

No prestige, no money, no contribution? The German Social Sciences' Didactics and the Omissions of Sociology: What it is all about¹

Katrin Späte

Contents

1. Interdisciplinarity, the "Problem of Integration" and the Educational Values of Sociology
2. Behind the facades of didactics – a brief sketch
3. Sociology and the German Discourse on the Didactics of the Discipline: A Historical Outline
4. Sociology as a Complementary Subject - the value dilemma
5. Conclusion and Desiderata

References

1. Interdisciplinarity, the "Problem of Integration" and the Educational Values of Sociology

The main task of sociology is the scientific observation of all phenomena due to social action. So basic questions of my sociological angle of view concerning the issue "Interdisciplinarity" in Social Sciences' Didactics will be: In which ways was and is sociology integrated in the discourse of Social Sciences' Didactics? Does the phenomenon called the "problem of integration" in the German discourse of didactics really exist? What is the function of the so-called "problem of integration" in the discourse of the scientific community? Is it really a methodological and epistemological problem?

At the present time the analysis of social reality seems to be a division of labour between the disciplines Political Science, Economics and Sociology: Political Science is responsible for analysis and explanation of "politics", Economics for "economy" and Sociology for "society" (cf. Hedtke 2006a). Those topics for which Sociology is seen as responsible seem quite similar to the term "society" used in a rubric headline by the German news magazine Der Spiegel: "the colourful and the odd". In the didactics of the discipline this "division of labour" in analyzing the social world is treated as a "problem of integration" and only interdisciplinarity can solve this problem. While Political Science and Economics are dominating the discourse as "political education" and "economic education", sociology seems to be marginalized (Meuser 1997) or is suffering under a "value dilemma" (Claussen 1997).

I would say – after a long time of research - that civic education/didactics of social science is still interdisciplinary and can't exist in other ways than in interdisciplinary one's because of the objectives of civic education. The first problem is that sociology is invisibly integrated: most of the concepts use sociological topics, sociological studies and sociological theoretical approaches as Bernhard Claussen outlined (Claussen 1997). There is no way to ignore Sociology completely. It's quite the contrary: social sciences like Political Science, Education Science and even Economic education are more and more "sociologized". The main topics in the discourse of civic education and in Education science are genuine sociological topics: the research of poverty, labour division, globalization, ethnic conflicts, emancipation, diversity, tolerance, prejudice, deviant behaviour, violence, citizenship, social movement, live style, gender, family and so on. The problem for the discipline Sociology is that all these topics are researched as well by the other disciplines without referring directly to sociology as science – the "value dilemma" (Claussen) - and by transforming the sociological angle of vision in the frame of reference of their disciplines. The difference between the disciplines regarded is not the object of research – the "social action" - , but the way to reduce the indefinite complexity of social action due to interests of research, frames of references and paradigms of disciplines. Economic and political scientists in the field of social sciences' didactics often reduce the widespread sociological research and theory fancy-free. One well-known example is the topic "unemployment". The "sociological view" is reduced under aspects like "social marginalisation due to unemployment" instead of discussing the class society and questions of social justice. So the students know sociology as a science discussing the feelings of depressed unemployed, their deprivation and questions of prestige instead of thinking and searching about social inequality and social justice. The second problem is that sociologists don't take an active part in the German Social Science Didactics discourse since more than twenty years (cp. below). That's why the first problem exists. So German political scientists cry for "More civic education in Classroom", economists cry for "More Economics in Classroom" and sociologists themselves keep silent: "Sociology did not develop a didactics of its discipline. Even though Sociology is – next to the

¹ I'd like to thank Monika Friedrich for translating major parts of this text into English.

Political and Economic Sciences – one of the related disciplines for political education, and an important part of the political education personnel within and without schools are Sociologists, this has not resulted in the development of “independent” didactical ambitions within Sociology” (Hoppe 1996, 115).² Only a few scientists ask for a more sociologically oriented didactics as does Mechthild Oechsle: “Generally the educational value of sociological knowledge should be examined and approaches of a more sociologically oriented didactics of political education be developed; which then perhaps could be called more adequately social science education” (Oechsle 2000, 71).³

The demands for a Didactics of Sociology, or for a stronger sociological orientation, show a certain discomfort with using predominantly political and economic paradigms in explaining what we are accustomed to call “social reality”. Sociologists look at “society” in others ways than political scientists or economic scientists does: “There are many ways of playing.” (Berger 1963, 17) How could sociology play one more active and by this more visible part in the discourse of civic education and in the teacher training? What might be the educational value? A Task Force of the American Sociological Association (ASA) described in their report “Sociology and General Education” (ASA 2006) the contributions of Sociology in the domains “content” and “learning outcomes”. They define first the particular contribution of the discipline as “Habits of mind”, also known as “sociological imagination” since C. Wright Mills or as “sociological consciousness” as Peter L. Berger has pointed out: “Nevertheless, we would maintain that sociological consciousness predisposes one towards an awareness of worlds other than that of middle-class respectability, an awareness which already carries within itself the seeds of intellectual unrespectability.” (Berger 1963, 46) Second they describe nine domains of learning outcomes: “1. Quantitative Literacy; 2. Knowledge of Society; 3. Multiculturalism/Diversity; 4. Global Awareness and Understanding; 5. Critical Thinking; 6. Civic Engagement; 7. Communication; 8. Moral Reasoning; 9. Collaboration and Teamwork” (ASA 2006, 17ff) Even if these learning outcomes are focused on the contribution of Sociology to General Education they reveal the educational value of teaching sociology in the Social Science Didactics too: “In short, sociology helps to provide students with the intellectual resources that prepare them for civic engagement in whatever walks of life they encounter.” (ASA 2006, 15) By the way this report shows a certain resistance to educational questions of sociological communities. The authors concluded in the report: “The Task Forces urges the sociological community to become more engaged in the discussion and shaping of general education on campus.” (ASA 2006, 42)

I propose, to look behind the facades of didactics in order to find reasons for the status quo of contribution of Sociology in the Social Science Didactics discourse.

2. Behind the facades of didactics – a brief sketch

From my own sociological point of view, didactics itself has to be put into question before concepts were made. What does this mean? Up to now the generally accepted basic didactical question from the view point of the discipline of education is: Who is going to learn what, when, why and how? Understood in this way didactics is until now a discipline legitimizing educational processes steered by a democratic political system. Curricular contents as well as the topics of learning are not arbitrarily specified by tradition or by ideological goals. Instead, they are justified and selected based on scientific insight and then voted on in a politically directed discursive way - more or less directly influenced by lobbyists of groups of industrial companies. So from my sociological point of view this (fivefold) basic question has to be extended by questions like: who determines and why it is determined by whom, who is going to learn what, when, why and how? The meaning of the technical term “didactics of the discipline” itself has to be critically questioned and extended as did the German researcher Rolf Schmiederer in the 1970's (Schmiederer 1971). I will depict some main aspects.

First of all the discourse of didactics itself has to be analyzed as a relationship of power structures embedded in the political-administrative field, economic field, educational field and the scientific field. Social sciences' didactics depends in a restrictive manner on decisions of ministries of education: the curricula for civic/economic education are developed by the ministries. Even if curricula themselves are developed by commissions – the members are teachers (the great majority) and scientists nominated by the ministries or by special agencies - the ministries control the curricula development, the topics, the objectives (cf. Späte 2005a). This means that didactic concepts are successful if they agree to the political interests of the ministry of education, the

² Original: „[...] die Soziologie keine Didaktik ihrer Disziplin entwickelt hat. Soziologie ist zwar neben der Politischen Wissenschaft und den Wirtschaftswissenschaften – eine der Bezugsdisziplinen für den Bereich der politischen Bildung, und Soziologinnen und Soziologen stellen einen nicht unerheblichen Anteil der MitarbeiterInnen in der schulischen und außerschulischen politischen Bildungsarbeit, ohne daß dies allerdings bisher innerhalb der Soziologie zur Entwicklung ‚eigenständiger‘ fachdidaktischer Ambitionen geführt hätte.“ (Hoppe 1996, 115)

³ Original: „Generell wäre nach dem Bildungsgehalt soziologischer Erkenntnisse zu fragen und Ansätze einer stärker soziologisch orientierten Didaktik der politischen Bildung, die dann vielleicht besser und zutreffender sozialwissenschaftliche Bildung genannt werden sollte, zu entwickeln.“ (Oechsle 2000, 71).

government of one's "Land"; with Peter L. Berger's words: "In Western democracies with their ideological emphasis on voluntary compliance with popularly legislated rules, this constant presence of official violence is underemphasized." (Berger 1963, 69) This may explain the success story of economic education in German schools, especially of those "advocates" enhancing entrepreneurship at school (cf. Weber 2002) and shows, at the same time, that the power structures in the scientific discourse of didactics is intertwined with the power structures in the political-administrative field and the economic field.

Second the inner power structures of the scientific discourse have to be examined. It is clear that the discourse in Germany is dominated by different small researcher's networks and associations being in possession of sufficient scientific capital by professional rank who determine which topics are to discuss or to research. Bourdieu concluded in his analysis about the scientific field that it is a „lutte pour le monopole de la compétence spécifique“ between the "dominants" and the "prétendants" (Bourdieu 1976, 89). By the way this is as well one of the reasons why gender mainstreaming isn't institutionalized in the "male stream" of the didactic discourse (cf. Späte 2005b). Students and teachers often have difficulty in finding the essentials of a theoretical approach, because they ignore completely the specifics of the scientific field.

Third, the most important, is the understanding of didactics. There is an indefinitely number of possibilities to reduce the complexity of "world". There are many attempts to determine criteria what the essential for civic education are, but very often researchers forget that is always one single manner to reduce complexity, there is no objective benchmark for didactics. "Didactics" is not more than a term to legitimate the reduction of complexity under the "knife" of different disciplines in order to increase complexity for the students.

And there lays the educational value of sociology either for the teacher training or in school: to reveal the world's complexity (what Luhmann called "contingency") without ignoring that there is reduction of complexity in order to increase complexity, without ignoring power structures, without a certain objective other than understanding and last but not least without producing fear. "Sociology as a form of consciousness" means having mistrust in trust, but no trust in mistrust, like Peter L. Berger recommended (Berger 1963, 30) It means being able to deal with the innumerable intertwined possibilities social action offers while having to choose one of these innumerable possibilities, because, first this is the character of human being, second this is the task of teachers in school: reduce complexity of social action to produce complexity of social action. And it means to see the consequences of this decision.

But why do sociologists keep silent until now though school is the most important institution a state has to offer to its citizens? If there is compulsory education it includes all entitled to attend. It binds a substantial part of the life time and undoubtedly awards life chances. The institution school is also appreciated as a research object of the German Sociology of Education which developed in the Sixties of last century. Since then, it has enjoyed a varying yet quite stable sociological interest. Recently – and in connection with specific problems of the German educational system – the scientific discussion about the importance of the institution school and its contribution to reproducing social inequality was revived. In contrast, there is much less scientific curiosity about what happens in school, and – more precisely – in and through specialized courses. Only analyzing "school" and "education" by looking at the negative relationship between social or ethnic origin – less gender - and educational chances dominates the sociological research interests in such a way, that other perspectives on school and education are either ignored or inter-disciplinarily judged as unimportant. There was no "place" established for the discussion of didactical questions within the discipline itself even though sociologists are until now involved in teacher training for civic and economic education (cf. Händle 2002).

This seems to be an international phenomenon viewing the studies of teaching sociology in the United States (ASA 2006). Even if there are sociology courses at high schools nearly since one hundred years and even it is clear that only some of the graduate students will stay at the universities as researchers, most of them will teach sociology outside, [...] "teaching is thought of and treated as secondary to research" (DeCesare 2003, 77). Michael DeCesare pointed out as reason: "Again, teaching will not bring them prestige, earn them tenure, or win them grants." (DeCesare 2003, 78). So it is maybe due to the inner logic of the scientific field – "publish or perish" - that sociologists don't be keen on school. But this doesn't explain why teaching seems to be more important for the other disciplines. I think another reason may be that sociologists look behind these facades of didactics; maybe the majority of them unconsciously only due to an unspecific discomfort or as a result of "the art of mistrust" like Peter L. Berger described with the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche sociology as "a form of consciousness" (Berger 1963, 30). A short historical outline about Sociology in the German discourse of civic and economic education will show the phenomenon that some important sociologists took an active role in civic education since the beginning of the Sixties in the last century, that there was a great number of sociological research projects in the field of civic education until 1980 and then turned in a

3. Sociology and the German Discourse on the Didactics of the Discipline: A Historical Outline

The introduction of a course of instruction in democratic education occurred in the context of the re-education measures of the American occupation. "The Germans" were supposed to change: from mass murders compliant to dictatorship to democrats respecting human rights. In the beginning, the political educators of the Weimar time presented drafts for a curriculum, meeting the demands for a democratic education. In the early fifties of last century, Theodor Wilhelm, using the pseudonym Friedrich Oetinger, presented a draft for an "education to partnership". It was inspired by a life-world understanding of democracy as presented by the American educator John Dewey, which focussed on imparting the abilities for a life in community (*Gemeinschaft*). This resulted in a subject called "Gemeinschaftskunde" (social studies). Critical voices of the time suspected here a close affinity to the ideology of National Socialism (cf. Gagel 1994, 67).

In 1960 a didactically oriented discussion was initiated by the book "Der politische Unterricht" (The Teaching of Politics) published by a team of authors (Fischer; Hermann; Mahrenholz 1960). This book was published at a time characterized by the beginning of the "assimilation of the past" (Adorno 1960) through the NS-Trials and swastika-scrrawls in Cologne. This initiated a "change in political education" (Gagel 1994, 127) and an increasing interest in "a better and more intensive political education of the young" (Sander 1989, 99). In the following years the teaching of political education in school met a lively sociological research interest of the Frankfurt Research Institute lead by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno. They initiated, on the one hand, research on the "effectiveness of political education" in school teaching. On the other hand they established an "Office of Studies of Political Sociology" designed to promote exchange between American and German scientists in this field. All studies on teaching and on teaching materials (Nitschke 1966; Becker; Herkommer; Bergmann 1967; Teschner 1968) showed that students weren't enabled to recognize societal connections. Instead, biological patterns of explanation were used for societal matters (cf. Teschner 1978, 141). The social scientists pleaded for teaching more sociology which met with Adorno's point of view: "All political education should be centred at last in Auschwitz never to occur again ... For that to happen it had to be turned into Sociology, i.e. into teaching about the societal play of power, which is located behind the surface of political forms" (Adorno 1970, 109)⁴. Even though the studies were used subsequently by engaged political educators and didactics to ask for more courses and to highlight the importance of political education, this had little effect on realizing the demand for more Sociology. In the 1970's of last century, the so called "Critical Theory" reached the concepts of a general didactics and the curricula for teaching politics in the states North-Rhine-Westphalia and Hesse by a pedagogical "detour" through the critical science of education founded by Herwig Blankertz and Wolfgang Klafki. The only Sociologist⁵, who started to systematically study didactics at the end of the 1960's of last century, was Rolf Schmiederer. He not only worked on didactical questions but analyzed the context in which political education took place, too. As programmes of a state institution, this education always had the additional function to stabilize the "status quo": "It would be illusionary to view school and political education as a lever to reform society" (Schmiederer 1971, 26).

In his draft on the educational content of Sociology within political education, Schmiederer used the catchword "Sociological Imagination" coined by C. Wright Mills, and in the 1968's reform years made fruitful for the education of workers by Oskar Negt as "soziologische Phantasie" (cf. Wienold/Bierhoff 2003). For Mills, the value of the "sociological imagination" was to show a path from "private troubles" to "public issues". Understanding "soziologische Phantasie" as "sociological thinking endowed with creative power", Oskar Negt combined it with a clear aim:

"It is the education to a sociological way of thinking with the aim of transferring pre-politically existing forms of class consciousness into class-conscious action that enables the individual to revoke scientific divisions of labour and so introduce structures motivating for action into the chaotic mass of information and the content of the curriculum" (Negt 1971, 27).

So much sociological imagination could hardly be put into the state curricula. Schmiederer was recognizant of the fact that didactics as the answer to questions of what? and why? mainly served to scientifically legitimize state curricula. He accepted the contradictions and became more moderate with each publication. This became highly visible in the early 1970's after vivid controversies around the guidelines for political education to be passed in the states North-Rhine-Westphalia and Hesse. In public discussions, the strong sociological orientation of the curricular contents and the clear connection to the ideas of Critical Theory lead to diagnoses like "class struggle in the classroom". "Social order" was perceived as endangered by this strong sociological orientation. Key terms such as "conflict", "training to resist", "critique" and "power relationships" resulted in vehement rejection. Actors from all segments of society were afraid of a social revolution initiated by indoctrinated students. Later, Schmiederer focussed on student-orientation as the

⁴ Expressed in a conversation with Hellmut Becker.

⁵ Sociologists I call those who have an academic degree and/or who themselves designate their work as „Sociology“.

didactical principle of his work and was criticized for denouncing “demands” as “utopia” and so taming political education by returning to pedagogy (cf. Priester 1981, 153).

Timid approaches to establish political education as the leading science by scientists like Johann Dieckmann and Dieter Bolscho (Dieckmann; Boloscho 1974) or Elke Calliess, Wolfgang Edelstein und Dieter Hopf (Calliess et al. 1974) failed. In the following, there is no engagement anymore by sociologists worth mentioning (cf. Späte 2005a). This “turning away” from questions of political education can be explained with the necessity to differ from social science education on the one hand (Goldschmidt; Händle, 1969) and the widening of research possibilities in the special sociology of education on the other. These research perspectives were and are based on a different meaning of political education in a democracy which, in the sixties of last century, was called the “civil right to education” by Dahrendorf. In present day view the educational practice of political education was nothing but a fig leaf of the political system. Whether or not the turning away from or ignoring of political education in schools by sociologists is related to “academic arrogance” and the downgrading of matters of social studies by “ambitious scientists”, as Stefan Hradil suspects (Hradil 1996, 7) remains open. It can be concluded; however, that the accumulation of scientific capital cannot be combined with *this* perspective on the research setting school, otherwise we had much more research results available.

4. Sociology as a Complementary Subject - the value dilemma

Since the middle of the Seventies of last century, the didactics of teaching was established by creating many professorships at institutes of political science named “didactics of political education”, “didactics of social studies”, “political science and its didactics” etc. Since then, explicitly sociological approaches have been rare. Sociologists don’t contribute any longer in active way, they began to be content to produce knowledge without worrying about the usage. So today, it seems, sociological methods, theoretical approaches and research results related to the development of didactical concepts are used as a “quarry for various constructs” (Claussen 1997) by established actors. This is true especially for research on Political Socialization, for the Sociology of the Young and for the Theory of Society.

Using insights from research on Political Socialization and the Sociology of the Young serves to answer basic questions. Such questions are: whether or not children and young people, as objects of educational intentions, are altogether interested in “political topics”, which, in turn, could give insights into the motivation to learn about political matters. And if so, which political topics are adequate for which age groups. Helmut Schelsky in his famous study “The Sceptical Generation” accorded the young a “deep experience of strangeness without any obligation to cope” as a basic attitude toward politics a public affairs (Schelsky 1963, 352). Making statements on the interest in political matters and on the educatability of children and young people through school education depends on the definition of the political, as Günter C. Behrmann pointed out (Behrmann 1969). He referred to American research results showing that feelings and ideas about political matters are developed already in childhood and early youth (9 to 14 years of age). This means that the family and other social relations outside of school, i.e. peer-groups and the media, play a role. Instead of looking into the forms of life and communication in families and their educational styles as political phenomena, the development of didactical theories was directed toward “bridging” the gap between life-world and “politics”. With this metaphor Tilman Grammes (Grammes 1986) described the “very deep experience of strangeness” diagnosed by Schelsky and so focussed on the didactical challenge of political education in school. The reception of studies from the Sociology of the Young, too, served to diagnose the youths’ opinions. The attitudes, ideas and values of the young are empirically reported continuously. Most likely, the young are a group best observed and so controlled even though the educational and didactical content of the research has to be viewed sceptically: “Teachers do not teach a representative sample of the young, but students and student groups whose opinions and attitudes quite often are not distributed in a representative way” (Behrmann 1986, 241). Thus, a lot of knowledge about anonymous young people is generated, but the concrete life-worlds of the students in the classroom find little consideration. For a short time the life-world approaches of Alfred Schütz or of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann met with some interest. However, they rarely changed the theoretical approaches to the didactics of politics, but are hidden in the development of general didactical principles such as the orientation on the student (Schmiederer, by the way), on everyday life and on agency. This is due to the fact that the contents of the concept of politics had to be changed in order to search for politics in the life-worlds of individuals.

This is the reason why the didactics of the discipline are much more interested in the “theories of societies”. Klaus Roth depicted their function as “handrails through the scrub of social life” (Roth 1997). In the didactical discourse of the discipline Sociology was granted interpreting power since it produces the knowledge about the “system”.

Ulrich Beck’s “risk society” reached a special reception in the didactical discourse of the discipline (cf. Pohl 1997). It was used for selecting leading goals and contents and for determining the

framing conditions of political education. In his dissertation Peter Henkenborg, professor for the didactics of political education at the Dresden Technical University, attributed the term “risk” a high importance for the problem of content selection. As a classificatory category, as a key category for didactics and methods, the term risk could “...organize and collect knowledge about what has changed in present-day society and so could help disclosing the found complexity of problems in society” (Henkenborg 1992, 197). Thus, Beck’s theoretical concept became the “handrail through the scrub of social life”. But at the same time, it endangered the concept of politics which constitutes the supporting framework of didactics: “Risks become the motor for *self-politization* of the modern industrial society – even more: the *term, the place and the media of ‘politics’* are altered by them” (Beck 1986, 300). The de-limiting of the “political” cannot be accepted by a science however, which has the “political” as its main topic. Kerstin Pohl treated the reception of the risk-society with irony in calling it the “Beck-risk for the didactics of politics. In her eyes, such a concept of politics means neglecting the original task of teaching politics, which is the “systematic discussion of politics” (cf. Pohl 1997, 187).

The inflation with diagnoses of our times, such as event-, communication-, information-, multi-option- or knowledge-society, posed the question not only to Armin Pongs, “precisely in what kind of society do we live?” (Pongs 1999). The excessive supply of diagnoses of our times changed the evaluation of just how useful theoretical concepts of society are for outlining a didactics of politics. As a way out of the dilemma of an undeterminable society, a reconsideration of categories of order and selection of political reality was suggested (cf. Henkenborg 1997, 199). In recent discussions once again a model of society: the society of citizens (Bürgergesellschaft), seems to have the potential of knitting approaches to didactics of politics together. This model, fed by different theoretical approaches, ends the feared diffusion of the political by adding to the classical tasks of the ‘responsible citizen’ (German: *mündiger Bürger*) those of a civil society. Thus, in addition, an adequate model is developed for the course of studies in schools: the citizen competent for democracy (cf. Detjen 1999). It is a kind of compromise between a concept of politics which vaguely “connotes with the state” (Nassehi 2003, 133) and one which understands everything as political “that goes beyond the direct private conduct of life” (Nassehi 2003, 134); which itself was understood as a political phenomenon not long ago (the feminist slogan “The private is political”). The perspective of observation, however, stays macro-analytically oriented even within the framework of discussing civil society. Rarely questions are asked concerning the meaning of “the political” from a perspective of the subject and the meaning it has for individuals. The large interest in the citizen and especially in her “engagement” as shown, for example, in the appointing of an official inquiry commission on “civil engagement” by the German government, is fed by the insight that the “potentials of the state and the market” (Zimmer/Nährlich 2000, 9) are exhausted” rather than from efforts to improve democratic participation.

5. Conclusion and Desiderata

In conclusion the interests of the West-German sociologists in civic education turned away since the Eighties of the last century. In this period the scientific discourse of Social Science Didactics was institutionalized by the establishments of chairs, most of them in the Political Science; that’s why the discourse is actually still dominated by this discipline even though the success story of economic education. So sociology became in Germany not a regular school subject like in USA for example. And if there is no school subject (except for two “Länder”), there is no didactics too, even sociologists teach sociology everyday at the universities.

I think, establishing chairs at sociological institutes would be the best precondition to develop further the existent beginnings of participation and to contribute to the didactics of the discipline as well as to the university education of future teachers. A scientific discussion of the “teaching the discipline” would so find a place in the discipline of German Sociology, would get more prestige and would guarantee earning money. Such institutional support and location would offer the possibility to contribute to the Social Sciences’s Didactics – in the beginning by articulating particular interests, later, when a position in the discourse is opened by focusing on a “social science education” (cp. Hedtke 2006b).

In the following I will sketch out some research key areas of my sociological point of view.

a) Research on the field of teacher training in civic education

The first is to establish a university education for teacher-training students oriented basically on their professional needs. That this is not the case yet results not only from a missing engagement of university teachers but also from the structure of teacher training in Germany, which is differentiated in two phases: studies at universities on the one hand measured as insignificant and studies at schools on the other hand measured as very important. The academic studies are underestimated by the students and the professional teacher trainers in the second phase. They see the studies at university as waste of time instead of thinking of it as possibility of own personal building and as possibility of liberal education. Research on this field should help to develop the

learning outcomes for the majors and to show clearly the contribution of academic studies: what does a teacher need for teaching civic education in classrooms? This could and should be the same aims the future teacher does teach to his pupils (cp. Hedtke 2006b). These learning outcomes should be evaluated in order to find those contents and methods able to provide the students with pertinent competencies. In my opinion, the training of teachers in general could be much improved by making the goals of their education a subject of their studies.

b) Research on the field of “civic education” as context of professional action:

There is a need of a sociological analysis of the interdependence between “state”, the political-administrative field” and “political education” (present, past and regionally).

Scientific investigation into production and selection of curricular contents by commissions of the political administrative system seem to me especially important, because it shows in seminar discussions that students of education neither are able to critically evaluate curricula contents nor know about their production. Curricula or other guidelines like standards as documents of the state are understood as administrative orders and so accepted. This is not only true for the students of the discipline but for all teacher training students. The scope which curricula and guidelines always offered (different in different states, though) often remained undetected, either because of indolence or ignorance. These documents, today called “standards of education”, “learning outcomes” and “core curricula”, which determine the kind of knowledge and the competencies to be taught, have to be analyzed during teacher training. Discussing questions like why a certain subject matter should be taught or another, that competency should be developed and not another, which competencies are important altogether, do fit well into the first phase of teacher training while there is no room for them anymore during the second phase.

c) Research on the field of the fundamental functions of didactics

As I have pointed out in the beginning, a different way of looking at didactical questions has to be developed from a sociological point of view. Didactical work in Sociology has to reflect the processes of selecting, of organizing and of justifying the knowledge as well as the conditions for these processes. For this theoretical approaches from the constructive didactics could be used. The discipline has to develop conceptions of Sociology: what are the strengths of west German sociology? Are they maybe identical to the conceptions of American High School Teachers, teaching us that sociologists *think*, that sociology is able “[...] to develop in students greater tolerance, openness, and acceptance of cultural differences”? (cp. DeCesare 2006, 55). This should be empirically proved.

d) Research on the field of the Social Sciences’ Didactics as context of scientific action

A sociological analysis of the discourse of the Social Sciences’ Didactics with regard to Sociology of Knowledge and discourse aspects would help the students to understand better the making of concepts in civic education. Even though they might have little relevance for the teachers’ preparation of classes, since they often are perceived as too scientific and too complicated, they do have indirect effects by being used for materials, for school books and concepts of education permitted by the state. Students often underestimate the meaning of the concepts for their practice in the classroom, because they are not able to perceive their meaning.

e) Research on the contribution of sociology in civic education

It is one thing to list intended learning outcomes and another to prove them empirically. So I only can describe the workable part Sociology could play in Social Science Didactics quoting the work done in the Sixties and the work the ASA Task force recommended:

- Human beings are at liberty in social action; their behaviour is not determined by physical or social conditions, but their behaviour is influenced by social forces: “Students must develop an understanding that the life choices of individuals, circumstances, and challenges are shaped by larger social forces such as social class, race and gender relations, and the corresponding structure of social institutions.” (ASA 2006, 19)

- The process of learning these social forces is called by the ASA Task force as “interplay between macro and microstructures” (ASA 2006, 16), better known as “socialization”: the students should investigate their own socialization; in civic education especially their own civic engagement;

- Power relations in societies are the result of historical processes: to be rich or poor is not a natural phenomenon: “We [sociologists, K.S.] explain why poverty can’t be solely attributed to personal causes and why it is so difficult to eradicate.” (ASA 2006, 16)

To answer such questions and to understand these connections would improve teacher training and didactical practice considerably by producing empirically founded and differentiated knowledge on these fields of activity. This alone is what I intent with this article.

Up to now we know little about the students' concepts of the state or of "society" when they leave the university. University teachers of the subject "society" should be interested in developing an awareness of the problems in a research topic which constitutes the discipline. This is absolutely necessary if the students should not be released from their university education with an understanding of the problems that remains within the "the colourful and the odd" of the German Spiegel-magazine, about which can be chattered nicely in classes of politics.

References

- Adorno, Theodor W. 1960. Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit? [What does coming to terms with the past mean?] In: Gesellschaft-Staat-Erziehung, no. 1, 3-14.
- Adorno, Theodor W. 1970. Erziehung zur Mündigkeit [Education for Maturity and Responsibility], Frankfurt/Main.
- American Sociological Association (ASA) 2006: Sociology and General Education. ASA Task Force Report to council. (<http://www.asanet.org/galleries/Governance/General%20Education%20Council%20Report%207-15-2006.pdf>)
- Beck, Ulrich. 1986. Risikogesellschaft. Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne [Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity], Frankfurt/Main.
- Becker, Egon; Herkommer, Sebastian; Bergmann, Joachim 1970. Erziehung zur Anpassung. Eine soziologische Untersuchung der politischen Bildung in den Schulen [Education towards Adaptation. A sociological study of civic education at schools], Schwalbach.
- Behrmann, Günter C. 1969. Politische Sozialisation in den USA und Politische Bildung in der Bundesrepublik. [Political Socialisation in the USA and Civic Education in Federal Germany] In: GSE, no. 3, 145-160.
- Behrmann, Günter C. (1986). Neue Didaktiken von Altmeistern. [New didactics of ex-champions] In: Gegenwartskunde, no. 2, 239-244.
- Berger, Peter L. 1963. Invitation to Sociology, New York.
- Bourdieu, Pierre 1974. Le champs scientifique. [Fields of science] In: Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales, no. 2-3, 88-104.
- Calliess, Elke; Edelstein, Wolfgang; Hopf, Dieter 1974. Sozialwissenschaft für die Schule. Umrisse eines Struktur- und Prozesscurriculums [Social sciences for school. An outline of a structure and a process curriculum], Stuttgart.
- Claussen, Bernhard. 1997. Zum Stellenwert der Soziologie in Theorie und Praxis der politischen Bildung. [About the significance of sociology in theory and in practice of civic education] In: Siegfried Lamnek, ed., Soziologie und politische Bildung [Sociology and civic education], 27-80.
- DeCesare, Michael (2003): The Impact of Sociological Orientation on Pedagogy: A Reconsideration of Teacher Training in Sociology Ph.D. Departments, The American Sociologist (<http://www.csun.edu/~mdecesare/American%20Sociologist%201.pdf>)
- DeCesare, Michael (2005): The High School Sociology Teacher, In: Teaching Sociology, Vol. 33, October: 345-354. (<http://www.csun.edu/~mdecesare/The%20High%20School%20Sociology%20Teacher.pdf>)
- DeCesare, Michael (2006): "It's Not Rocket Science!": High School Sociology Teachers' Conceptions of Sociology. In: The American Sociologist 37 (1), 51-67. (<http://www.csun.edu/~mdecesare/Rocket%20Science.pdf>)
- Detjen, Joachim. 1999. „Der demokratiekompetente Bürger“ – Politikwissenschaftliche Anmerkungen zu einer normativen Leitvorstellung Politischer Bildung ["The 'democracy-competent' citizen" - remarks from political science on a normative conception of civic education], Katholische Universität Eichstätt, Eichstätter Antrittsvorlesungen, Band 3, Wolnzach.
- Diekmann, Johann; Bolscho, Dietmar 1975. Gesellschaftswissenschaftlicher Unterricht [Teaching social studies], Bad Heilbrunn/Obb.
- Fischer, Kurt Gerhard; Hermann, Karl. 1960. Der politische Unterricht [Teaching civic education], Bad Homburg.
- Gagel, Walter 1994: Geschichte der politischen Bildung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945-1989 [History of civic education in the Federal Republic of Germany 1945-1989], Opladen.
- Goldschmidt, Dietrich; Händle, Christa 1969. Der Wandel der Pädagogik in der Auseinandersetzung mit der Soziologie. [Educational Studies in transition and their dispute with sociology] In: Dietrich Goldschmidt u.a.: Erziehungswissenschaft als Gesellschaftswissenschaft [Educational Studies as Social Studies], 9-44.
- Grammes, Tilman. 1985. Politikdidaktik und Sozialisationsforschung. Problemgeschichtliche Studien zu einer pragmatischen Denktradition in der Fachdidaktik [Didactics of civic education and socialisation research. Problem-oriented historical studies on a pragmatic tradition of thought in didactics of civic education], Frankfurt/Main.
- Händle, Christa (2002): The Burden of History? Civic Education at German Schools, in: JSSE, Jg.3 (2) (http://www.jsse.org/2002-2/germany_haendle.htm) published 16.2.2003.
- Hedtke, Reinhold. (2006a). Integrative politische Bildung. [Integrative civic education] In: Weißeno, Georg, ed. Politik und Wirtschaft unterrichten [Teaching Politics and Economics], Wiesbaden, 216-229.

- Hedtke, Reinhold. (2006b): Sozialwissenschaftliche Bildung statt fachpolitischer Partikularinteressen [Social sciences education instead of political particularist interests]. In: POLIS, 3, 6-8.
- Henkenborg, Peter. 1992. Die Unvermeidlichkeit der Moral. Ethische Herausforderungen für die politische Bildung in der Risikogesellschaft [The Inevitability of Moral Standards. Ethical challenges for civic education in the risk society], Schwalbach/Ts.
- Hoppe, Heidrun. 1996. Subjektorientierte politische Bildung. Begründung einer biographiezentrierten Didaktik der Gesellschaftswissenschaften [Subject-oriented civic education. Justification of a biography-centred didactics of social sciences], Opladen.
- Hradil, Stefan (1996): Lehramtsausbildung – oder: Wie politische Bildung schon an der Wurzel geschädigt wird [Teacher education - or: How is civic education already impaired at its roots]. In: dialog, Juni, 6-7.
- Meuser, Michael. 1997. Marginalisierung der Soziologie? [Marginalisation of Sociology?] In: Siegfried Lamnek, eds. Soziologie und politische Bildung [Sociology and civic education], 241-260.
- Nassehi, Armin. 2003. Der Begriff des Politischen und die doppelte Normativität der „soziologischen Moderne“. [The notion of the political and the double normativity of the "sociological modernity".] In: Armin Nassehi und Markus Schroer, eds. Der Begriff des Politischen [The Notion of the political], Baden-Baden, 133- 169.
- Negt, Oskar. 1968. Soziologische Phantasie und exemplarisches Lernen. Zur Theorie der Arbeiterbildung, [Sociological Imagination and exemplary learning. About the theory of worker education] Frankfurt/Main.
- Nitzschke, Volker. 1966. Eine soziologische Analyse des Sozialkundeunterrichts an Volks-, Mittel- und Berufsschulen [A sociological analysis of social studies teaching in elementary, secondary and vocational schools], Frankfurt/Main.
- Oechsle, Mechthild; Wetterau, Karin, eds., 2000. Politische Bildung und Geschlechterverhältnis [Civic education and gender ratio], Opladen.
- Pohl, Kerstin (1997). Das „Beck-Risiko“ – Wie eine fragwürdige Gesellschaftsdiagnose zu einem allgemeinen Dogma der Politikdidaktik avancierte. [The 'Beck Risk' - How a dubious diagnosis of society advanced to become a general dogma in didactics of civic education] In: Politische Bildung, no. 2, 174-190.
- Pongs, Armin. 1999. In welcher Gesellschaft leben wir eigentlich? [Which society do we actually live in?] Vol. 1, München.
- Priester, Karin (1981): Wie progressive Konzepte entpolitisiert werden. [How progressive concepts are depoliticised] In: Volker Briese, ed. Entpolitisierung der Politikdidaktik? [Depoliticisation of civic education didactics?], 143-162.
- Roth, Klaus (1997). Die Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns von Jürgen Habermas [The theory of communicative action by Jürgen Habermas]. In: Politische Bildung, no. 2, 24-54.
- Sander, Wolfgang. 1989. Zur Geschichte und Theorie der politischen Bildung. Allgemeinbildung und fächerübergreifendes Lernen in der Schule [About the history and theory of civic education. General education and interdisciplinary learning at school], Marburg.
- Schelsky, Helmut. 1975. Die skeptische Generation [The sceptical generation], Frankfurt/Main.
- Schmiederer, Rolf. 1971. Zur Kritik der politischen Bildung. Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie und Didaktik des politischen Unterrichts [About the criticism of civic education. A contribution to sociology and to didactics of civic education], Frankfurt/Main.
- Späte, Katrin. 2005a. Hauptsache Gesellschaft. Westdeutsche Soziologie im Kontext schulischer politischer Bildung [Society as a main issue. West German sociology in the context of civic education in schools], Schwalbach/Ts.
- Späte, Katrin (2005b). Forgotten Documents. Gender and Curricula Work in Civic Education – the Case of Germany. In: JSSE, Jg. 5(2), (http://www.jsse.org/2005-2/forgotten_spaete.htm) publish 24.2.2006.
- Stein, Gerd. 1979. Immer Ärger mit den Schulbüchern. Ein Beitrag zum Verhältnis zwischen Pädagogik und Politik [The constant trouble with schoolbooks. A contribution to the relationship between education and politics], Dokumentarischer Teil, Stuttgart.
- Teschner, Manfred. 1968. Gesellschaft und Politik im Unterricht. Eine soziologische Analyse der politischen Bildung in Hessen [Society and Politics in education. A sociological analysis of civic education in Hesse], Frankfurt/Main.
- Vogel, Ulrike. 1977. Zur unentdeckten Professionalisierung der Soziologie. Lehrerbildung – Richtlinien – Prüfungsordnungen [About the undetected professionalisation of sociology. Teacher training - Guidelines - Examination Regulations], Stuttgart.
- Weber, Birgit (2002). Economic Education in Germany, in: JSSE, Jg.3 (2), (http://www.jsse.org/2002-2/germany_weber.htm) published 16.2.2003.
- Wienold, Hanns; Bierhoff, Oliver (2003): Gewerkschaftliche Bildungsarbeit zwischen soziologischer Phantasie und Verbandsinteressen. [Educational work of trade unions between sociological imagination and union interests] In: Paul Ciepke, ed. Erwachsenenbildung und politische Kultur in Nordrhein Westfalen [Adult education and political culture in North Rhine - Westphalia], Essen, 283-295.
- Zimmer, Annette; Nährlich, Stefan, eds., 2000. Engagierte Bürgerschaft. Tradition und Perspektiven, Bürgerschaftliches Engagement und Nonprofit-Sektor [Committed Citizenry. Tradition and Perspectives. Citizen Commitment and Non-profit Sector] , Vol. 1, Opladen.

Author:

Späte, Katrin, Dr., Studienrätin im Hochschuldienst, Institut für Soziologie, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Germany.