Austrian Corporatism and Institutional Change in the Relationship between Apprenticeship Training and School-Based VET

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ECER2011 ‘Urban Education’, VETNET-Network

15 September 2011
Agenda

— Overview of the system: structure and governance

— 'Collective skills system', research question

— Theory, method, findings

— Conclusions
Skill Formation in Austria
Major Organizational Forms

University
University of applied Sciences (FH)

'Matura'
VET College
VET School

'Matura'
Academic Secondary Education

Vocational 'Matura'
Apprenticeship

NEW:
'Lehre mit Matura'
Prevocational school
Crossectional distribution of a cohort (approx)
Enrolment at upper secondary level related to 15-19yrs population in Austria 1924-2008

- Academic sec.educ.
- Teacher ed.
- VET-college
- VET school
- Apprenticeship
~ Eight different governance systems including different actors

- University (Bologna)
- Primary school (4 years)
- General secondary school (4 years)
- Special schools
- Prep
- Dual Voc training (2-4 yrs)
- 100% of age group

~ Eight different governance systems including different actors

- Master/crafts qualifications...
- Intermediate vocational school (1-3 yrs)
- Higher Education
- University (Bologna)
- Polytechnics (3-4 yrs)
- Non-University Upgraded postsecondary teacher education
- Academic secondary school (Upper 4 yrs)
- Academic secondary school (Lower 4 yrs)
- Elementary education

~ Eight different governance systems including different actors

- 100% of age group
~ Four types of governance

- 'Collective skills system'
- 'New public management', institutional autonomy
- Local autonomy, political governance
- State bureaucracies, government

100% of age group
‘Collective Skills Systems’

‘The main characteristic of the vocational training systems of these countries is that they are collectively organized, because firms, intermediary associations, and the state cooperate in the process of skill formation in initial vocational training. In particular, this means that,

— first, firms are strongly involved in financing and administering workplace-based training;
— second, intermediary associations play an important role in the administration and reform of these systems;
— third, the systems provide portable, certified occupational skills; and
— fourth, training takes place not only in schools but also in companies, usually in the form of dual apprenticeship training.’

The Political Economy of Collective Skill Formation. Edited by Marius R. Busemeyer and Christine Trampusch, Oxford Univ.Press, forthcoming 2011, p.4
Research Question

From an historical-institutionalist perspective, which factors have most shaped the development of the distinctive VET system in Austria?
Argument

Austria’s specific development — the institutionalization of both strong dual apprenticeship & school-based VET — has been influenced strongly by:

— Long-term historical co-existence of both apprenticeship system and full-time school-based training system
— Austrian small state corporatism
Theory: Small State Corporatism

— ‘Social Partnership’ at national level
  Voluntary and informal coordination between interest groups, state bureaucracies, and political parties
— ‘Centralized Federalism’ (Austria-specific)
  Obstacle to change

→ …overall great adaptability to survive in rapidly changing environment, i.e. internal rigidity can nevertheless lead to external flexibility.

(see Katzenstein 1984, 2003)
Gradual Institutional Change: Modes

— System has changed significantly without having been planned by someone in this way

— **Institutional change by**
  
  — **layering:**
  
  Introduction of new rules on top of existing ones, which may eventually crowd out or supplant old institutional logic

  — **drift:**
  
  Changes in environment result in altered scope, meaning, or function of an institutional logic (Mahoney & Thelen 2010)
Method & Data

— Process-tracing

— Data sources:
  — Secondary literature & document analysis
  — Aggregate statistics
  — Expert interviews with key stakeholders (n = 13), March 2010
# Key Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19th C. – late 1960s</td>
<td>Separate institutionalization of both apprenticeship &amp; school-based VET</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970s – mid-1990s</td>
<td>Expansion of VET Colleges (Layering)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970s – late 1990s</td>
<td>Marginalization of dual apprenticeship (Drift)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late 1990s – present</td>
<td>Reforms of apprenticeship (Layering to avoid drift)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Late intro of FHs</td>
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Crucial Factors

— Shift towards service-based and ‘knowledge’ economy in the context of globalized markets

— EU context (accession in 1995)

— Privatization of large-scale industries & economy dominated by SMEs

— Corporatist governance of apprenticeship system & partisan politics in school-based VET

— Educational choices of individuals seeking to optimize career chances
Conclusions

Path-dependent patterns of gradual institutional change in the Austrian VET system has been strongly and continuously influenced by

— Small state corporatism (*macro level*)

— Relationship between apprenticeship system and school-based VET, especially by the expansion of VET Colleges as a hybrid organizational form (*meso level*) at the boundary between vocational and higher education.