, history, or comparative cultural research introduce their concepts as ‚side-intruders‘. This means that the *CE/VE* has been forced to get involved in debates about fundamental academic issues on theory ever since the beginning of 1800. It is therefore not astonishing why *Erwin H. Epstein* as President of the *Comparative and International Education Society* emphasized the „chaotic disorder“ in the relevant methodologies in 1983 and spoke about a „battle-field“ of ideologies which were apparently irreconcilably competing with each other. Thus he found the situation which was typical in the early 1980's. The argument about theories and methods, presently going on within the *VBBF*, is consequently nothing new for the *CE/VE*.

In spite of the fact that the present situation in the German *VBBF* at first glance seems to be so close to that in the *CE/VE* 25 years ago, there is a fundamentally different initial situation. The discourse within the *VBBF* rather seems to be the product of a great uncertainty in basic theory- and method-oriented issues. As opposed to this, the situation within the *CE/VE* is characterized by the fact that controversial debates took place in a continuous discourse. Moreover, the disputants recall the history of the *CE/VE* ever since the ‚first‘ representative Jullien de Paris (around 1800) in the course of this as this basis was and is taken for granted.

Despite the turbulent debates that took place three decades ago and clarified the positions between ‚empiricists‘ and ‚hermeneuts‘, even *CE/VE* cannot present any indisputable results referring to a closed theory of the comparison of educational systems and permitting a direct transfer to the technical and vocational education and training. The fierce discourse on the leading interests and theories of knowledge rather indicates that the theories and methodologies of the international comparison are in an open development process. It does not therefore come as a surprise that there is no standard work containing an overview of the development, the state of theory and methodology, and of important results of the research (Glowka 1997, 55). As early as in 1981, *Kelly/Altbach* (1981, 1) brilliantly commented on this situation by indicating that, in contrast with history, economics, sociology, and psychology, the *CE/VE* neither have discipline-related methods of research at their disposal nor is there any mutual basic knowledge. In spite of this plurality, a ‚minimum standard‘ exists in contrast to the *VBBF*. On the other hand, the non-existing connection to the international standard, criticized by *Czycholl* (1975, 15), still applies to the *VBBF*

today with reference to research interest, theories, paradigms, and methodologies.

With reference to this initial situation and the closeness of the *VBBF* to the *CE/VE*, a study design and a reference framework were developed on the basis of the results of the *CE/VE* and used for analyzing, systematizing, and embedding in historical contexts the results of the *VBBF* in Germany. In this process, fields of research, development periods, theories, paradigms, methods, and methodologies were handled and relationships established with regard to the social sciences. The influence of the social, economic, and political framework on the need of research is also important. As there is no separation into *VBBF* and *CE/VE* in most countries, it is additionally examined why this differentiation was made in Germany and which conclusions are to be drawn for the *VBBF*.

## 2 Phases of development of the *CE/VE*

The analysis of the development of the *CE/VE* was started with a limitation of the field of research based on studies conducted by *Halls*. His systematology, with the *Education abroad* called ‚basic discipline‘ of the *CE/VE* by *Schneider*, was given up in favor of an integrative notion of the *CE/VE* without sub-disciplines backed up by scientific theories. This wide notion of the *CE/VE* may be justified by a worldwide dialog of the scientific community and by the research assignments becoming more complex and differentiated. This argumentation was continued by pleading for an interdisciplinary *VBBF* with *CE/VE* as the leading discipline. Following *Hilker* (1963, 511 ff.), five phases of the *CE/VE* can be described up to date:

1. The stock-taking of relevant educational information and data on national or regional education systems was made in order to obtain the principles and constituent rules for certain regularities (*nomothetic approach*) and, at the same time, to serve as a ‚model‘ for the development of the education system itself (*melioristic approach*). Information was obtained by means of specific ‚commissioned‘ itineraries which were then ‚brought in‘ to each situation. This ‚need‘ came up between the end of the 18th till the middle of the 19th century when *national education systems* were established. The first representative mentioned is *Marc Antoine Jullien de Paris* who combined these purpose-oriented descriptions with a *nomothetic theoretical approach* and, in addition, made fundamental remarks on the establishment of a comparative educational science.
2. This search for the cross-system elements was countered with the analysis of the driving forces and determining factors making up the typical features of national education systems by *Michael Sadler* around 1900 by means of historical and education philosophical studies (*idiographic approach*).
3. Integration of the phases 1 and 2 from the 1920's onward, e.g. by the attempt of an overall analysis of the education systems in the individual countries (*global analysis*) with the core: nature and main focuses of national education systems, education system and pedagogy as the product of national character and the nation as an integrated intellectual whole, historical orientation with mostly genetic, historico-humanistic methods, use of ‚complementary sciences‘ in order to adequately research into the evolution of the education systems in comparative analyses (*evolutionistic approach*). Typical representatives are *Kandel*, *Schneider*, and *Hans*. The first attempt to obtain an empirical quantity of the *evolutionistic approach* of the genesis of national systems and of the transnational comparison was made by *Bereday* who wanted to extract hypotheses on the basis of empirical data and to gain, by means of induction, the ‚world formula‘ of the *CE/VE* which was meant to show the important regularities between society and education system. His followers *Noah* and *Eckstein* left the qualitative basis and set it against the *empirico-quantitative paradigm*. In consequence, the *dispute of paradigms* arose between the metrists and hermeneuts in the 1960's and 1970's.
4. The empirical dimension of the comparison was further developed ever since for pragmatic reasons because the evolutionistic global analyses of education systems marginate important single problems and because their more in-depth handling by means of sociological methods is not provided for. The problem approach, which deals with functions of partial aspects of education systems on the basis of *empirical analyses* by way of comparison, was therefore set up as a deliberate alternative plan.
5. The dichotomy between arts and social sciences has nowadays been resolved in favor of an integrating view. Both notions have their merits but, on the other hand, they are not able to deal with the complex subject of education system as a whole. *Functional analyses* are therefore carried out. The *historical approach* and the *sociological approach* (*empirico-analytic approach*) are used in order to reveal the complex subject. While the methods of the *historical approach* are undisputed, the results nevertheless often not being relevant to practice, there is still need for discussion between the hermeneutic qualitative and the empirical quantitative research approaches. Results of comparative empirical studies, whose research design was developed without any reference to the hermeneutically oriented qualitative social science and to arts, virtually promote the misinterpretation.

This is the reason why present-day researchers who want to include the whole dimension of the complex object of research of education system in the corresponding context use the *empirico-analytical approach* in combination with a humanistic-hermeneutic dimension (*pragmatic approach*) as *multi-level analysis*.

The general *historico-political settings* are a decisive factor for the further development of the *CE/VE*. As a consolidation of the education system was started within the national states during the 19th century, special interest awoke in getting information about the education systems of other countries (*melioristic* interest in knowledge). This need for information prevailing to this very day led to the foundation of *national institutes* and *international scientific societies*. The *CE/VE* could establish itself in individual countries, partly within the framework of courses of studies. The combination of the national interest in research with an international dimension, also as a basis for the discourse with the politics, is in this regard typical of the institutes and chairs.

This constitution was especially promoted or hindered by the general political conditions, e.g. by the two world wars. Since the promotion of the international cooperation was given priority as a conclusion from these terrible events, international organizations were founded, viz. the League of Nations after the First World War and the United Nations after the Second World War. Both formed subsidiary organizations, such as the UNESCO or the ILO. Not only these international agencies but also institutions having the economic promotion as their main task, such as the OECD and the World Bank, or supranational amalgamations, such as the EU, make an important contribution to the development of the *CE/VE* by their need for comparative research. A global network of institutes, scientific societies, and communication platforms, such as journals or magazines, was created. This organizational framework makes intensive international dialogs between researchers and in the transfer with the academic public, as well as international cooperation possible today, and it contributes to the continuing constitutional work of the *CE/VE*. These communication platforms have a special importance in view of disseminating the results. The most convincing results are not noticed if there is no discourse in the *scientific community* on regional, national, and global level, and if its transfer to the education practice fails with no relevant institutes and courses of studies existing to build the framework for the promotion of personal continuity.

### 3 *Interests in knowledge and comparative theories*

The statement commonly made over and over again within the *VBBF* to the effect that „it cannot be compared because it is not the same“ is confronted with the fundamental theoretical principle of science that *scientific interest in knowledge* can be implemented by way of *comparison* as a means of analysis of „something else“. The comparison has a central meaning for the social sciences (Schriewer 2000, 5). Besides this fundamental meaning, there are special trends in individual disciplines which have made the comparison of systems or subsets of these units the central object of their research work. The position that the *VBBF* defines itself on the basis of the method of comparison can therefore not be maintained either. It's rather the objects of research and the research interest that are constituting factors for the *VBBF*. The international and intercultural comparison of general and vocational education systems includes its elements by means of defined and well-founded system categories. The objectives of research directly related to that refer to the categories of the comparison with the *range of results of the research from correspondence to differences*, with many variants inbetween. Research studies which are apparently not comparative in their design, such as idiographic monographs or problem analyses, should be included since they likewise follow this concept as *implicite comparison*. The interest in knowledge of comparative studies, their reference framework in the social reality, their usefulness and scope are methodically presented by means of *tertium comparationis*.

The *CE/VE* as practice-related research provides the public, the actors involved, the education planning and administration, as well as the politics with categorized patterns of interpretation for the structuring of reality, and consequently it prepares solution concepts for pending reforms. The definition of the practical objectives of research is closely connected with the controversial issue as to the extent to which the *CE/VE* could make its *contribution to improving the education system and present measures for the planning of instructions for actions* in practice. This *functionalistic paradigm* was a constituting and dominating element of theories from the very beginning until the 1970's. The *functionalism* itself shows the close correlation between the current research subjects and the general political settings in each case.

The *research practice-oriented paradigms* have been connected with the presented *fundamental theories and paradigms* that refer to a certain concept of the theory of science, e.g. to the positivism, to evolutionary theories, to the function of the experiment in social research, to the induction theory, etc., ever since the constitution of the *CE/VE*. Since the *CE/VE* as integration science receives and adapts both humanistic and sociological theories, the discourse that existed or still exists in the corresponding sciences is just as due to be dealt with in the *CE/VE* and in

the *VBBF*. Several levels are mostly encountered in this regard. If the *melioristic paradigm* is the basis, then further analyses regarding the validity of additional or corresponding theories, such as *borrowing*, *lending*, *best practice*, or generalizing regularities between education system and society must be carried out and, moreover, put in the global context of educational cooperation with the third world and the plausible theory of global system there, with the reference to the *evolutionistic paradigm* then becoming apparent.

The sciences giving the impetus for the four comparative functions brought out are empirically oriented ones, such as economics, sociology, and psychology, in particular regarding the theories of (c) *evolutionistic function* and (d) *quasi-experimental function*, whereas the (a) *idiographic function* and (b) *melioristic function* rather refer to arts, especially to the science of history and the humanistically oriented pedagogy, and their hermeneutic methods: The four functions represent at the same time the phases of development of the *CE/VE*. Whilst the melioristic function can be directly derived from practice-based motivations of comparative research, the three other functions are closely connected with the *scientific theoretical position* assigned to the *VBBF* or to the *CE/VE*. The paradigms and theoretical models likewise represent certain methods of research, such as hermeneutics or metrics.

Even if the interest in knowledge of comparative analyses were only limited to one of *Hörner's functions*, these studies can hardly be carried out in this way. The complexity of the object of research, viz. education and training leads to the combination of functions. The integration into the *multi-level analysis* recommended by *Schriewer* seems to be an appropriate way for it.

The estimation of *Arnove/Altbach/Kelly* regarding the development of the interest in knowledge, the theories and paradigms of the *CE/VE* with the motivating force "change for the better" groups around the melioristic paradigm and can be used as a hypothesis for the development of the *VBBF* in combination with further theories and paradigms.

#### 4 Fields and types of comparative research studies

The theoretical concepts and the methodical implementations are decisive for the relevance of the results of the research in the analyzed *comparative research studies* standardized according to their main focuses. The hypothesis of the *primacy of theory* and the leading issues of knowledge with respect to the methodical decisions was substantiated. Both the hermeneutic and the metric comparative methods are - if only implicitly in part - connected with fundamental leading issues of knowledge.

As concerns the fields and objects of the comparison, there was a differentiation in many respects in the course of the development of the *CE/VE*. While geographic/political units had a determining influence on the fields of the comparison at the beginning, defined units, such as family, regions, or other functional units, such as companies or associations were later turned to, often with reference to special issues within the framework of the *problem approach*. Mostly, these examples already distinguish themselves during the process of establishing and delimiting the fields and objects by the fact that theory and leading issues of knowledge are the determinants for the research design. These interrelations were particularly apparent during the dispute over hermeneutic or sociological paradigms in the 1960's and 1970's.

The turning to special geographic/political units or *problem approaches* finds its expression in the type of the research study. Representatives of the *problem approach* claim over and over again that regional studies (*total approach*) would be pure description following the itineraries. Our study on this does not confirm this hypothesis. The truth is rather that researchers who have taken up this assignment have incorporated the *problem approach* - though not using quantitative methods - in their 'description'.

In order to bring out the philosophies, peculiarities and system structures that stand for a special national, regional or operational stamping of general and vocational education, the factors and development trends that led there have to be examined. This type of comparative study, the *development study*, was dominating up to the sixties. The change of paradigms from arts to social science resulted in the development studies becoming obsolete and the *problem approach* taking their place.

#### 5 Methodologies, methods and interest in knowledge

Methodological questions cannot be separated from those of forming a theory or decision on paradigms. The hypothesis of the *primacy of theory* (1) and of the leading issues of knowledge (2) with respect to the methodical decisions (3) was confirmed. The choice of paradigms (4) must still be added to it. The method (3) is in the interdependent field of tension between (1), (2), and (4). They, in turn, have mutual influence on each other.

The assumption that the method is directly linked as a fourth step after the objective of research in combination

with the interest in knowledge for a theory and the paradigm that influences everything, is often not compatible with the research reality. The study conducted by Rust i.a. (1999) or the assessment by Nohlen (1994) for the political science, likewise an integration science with open methodical concepts, reach the conclusion that researchers ‚care‘ little about theory- and paradigm-related principles in their studies and that they only sporadically ‚divulge‘ any methodical concepts, paradigms, theories, and research interest. Nothing is mostly stated in this respect. It seems that there is only *little* interest in making theory- and methodology-oriented plans and that it's more popular to design the studies ‚intuitively‘.

On the other hand, these interdependences between (1)-(4) appear in their mutual dependence in a well-ordered - partly also sound - connection in the *methodologies* of Hilker, Bereday, Robinsohn, Holmes, Röhrs, and Garrido. The decisions on (1)-(4) are directly substantiated, or they may be indirectly gathered from the methodologies and from the additional practice-related examples. These *methodologies* express a special phase of development, a certain epoch of the *CE/VE*, Bereday for example stands for the *evolutionistic paradigm*, for the inductive method, the nomothesy and qualitative methods of the data collection in the framework of a *total analysis*. Robinsohn is a typical representative of the *sociological paradigm* with pluralism of methods in the data collection, the intercultural comparison as *total analysis* or *problem approach*, with the intention of putting these results in defined correlations and regularities with regard to each other (integration theory) in order to thus gain knowledge of possible development trends and the educational planning.

#### 6 *VBBF as delimitation with regard to the CE/VE?*

The hypothesis that the *VBBF* would have independent roots with regard to the *CE/VE* and that the basic development would be characterized by a separation with regard to the *CE/VE*, is mainly based on the assessments of Lipsmeier (1969a) and Dörschel (1960/1975<sup>4</sup>), and on the more recent studies conducted by Münch, Greinert or Georg, as well as on current comparisons of technical and vocational education and training.

The position of Abel, who repeatedly established connections between the *VBP* (*Vergleichende Berufspädagogik*) [Comparative vocational education] as core of the *VBBF* and the *CE/VE*, appeared to be a non-representative exception. On the other hand, there were indications that Fischer and Kerschensteiner would do their research work by way of international comparisons without only referring to the technical and vocational education and training. This constellation was confirmed. While Kerschensteiner made inquiries in the neighboring countries when planning the further educational school system in Munich according to the logic of the melioristic function of comparison in order to get ideas for the accomplishment of his assignment, Fischer participated in the international discourse of the *CE* just being constituted by bringing out the factors and motivating forces that made up the particular, the cultural characteristic of the German general and vocational education in the meaning of the theories set up by Kandel and Schneider in the article on the German educational system for the Educational Yearbook 1929 published by Kandel. He thus follows his essay „Die kulturellen Grundlagen der Erziehung“ [The cultural bases of education] (1925), described as one of the first basic contributions to the theory of the *CE/VE*. In their retrospective analyses, Flitner and Röhrs name the reform pedagogy as the main motivating force for the international discourse. Kerschensteiner was one of the most active protagonists. Shortly before his death, he wrote the preface for the new *Internationale Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft* in 1931. The articles in the *IZE* do not indicate any independent *VBBF* with regard to the *CE/VE*.

After the interregnum caused by the National Socialists in the German international *VE*, with the persecution of the democratically minded or racialistically stigmatized researchers, this integral tradition of the *CE/VE* was resumed after the World War Two, strongly supported by the U.S. military government. The ‚old‘ connections between the U.S. American and the German representatives of the *CE/VE*, which had been established by 1933, were very useful in this process. A separation of the *VBBF* was not on the agenda. The results of the comparative research studies were rather used for supporting the reform efforts and for the reconstruction of the general and vocational education system in the western occupation zones, viz. in the Federal Republic of Germany. Especially in the vocational main field, idiographically and melioristically oriented comparative studies in the meaning of the theories set up by Kandel and Schneider were dominating with their results not only referring to the German situation but also being able to give ideas for changes in the technical and vocational education and training in the USA, as was the case with the *Ware report*. Besides these research studies oriented towards the pedagogical theories of comparison, international comparisons with sociological, economic, and psychological backgrounds, were likewise made in the field of technical and vocational education and training without referring to it as a special discipline called *VBBF*.

The foundation of the *Hochschule für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung - HIPF*- (1951) [University for International Educational Research] in Frankfurt a. M., from 1964 onward known under the name of DIPF [German

Institute for International Educational Research], served for the purpose of promoting the empirico-sociological comparative educational research and of acting as a counterpole to the traditional hermeneutically oriented German pedagogy. It was only natural in this connection as well that the technical and vocational education and training was an integral part of the *CE/VE* and of the studies which were internally oriented toward the German educational system. The promotion of the empirical research work was likewise effected by delegating such educational practitioners as *Heinrich Abel* to the University for International Educational Research, *HIPF*. For Abel who, besides conducting studies which were internally oriented toward the German technical and vocational education and training, examined for example the U.S. American conditions, e.g. in the field of Programmed Instruction, in order to gain ideas for the development of the German situation, these research studies of the *VBP* were always a sub-area of the *CE/VE*. As an 'integral' educationist who conducted his first educational studies with Schneider, he took up their theories and concepts and adapted them to the technical and vocational education and training. For example, he gave up the *best practice* argument when examining the Programmed Instruction due to the quite different cultural, economic, etc. general conditions in the USA and Germany. As a motivation for comparisons, Abel often used the theory of technical and vocational education and training and the equivalency of general and vocational education justified by it. He combined the internal and external view in his comparisons - for example the research of the development of occupations referred to the German situation with the theory of the international development in the formalization of informal education within the framework of the trend of job activities becoming occupations.

After the sudden death of Abel, further studies of foreign education systems were conducted or supported by means of publications by his successor to the chair for vocational education theory at the Technical University of Darmstadt, Gustav Grüner - in this case again, the research interest was aimed at the promotion of the equivalency of general and vocational education as with Abel, in this case by the model of double qualification. As a specialized vocational educationist, he no longer continued with the debate about *CE/VE* and, what's more, he was no longer supported in this on the part of the German Institute for International Educational Research, *DIPF*, with which joint publications on the results of research were issued. No efforts were made on either side to further promote, let alone to extend the existing integrative approach.

An essential reason for giving up the debate about the *CE/VE* by the vocational educationists seems to be the fact that the vocational education gained status, which became possible by the turning of the teacher training for vocational schools into a graduate profession, and that there was a delimitation with regard to the general education. In addition, the setting up of courses of studies that tied down capacities, the 'low' staffing level, and the hardly existing integration of elements of the *CE/VE* in the study schemes should be mentioned as possible reasons. It seems as if the *CE/VE* had been simply forgotten although Lipsmeier, a disciple of Abel, establishes relationships now and then but argues more in the sense of a stand-alone *VBP* in this connection. The connection, and the analysis of the *CE/VE* mostly accompanying it, was almost exclusively made by representatives of the economic education, such as Abraham, Dörschel or Pukas, and in the current discussion by Frommberger, Deißinger, Justin, Schütte or Reinisch.

In the period between the seventies till the nineties of the 20th century, it was no longer the solid comparative analysis that dominated in the *VBP* along with the idiographically oriented studies of foreign systems of technical and vocational education and training but the forming of artifacts to systematize vocational education systems in combination with theories on typologies. This became the typical characteristic of the *VBBF* which saw itself more and more as something separated from the *CE/VE*. A pattern of explanation for this development is the tendency toward cutting oneself off and the devotion of one's attention to oneself, likewise with regard to the social sciences in general because typology is widespread there as well, however, as the result of empirical scientific studies and not of speculative formation of artifacts. Solid empirical comparisons met with less response.

Such researchers as Nölker or Schoenfeldt, who continued to plead for the orientation toward the sociologically oriented *CE/VE* and complained about the halt in the development with regard to that within the social sciences, could not assert themselves. An independent *VBBF* developed whose representatives frequently closed their minds to the development trends within the *CE/VE*, or did not register them, as opposed to Kerschensteiner, Fischer, Röhrs, Abel or Blankertz who concentrated their interest on the general and vocational education. Let us only refer to the integration of empirical methods, the intercultural comparison, the problem approach, or the multi-level analysis in this connection.

Not until the last few years, an approach toward the *State of the art* of the *CE/VE* has again been 'coincidentally' taking place - as in the case of Georg - indirectly via the comparative cultural psychology and organizational sociology. This path is typical since scientists from other sociological disciplines are mostly active as comparative 'vocational education' researchers due to the increased need for international comparative research within the technical and vocational education and training, e.g. within the EU or the development cooperation, and due to the low level of staffing of the 'original' vocational educationists. In their original disciplines, comparative research

studies are an assignment which is methodologically included in the *State of the art* of the corresponding discipline and consequently something normal to deal with.

The result will therefore not only be an extended interdisciplinary cooperation in international comparative projects but also ceasing of the state of halt in the *VBBF*, which is still partly characterized by the formation of artifact-like models, in favor of comparative research studies that combine the internal and the external view in the research interest. The international comparison will then represent a theoretical concept in the vocational educational research which is quite ordinarily likewise used for dealing with ‚internal‘, i.e. German problem areas. This would constitute an approach toward the international standard in the sociologically oriented research in TVET in which this field of research is not exclusively claimed by one single discipline. The communication platforms for the documentation of the results of the research and for the promotion of the discourse among the researchers and with the educational practice are essential in view of supporting this process.

With reference to the initial questions, it could be demonstrated that an independent *VBBF*, which is able to stand up against the sociologically oriented *CE/VE*, has not developed up to date, and that this is not to be expected for the future. As concerns the question of the particular feature of the *VBBF*, this is not to be found in the paradigms, theories, methodologies, and methods of comparison, but in the concentration on the field of research, viz. technical and vocational education and training. The interest in knowledge of the comparative vocational education researchers is generated from the field of technical and vocational education and training, nevertheless on the basis of (vocational) education theories or special problem areas. Comparative research studies analyzing the equivalency of general and vocational education therefore still remain an essential research issue today, also on the level of the European Community. Apart from these (vocational) educationally oriented comparisons, which refer to *CE/VE* as reference discipline due to the pedagogical orientation, there are parallel comparative research studies in the field of technical and vocational education and training with sociological, psychological, or economic, etc. orientation, which are embedded in their corresponding disciplines. These disciplines are combined in the field of the *VBBF* in a multi- or interdisciplinary way.

#### 7 Phases of development of the *VBBF*

The attempt to sort the results of the *VBBF* according to phases that would show its scientific theoretical orientation had to fail because the *VBBF* is to be considered even less a monolith than the *CE/VE*. Reference should be made at this point to the representatives of other disciplines, such as economics (research of labor market) or sociology (youth and organizational sociology), who also have research interests in the field of technical and vocational education and training, and who also conduct studies that could be internationally, interculturally, etc. comparative, and thus form a sub-area of the *VBBF*. These projects are not decisive for our attempt to make out phases. As opposed to that, the results obtained in the field of vocational and economic education - *BWP* - especially with the main focus on vocational education - are to the fore.

Making out of phases was likewise not possible because the fundamental question of an independent *VBBF* with the main focus on vocational and economic education, which developed from the basic discipline *BWP*, cannot be answered positively. Contrarily to the opinions of Abraham, Dörschel and Lipsmeier, the existing comparative studies and fundamental theoretically oriented works do not allow these conclusions.

A basic paper oriented toward the theory of science has not been published up to this very day. Let us only refer to the publications in the *CE/VE* by Jullien de Paris, Sadler, Kandel, Schneider, Bereday, Holmes, Noah, etc.. This result was to be expected as the representatives of a ‚stand-alone‘ *VBBF*, which develops from the *BWP*, are only to be found in the German-speaking area. There was never a wide and solid international basis.

The occupation of the ‚first‘ comparative vocational educationists Kerschensteiner and Fischer for the *VBBF* is not possible either because as ‚generalists‘ they combined their scientific interest with all areas of the education system, as is also the case with the representatives of the next generation, such as Abel and Blankertz.

Even the argumentation that the melioristically conditioned inquiries abroad within the technical and vocational education and training (from around 1800 onward) were oriented towards a certain purpose and not ‚aesthetic‘ due to their connection to the economic promotion as opposed to the ‚educational trips‘, which were made for the development of the general school system, no longer applied already at that time because economic development was equally pursued through the establishment and extension of the national education, which was combined with ideas from abroad for the development of the national education systems in Europe and North America. The importance of the population's ability to read and write for the ‚quality‘ of the armed forces should likewise be referred to in this regard in view of the compulsory military service, all of it utilitarian reasons to be taken seriously.

After the turn of the century, between the 19th and the 20th century, the ‚first‘ research studies on technical and

vocational education and training which were intentionally designed to be comparative came into being by scientists, such as Kerschensteiner and Fischer, who were just at home in the vocational as in the general education. According to this logic, even Abel, who adopted the results of the *CE/VE* for the *VBP* all the way till the 1960's, did not stand for the *VBBF* as an independent science that distinguished itself especially by Utilitarianism and relations to economy in comparison with the *CE/VE*. A definite résumé on the phases of development of the *VBBF*, which orientates itself toward the evolution of the *CE/VE*, has therefore hardly been possible so far. The process of finding, which began in the 1960's with the 'emancipation' of the *CE/VE*, is not yet completed, and will no doubt lead back. The discourse on the definition of the position of the *VBBF* which started 'promisingly' with the contributions made by *Czycholl* in the years of 1971 and 1975, and which fizzled out quickly, has not been resumed until today.

## 8 Résumé

The comment by Kelly/Altbach (1981, 1) on the worldwide state of the *CE/VE*, when the pieces were picked up, arranged, and patched up again after the *war of paradigms* in the 1970's - between the hermeneuts and metrists, between the supporters of the *total analysis* and of the *problem approach* -, would be an excellent initial position for the necessary dispute over the contents of research studies in the *VBBF*, with the recollection of the roots in the *CE/VE* and less of the existing methods elaborated in the social sciences.

There is reason for scepticism since although the estimation of Kelly/Altbach also applies to the *VBBF*, the inevitable analysis of the *State of the art* was previously not implemented as a basis of the discourse for the *VBBF* in the same way as it was continuously done in the *CE/VE*. The few current attempts at the theoretical and positional discussion must first prove their continuity. Not until after that - as the experience in the *CE/VE* shows - will it be possible to start a debate about the interest in knowledge, the theories and methods, as well as about the fields of research, which has previously not taken place in the *VBBF* despite the attempts of *Czycholl*. These debates only took place in part within the general vocational and economic education (cf. Beck 1995, 457 ff.; Pätzold 1999a, 124 ff.) without having any considerable effect on the *VBBF*.

One result can nevertheless be recorded as certain after this analysis of the historical development of the *VBBF*, viz. that the supranational historico-political contexts were and still are decisive for the development of the research work and of the discipline. At the moment, the factors increasing the pressure for changes on the national systems of technical and vocational education and training are the political and economic amalgamations, the technical progress, and the social change.

There is a field of research with a vast variety of assignments that should in many cases be handled in interdisciplinary mode for them to be successful due to the mostly complex structures within a research project. This internal view of the *Berufsbildungsforschung - BBF - [Research in TVET]*, that means the concentration on the national perspective and its analysis, will be ever increasingly linked with the external view of the *Vergleichende Berufsbildungsforschung - VBBF - [Comparative research in TVET]* in other countries where similar problem situations exist or where the melioristic gain of knowledge comes more to the fore. The international comparison, the intercultural comparison, and the like are available for this purpose as special methodical instruments. The results of international comparisons and the like likewise support the national interest in knowledge with the external-internal view. It helps to transfer knowledge to the different national levels (macro to micro) from the international and supranational point of view. It is obvious that the working of this field of research calls for difficult and complicated scientific processes by the *leading discipline of vocational and economic education* with the main focuses on *BBF* and *VBBF*. Due to the extraordinarily favorable general conditions prevailing at present for the *VBBF*, it should be assumed, apart from the amount of scepticism, that the adoption of the sociological comparative educational research will make it possible to succeed in achieving a more in-depth mode of working. This work is meant to contribute to achieving that.