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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The legitimation of school-based *Bildung* in the context of vocational education and training: The legacy of Eduard Spranger

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This paper is part of a special issue focusing on key thinkers in the development of German vocational education in the early and mid-20th century. These are ideas that continue to be influential today. They provide an important philosophical and practical challenge to contemporary constructions of vocational education and training.

Abstract

The philosophical foundation of *Bildung* in the context of vocational education and training was significantly shaped by Eduard Spranger (1882–1963). However its legacy is not as present today since vocational schools in German-speaking countries today focus strongly on competences. This article sheds light on the emergence of this concept, discusses the impact up to the present and reconstructs the debates surrounding it.

KEYWORDS

Bildung, concept of occupation, school-based, Spranger, vocational education and training

Vocational education and training (VET) in Germany still has a high reputation today. The discussion about reforming schools and building up a renewed vocational training system was live at the end of the 19th century and is today still a topic of debate. This was the case not only in Germany but also in other countries. For Germany and the German-speaking countries, Eduard Spranger played a role, as a supporter and prominent voice from educational research, in developing and enlarging educational institutions as well as reprofiling a part of the education system as vocational in orientation. Of interest is the fact that, in the German-speaking context, there have not been so many debates about the role of vocational schools in recent years. It is a fitting time to revisit Spranger's contributions to these debates.

The deliberations about reforming vocational training, the *Lehrlingswesen* (the traditional apprenticeship system), and educating young people towards integration into society were closely linked, at the end of the 19th century, to the so-called social question. This had a variety of aspects: helping artisans to survive in an economy that was becoming more and more industrialised and liberalised, but also trying to educate workers to cooperate and accept their place in

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the nation. Bismarck's policy on nation-building fitted quite well into this picture. Fighting against socialists and trade unions and at the same time promoting reforms in social policy went hand in hand. One specific aspect of modernising society and the economy was the educational system. These initial premises introduced by Bismarck of building up an education system that also included the masses and meant a prolongation of schooling were hardly challenged any more. In later years, they were often taken for granted by subsequent generations of educational reformers and thinkers about vocational education.

A second paradoxical phenomenon is that today, in contemporary Germany, the classics of philosophical thinking about vocational education are at first glance invisible. Nevertheless, certain traces and aspects of the classical thinkers in VET, like Georg Kerschensteiner, Eduard Spranger, Aloys Fischer, Theodor Litt, and Erwin Jeangros, can be identified even today. Their quest to modernise vocational education is today the often unquestioned basis for debates and reforms about VET. Their low visibility is connected with the complex history of Germany and the 1968 debates, which excluded conservative thinkers and especially persons who adhered to an explicit nationalism or, even worse, to Nazism (see Kipp & Müller-Kipp, 1995; Ortmeyer, 2008). Furthermore, the turn towards social sciences in German educational studies itself changed the focus of attention, away from philosophical thinking. Thus, Spranger and others seem to be worthy of consideration only for historians of pedagogical ideas. However, this view undervalues the foundations of VET and vocational schools, which have been shaped by thinkers like Eduard Spranger.

A third point is that Spranger is not an original thinker in relation to vocational education. His interests are broader, to the extent that some educationalists are surprised to find him associated with others who understood themselves as VET theorists. Spranger, however, was an influential thinker and educationalist, who especially in his later writings made several significant contributions in areas such as teacher training and educational psychology, and in establishing an educational science at the university level that was not associated with psychology and philosophy. In this context, he also addressed VET as a worthy topic for academic study. His main contribution is thus the further development of Georg Kerschensteiner's ideas on vocational schools and the way in which he transferred or enlarged his own concept of *Bildung* to embrace the field of VET.

Finally, the concept of vocational competence and maturity was not on Spranger's mental horizon. These words do not exist in his writings, but his concept of *Bildung* and the vocational school was taken up and further developed by authors who referred to Spranger's educational ideas.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF GERMAN VET

In the 19th century, the role of apprenticeships was under review in many European countries. With new forms of production—i.e., the industrialisation and the growing influence of liberal concepts of economy and society—the traditional form of apprenticeship, administered by guilds, was in decline. In Germany, the *Verein für Socialpolitik*¹, and especially Lujo Brentano, economist and activist in this group, pleaded for a new system of vocational education that also involved schools. He, therefore, criticised Adam Smith's reflections upon guilds and education as they were developed in his seminal work of 1776, *The Wealth of Nations* (Smith, 2007). Smith explicitly criticised the role of apprenticeships, which, he claimed, obstructed the free circulation of labour and, therefore, the well-being of societies (Smith, 2007, p. 110). As he stated, 'the institution of long apprenticeships has no tendency to form a young people to industry' (p. 100). Thus, for him, long apprenticeships were unnecessary and not effective (Smith, 2007). Sharing Smith's critical view of guilds, Brentano, like others and later, more prominently, Georg Kerschensteiner, reformer of the educational system in Bavaria, stressed the importance of education in schools alongside training and work in factories. Both argued that schools are also an important element in the education of young workers (see Brentano, 1875). It was not only privileged young people who should receive an education, but also workers and peasants: they too should have some general and vocationally specific education in order not only to be qualified for industry and work but also to enable them to become responsible people in the community and state. There lay a 'social question' in the background, namely, that the aim of school reforms should be to provide education for all members of society in order to integrate both workers and non-privileged people into society. Schools should get closer to 'life' and thus include manual work from the very beginning. Further education should also provide more education, also in order to

avoid harmful divisions within society. Besides socialism, extensive individualistic liberalism was also seen as a critical challenge that society should address. A commitment to the nation was a goal to which education had to be adapted. To elevate manual dexterity and stress, vocational competencies should also promote a national work ethos and thus be a response to the challenge of the 'social question' and socialism (see Gonon, 2012, p. 299). In 1901, Kerschensteiner published 'Civic education of the German youth', which was the first statement of this kind and also set out a plan to build a continuation school, with a special focus on vocational subjects. Thus, the focus would be in line with the general aspirations of school reformers. In the interest of civic education, the transformation of the school would lead 'from a place of individual ambition into a place of social devotion, from a place of theoretical, intellectual one-sidedness into a place of practical-humane versatility, from a place concerned with the right acquisition of knowledge into a place which also immediately teaches the right use of this knowledge' (Kerschensteiner, 1920, p. 113).

Spranger was also aware of these claims (based in socialism, liberalism and democracy) affecting the debate about schools and leading to a reformed education (Spranger, 1925b, p. 137). These concerns, however, he maintained, should be combined with an obligation to serve the whole society and a commitment to the 'German future', as he writes in a foreword to his wide-ranging collection of essays published in *Culture and Education (Kultur und Erziehung)* (p. V). The aim of education, i.e., *Bildung*, should be, as stresses, 'to awaken in the individual the sense that the state with its ordered power and legal forms lives through all of us as an objective spiritual power that shapes and binds our being' (Spranger, 1929, p. 71). If this double claim of merging state and individual soul and bringing the soul into the state ('Durchseelung des Staates und Durchstaatlichung der Seele') is correct, then as he writes, alluding to Plato, 'we will gladly convert to democracy' (p. 71).

The young Spranger himself published two books on Humboldt at the beginning of his career. The main purpose of both books was to introduce Humboldt, making him more widely recognised as a founder of the idea of *Bildung* and of a modern education system, especially the new Berlin university (Spranger, 1908, 1910). Both publications bring together the integrative approach of Eduard Spranger. *Bildung* is not just introduced as a concept for universities or as an individual affair for a small elite, but as a core element that defines education and an education system. It is especially his second publication, which takes critical reaction to his former book into account and follows his academic teacher Friedrich Paulsen's advice to head towards a 'realistic *Bildung*', that is aimed, in line with Humboldt's views, at 'humanising' the existing education system (Spranger, 1910, p. viii). The 'humanisation' of the vocational education and vocational schools is the main merit that, at a later point, Spranger attributes to his elder colleague Kerschensteiner, in his eulogy in 1932: in Spranger's phrase, he brought the idea of full humanity, which for a long time had hovered only at abstract heights, into the reality of the lives of German people (Spranger, 1954).

In his earlier writings, Spranger did not take much notice of vocational education. His interest in vocational education started with his deliberative correspondence, and later on close personal friendship, with Kerschensteiner. At the time they met, Kerschensteiner already had a high reputation; meanwhile Spranger was in an early phase of his career. Kerschensteiner's successful reforms in Munich also attracted considerable interest outside Germany. The English comparativist Michael Sadler observed that Germany had made 'the most systematic' and probably 'most successful efforts' to develop further training of boys and girls after mandatory schooling (Sadler, 1907). In Germany, renewed continuation schools, which were declared compulsory, helped 'to increase the efficiency of apprentices and journeymen by encouraging their attendance at continuation classes' (p. 531). The philosopher Charles Key Ogden, on the basis of his own personal visits and experiences in Munich, translated Kerschensteiner's *The Schools and the Nation (Grundfragen der Schulorganisation)* in order to make this reform also available for an English-speaking audience (Ogden, 1914). One of the core achievements of the Munich reform programme was the extension of compulsory school and the foundation of vocationally oriented continuation schools for all (male and female) youngsters (with no further high school options), a measure that also found the approval of Spranger regarding the transition to vocational education. He devoted some time in his career, even in its last years, to convincing politicians—on the strength of Kerschensteiner's ideas—to enlarge schooling in the face of political, economic and scientific change. But Spranger was also critical about an unlimited

extension of schooling, as he stated in a 1928 published article, which was also meant as a response to Kerschensteiner (Spranger, 1970a).

Meanwhile, Kerschensteiner in his later years developed a comprehensive philosophical rationale in order to legitimise his vocationally based approach to *Bildung* and vocational schools, and this was published in voluminous editions (Kerschensteiner, 1926, 1933). Spranger himself turned—under the influence of Kerschensteiner—more towards vocational aspects of education and schooling.

Spranger's views on vocational education are very much based on this conversation with his older friend. These deliberations helped both of them to refine and adapt a theory of *Bildung* that was suited to the changing economy and society. Another personal and influential connection of Spranger can be seen in his correspondence with the Swiss Erwin Jeangros, head of the vocational training office of the canton of Bern, with whom he discussed the changing nature of work (Gonon, 2000). The main problem for Spranger was to find an answer to the question of how *Bildung* could be more accurately realised and assured in times when society and the world of work were changing. One solution was to focus on work and its place in society, the economy and culture.

Spranger, as a scholar and rediscoverer of Humboldt, and also later on as a co-editor of a critical edition of the works of the Swiss pedagogue Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, published several papers, during his long life, that tackled the subject of vocational education. Also, Pestalozzi was for him a thinker (and practitioner) who defined education and *Bildung* in close connection with social, economic and practical activity and inspired him, in his turn, to vocationalise *Bildung* and schooling (Spranger, 1959).

In the 1920s, when he (and others such as Theodor Litt) coined the term *Kulturpädagogik*, which is still in use today, he also situated the notion of vocation (*Beruf*) within culture. Cultural pedagogy meant conceptualising education as a process involving the understanding and individual elaboration of values, which themselves were taken to be rooted in our surroundings as objectifications (Spranger, 1922, p. 380). In the Festschrift for Kerschensteiner's 70th Birthday, edited by Aloys Fischer and Eduard Spranger, he explained this formal idea by stressing both the role of classics in education and the role of an apprenticeship (*Meisterlehre*) alongside of schooling, in order to develop individuality and national character (Spranger, 1924, p. 329).

The conceptual distinctiveness of German VET, in contrast to the prevalent view of VET in the English-speaking world (that is, the closer link it creates between school and workplace), is something that, in the focus of the thinking of Kerschensteiner and Spranger in the 1920s, was not in view. Neither was the stronger involvement of professional associations, nor the view that they should define or shape the curriculum or work it out, in the forefront of thinking at that time. They were motivated much more by the will to modernise the education system and to find a new role for education and *Bildung* in a world where the economy and society were changing (see Gonon, 2009).

BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO EDUARD SPRANGER'S CAREER AND THINKING IN THE TRADITION OF THE HUMANITIES

Spranger was a very influential figure in Germany and also important for establishing the academic study of education. He was also a person who tried to provide a philosophical grounding for education. That is why he is also regarded as the founder of a new pedagogy (see Flitner, 1964, p. 138).

Spranger worked, first, as a teacher and, later, as a university assistant. Thus, he was trained in this field and was himself a scholar of Wilhelm Dilthey and Friedrich Paulsen. Both were themselves very influential in German philosophy and the history of education. Dilthey is known as the founder of the *Geisteswissenschaften* (in English known as the humanities or perhaps cultural studies), and Paulsen wrote a substantial history of higher education, which is still a key reference work today. The approach of the *Geisteswissenschaften* included the analysis of history, law, the arts, everyday life and practices of religion, and the sciences. The method of hermeneutics and the *modus* of understanding and reflection were important elements in the attempt to analyse human phenomena.

Spranger started his career as a philosopher. Education, however, was from the beginning a very important focus both of his practical work and of his studies at university. His main (philosophical) work is his *Lebensformen*, published in 1921, which later became an important basis for the theory of *Bildung* developed by Kerschensteiner and himself. Spranger situated the term 'forms of life' (*Lebensformen*), which was later adapted and differently defined by other thinkers (e.g., by Wittgenstein), in a socio-cultural and socio-psychological context (see Jäggi, 2014, p. 68). Also, his widely read work about psychology and youth—*Psychologie des Jugendalters*, first published in 1924—was founded on this culture-based approach and was directed against the dominant experimental, empirical and psychoanalytical currents in psychology (Spranger, 1949). After gaining a full professorship at the University of Leipzig in 1912, Spranger remained an academic for his whole professional life, later on taking a chair in the University of Berlin. In the following years, he lectured throughout Germany.

One of his main ideas was that outstanding persons in the field of philosophy, religion, education, the arts and literature, and politics—often known as the German classics—were role models not only for individuals but also for the nation itself. Humboldt, Pestalozzi and Rousseau, but also Luther, Hölderlin and especially Goethe, were presented as German thinkers. Goethe was several times the focus of his lectures and also appeared in his writings about vocational education. Like Kerschensteiner and a lot of other reform-oriented educationalists and philosophers (e.g., Georg Simmel and Karl Muthesius), he endorsed the passage in the work of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* in which one of the protagonists makes the remarks that education can only really take place in conjunction with manual labour (Zabeck, 2009). Spranger traced a line between German idealism and the education of citizens and workers. In the foreground of these lectures was a duty to the community and commitment to the German nation, and thus these heroic essays often represented the ideals of a white male Protestant. Furthermore, it was with this focus that he redefined Humboldt's concept of *Bildung*, which was oriented towards the ancient classics.

The Nazi takeover in 1933 complicated his standing in the German university and society. His own nationalism seemed at first to embrace the radical movement that was gaining so much support amongst younger people, as is visible in his publication about the folk, the state and education (*Volk, Staat, Erziehung*) (Spranger, 1932). On the other hand, he lacked connection with this younger generation. Due to the volatile situation that developed around him, he willingly accepted the position of guest professor at a university in Japan, where, for two years from 1937, he represented the Nazi regime. After coming back at the end of the war, Spranger was for a short time imprisoned, but after a while he was allowed to establish himself as a professor again. His publications in the years of the Nazi regime reveal his appeal to obedience and his positive assessment of the dominant ideology (see Ortmeier, 2008).

After the Second World War, the newly formed and Western-oriented German republic allowed a fresh start. He obtained a chair of education in the University of Tübingen, where he taught until his retirement. Spranger turned out to be a leading public intellectual in the renewal of education in West Germany. In this renewal of his thinking, he also integrated in a more determined way the vocational aspect of education, as is seen in his book on the philosophical foundations of pedagogy (*Philosophische Grundlegung der Pädagogik*), published in 1948. The possibility of becoming a human being, Spranger stated, was originally dependent on peasant and artisanal work. In the following decades, the division of labour into specialisms and the possibility of its greater humanisation ('*Vergeistigung*') came into view, and these together laid the way for the integration of the human and specialisation in today's vocational education (Spranger, 1973a, pp. 83–84).

KEY POINTS IN SPRANGER'S THINKING ABOUT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

In former times, apprenticeships were based in workshops under the control of a master. This medieval model was not questioned by the reformers at the beginning of the 20th century. Secondary schools were thought of as the most important element of providing education and *Bildung* for young people after they had completed primary school. Again, Spranger drew on Kerschensteiner, arguing that further education after primary school should be related to the world of work that young people were to enter.

One of the key elements in Spranger's view of vocational education was the revalorisation of the idea of the *Beruf* and the realignment of this concept as a school component, i.e., of the vocational school. He focused *Beruf* on the concept of original or core occupations (*Urberufe*), which meant, in his view, a triple occupational origin: the peasant, the artisan (*Handwerker*) and the trader (*Händler*). The notion of the *Urberufe* appears for the first time in 1929 in his reflections on the extension of compulsory education (*Pädagogische Betrachtungen zur Frage einer Schulpflichtverlängerung*) and, in 1932, in his essay on male youth (*Männliche Jugend*). There is, furthermore, a female core occupation (*Urberufe*) that is still relevant, although women are today more widely engaged in modern working life. Today, and especially for men, working in typical vocations, it is more complicated to find the former educational basis in *Urberufe*, which is implied in the core occupations of productive work (Spranger, 1970a, p. 115). In his view, all human beings have to know the simplest primal forms of production, which provide basic vocational *Bildung* (*urberufliche Bildung*) (Spranger, 1974, p. 242). To understand this original phenomenon of core occupations is so important in order not to get enslaved by vocationally based work, and, as he stresses in his later writings, to be able to convert and adapt to new circumstances and functions (Spranger, 1970d, p. 209).

In his essay on 'Grundlegende Bildung, Berufsbildung, Allgemeinbildung', published for the first time in 1918 in his collection of papers on cultural pedagogy, he tries to sharpen or better contextualise his understanding of *Bildung* at a time when the importance of the transmission of specific knowledge was becoming more apparent. He locates the first element of *Bildung* (in primary schools) mainly in the everyday surroundings of the child, in the world of home life (*Heimat*) (Spranger, 1925a, p. 161). Basic education is the element provided by primary schools. Afterwards comes the choice of an occupation, and it is in this phase of the lives of young people that the (new) vocational school comes in (p. 164). The new *Berufsschule* is different from the former specialised schools for only the few (*Fachschulen*), which moreover were narrowly focused on a unique subject. It was no wonder that that kind of school was attacked by Humboldtian and humanist thinkers, who saw it as the most important task of schools to provide a broadly based education (p. 165). Spranger now brings Pestalozzi and Goethe into play as witnesses to demonstrate that, in his words, 'indeterminate universality' must give way to 'purposeful individuality'. His main reference here is Georg Kerschensteiner again (pp. 166f.). Someone who is educated for an occupation will also have gained a general education, which is *Bildung*. Like technical higher education, however, vocations should be bundled together and not be taught in an over-specialised way. Therefore, vocations and *Bildung* are not at all in contradiction, but *Bildung* for vocations is embedded in a cultural context (p. 167), even if the modern factory has not yet integrated an educational spirit (p. 173). But also the vocational schools (*Berufsschulen*) of his times were not yet in the desired form. In his view, they were allied too much to specific vocations, and thus too narrow in their educational aims. The aim of *Berufsschulen* was to be directed to this broader vocational conception and at the same time to be focused on the individual's inner development. It was in this direction that the reforms to vocational education were to lead, so that they were to be organised not just in relation to external purposes, but in service of *Bildung* itself. From the core of vocational education grows the mantle of general education. Thus, the *Berufsschulen* should not prepare mere specialists (p. 172). In contrast to Humboldt's concept of *Bildung* and his views regarding the education system, which favoured first a general education and afterwards a specialised education, Spranger stresses a three-step pathway of education: first a basic education, afterwards a vocationally based education, which should lead in the third phase towards a general education.

Vocational education in vocational schools has, first, to be designed in such a way that it is not exhausted in narrow technical knowledge, but develops a comprehensive sense of what the occupation in question involves, of what it is for something to be an occupation, and an occupational ethos—this is what he argues in his 'General education and Vocational Schools' ('Allgemein Bildung und Berufsschule'), which was published in 1920. Such an approach should, second, allow young people to adapt to related occupations and, third, provide an organic centre for a general education, whose significance radiates out through all aspects of their social and intellectual lives (Spranger, 1970b, p. 25). The aim of the vocational school is, thus, to enable human development (p. 26).

These thoughts were developed further in his contribution to Alfred Kühnes' seminal handbook of vocational and specific schools (*Handbuch für das Berufs- und Fachschulwesen*), published in 1923. In his contribution, entitled 'Vocational education and general education' (*Berufsbildung und Allgemeinbildung*), he elaborates the concept of (voca-

tional) *Bildung* further and ties it to the different individual types of individual dispositions. Vocational *Bildung* is, on the one hand, under the influence of a historically and socially changing culture (*historisch-gesellschaftlich bedingte Berufsbildung*), and it meets, on the other, the different 'inner vocations' (*innerer Beruf*) of individuals (Spranger, 1973b, p. 286). Furthermore, traditional apprenticeship and life in factories need the supplement of the systematic education provided by (vocational) schools (p. 290). Vocational schools should include three elements: first, a vocationally specific education (*materiale Spezialbildung*), which is often represented by vocation-specific subjects (*Berufskunde*); second, a more formal or general vocational education (*formale Berufsbildung*); and third, a broad cultural education (*Kulturbildung*) (pp. 288–289). It was exactly this focus on vocations that led—through the intervention of Spranger himself, as he stresses in several publications—to a renaming of what had until then been called the 'continuation school'; this took place at the 13th conference of the German teacher convention in Dresden (p. 290).

With this statement and policy, the vocational schools emerged as an important pillar of the education system. While the German Gymnasium² was still based mainly on books and the study of literature, as Spranger pointed out decades later, the focus of *Bildung* in the vocational schools was directed towards shaping materials and useful work, and based on activity (Spranger, 1970e, p. 210). In another contribution, published in 1955, which resonates with the theme of the topicality of the tasks of *Bildung* (*Voraussetzungen der gegenwärtigen Bildungsaufgabe*), he coined the term 'thinking hand' (*denkende Hand*) for the vocational schools. They were to be developed according to the vocational principle of learning by example (*exemplarisches Lernen*), a principle that should follow, Spranger claimed, with an allusion to his friend Jeangros, the latent structure of the economy (*Partitur der Wirtschaft*) (Spranger, 1969, pp. 393–394). In his last publication on vocational education, in 1960, he came back again to the tension between specialisation in work–life and the culture of the society, which needed to be bridged through (vocational) *Bildung*. This allowed young people to experience the connection between their own actions in the workplace and the larger ethos of the community (*Volksgemeinschaft*). That was also why the master in the workplace should be an educator as well, a commitment that was necessary in order to compensate for the inherent weakness of vocational schools, which were—as every school was—mainly organised on the basis of subjects (Spranger, 1970c, pp. 404–405).

Spranger's summing up of the development of the vocational schools can be viewed as an evaluative looking back on the establishment and gradual evolution of this institution in his times, before and after the Second World War. It is a reassessment of the role of vocation, of the focus on human development, *Bildung*, and ethics, and of the future role of vocational education in times of technical and societal change. His argument is based on a more general line of thought and does not go into detail about how to organise vocational education in schools or in the workplace. Thus, there is not much in the way of practical suggestions about how to teach or learn. Spranger's definition of a variant of *Bildung* focused on occupations paved the way in the following years for a more activity-based form of learning and teaching, oriented towards what was at once a specific and a more general educational horizon.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF AND COMMENTS ON SPRANGER'S 'DIE ERZIEHUNGS-AUFGABE BERUFSSCHULE' (1958)

This publication was edited before the term 'dual model of apprenticeship' was coined (see Deutscher Ausschuss, 1964). Nevertheless, Spranger hints at the point that the school was originally meant as a supplementary element in vocational education, assuming that the apprenticeship under the supervision of a master was satisfactory. As human beings are involved, he adds, probably not all is going on as in theory it should. Nevertheless, he does not go more deeply into what exactly the critical issues were. The term *Berufsschule* replaces the former 'continuation school', which is progress in Spranger's view. The term defines more precisely what has to be done in schools: the workforce is to be educated. The whole article tries to make plausible the idea that the traditional concept of a *Berufsschule* has turned from a supplementary one to that of a (*berufsbegleitende Schule*) school, which embraces the occupational (and personal) development of the learners.

This amounted to a pedagogical re-definition of the concept of occupation (*Beruf*), which was to be seen as a central focus of *Bildung*, whether provided or supported by schools—with the important proviso that preparation for the occupations was not seen as aimed at as just fulfilling work-related tasks, but as a potential humanisation of occupational work. Furthermore, *Bildung* itself takes on a new meaning, which goes beyond the kind of erudition that comes from reading and studying literature. Spranger defines it as the readiness to assume moral responsibility. The quest for humanity (*Humanität*) itself has to be found in its specific and topical time. Thus, the *Berufsschule* has the task of educating according to the needs of the time. The time spent in schools by apprentices was, however, relatively limited, and for this reason it was important that schools become like workshops, where the pedagogical potential was much higher. The morality towards which the education was to lead was not confined to the occupation in question but of more general significance. The basis of moral education, however, remained the occupations out of which this general moral outlook and disposition was to emerge.

In Spranger's thinking at this point, the ideas he had developed earlier regarding education and *Bildung* reappear, but here they relate more to the occupational, practical and time-bound context. The school is the realm of the theory of *praxis*, while the practical work is part of the workshop. To define the curriculum for a *Berufsschule* requires a specific occupational theoretical component as well as a more general element aimed at cultural initiation and orientation to the world. The focus on aiming at a higher self (p. 334 and later 335f.) is realised through the occupationally framed activity. In this publication, he goes beyond the institutional setting to define the process of learning and individual development that is the core of *Bildung*. The basis of *Bildung* is the education of the self, which leads through specific occupational ethics. So the task of the *Berufsschule* is to guide the student into their own world. As Spranger observed from a more psychological perspective, these tasks meet two kinds of learners: the outward-oriented apprentice and the inward-oriented apprentice.

Spranger's concept of the time-bound orientation of the *Berufsschule* returns in his next sub-chapter (IV) (p. 338–340) when he talks about the future of this institution. If occupations vanish or are losing their importance, the legitimacy of the school is endangered (as well the occupations themselves). The development of industry and technology also affects the *Berufsschulen*: In former times, the discussion arose around the number of unqualified young people (*Ungelernte*), and now the concern was with those who turned their backs on occupations, choosing the exit option, which was happening especially where occupations were becoming more unstable and losing the continuity of employment they had formerly offered.

In this publication, Spranger takes much more into account than he had done before the Second World War. It was Theodor Litt (1955) who sharply criticised both him and Kerschensteiner for ignoring industrial reality and development. It was the 'automation' of production that he emphasised as a matter of serious concern for the future of the *Berufsschule*. Although he was not quite sure whether the projected scenario, including the projection of a reduction of industrial work, would in fact play out, he considered the possibility that the *Berufsschule* might need to educate also for work-free time and leisure (p. 542). It was clear that pedagogical thinking had to take social change into account. His hope was that a more complex and intelligent (and technically based) form of production would not make too many demands on the apprentices of the future. But in any case, there was no room for panic, because the ethical tasks of vocational education would still be pivotal: the education of the diligent and honourable worker.

It is surprising that in Spranger's writings, a certain kind of modesty, powerlessness or even resignation can be seen, including his admission that he does not really know in which direction the economy and society will develop. For us, today this sounds rather familiar. Spranger's programme for the *Berufsschule* is in a way quite typical of the discourse of his times, which needed to legitimise the role of this institution as well as that of the apprenticeships in companies. The role of the *Berufsschule* is acknowledged as an important part of vocational education. In this essay, he also stresses the role of self-education as the core element of *Bildung* in the context of occupational knowledge and ethics in vocational schools. The significance of different educational sites, i.e., the workplace, is, however, not worked out very much in Spranger's thinking. Just a few general remarks suffice to state the importance of workplace learning. But this relation is, as already explained, not deeply explored.

The two elements that define the *Berufsschule* are the concept of *Beruf* and the concept of *Bildung*. Both in a way are endangered, according to Spranger. The *Beruf* has to be seen in the context of technological change, which could jeopardise its pedagogical relevance, and this had already been more or less articulated by him in the 1920s. *Bildung* in schools has to take place in a very precarious situation related to time and resources. Despite these uncertainties, however, Spranger believed in the future of *Berufsschulen*. It is exactly his emphasis on the educational aspect of the individual self that allows vocational teaching and *Bildung* in vocational schools to have a future even when occupations are undergoing major change.

BEYOND SPRANGER: A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT FOUNDATIONAL BACKGROUND OF VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS IN GERMAN-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

The ideas Spranger held in 1958, including the conception of the vocational school as developed by Kerschensteiner and deepened also by Aloys Fischer, were also a response to critical voices who complained that the great distance between, on the one hand, industrial and technical development and, on the other, the romantic notion of work and occupation was not recognised. However, this task did not end in the 1960s.

In 1958, Fritz Blättner published a book called *Pedagogy of Vocational Schools (Pädagogik der Berufsschule)*. He sees the great achievement of Kerschensteiner, Spranger and Fischer to be the resolute way in which they put vocation at the centre of schooling and thus created a new type of school (Blättner, 1965, p. 24). Through the lens of manual work (*Handwerk*), there has been a merger of *Beruf* and *Bildung*, which has, furthermore, been located in the specific institution of the *Berufsschule*, which is more than just a continuation school. In Blättner's view, the combination of civic education and vocational skill (*Berufstüchtigkeit*) that Kerschensteiner advocated was widened by his friend Spranger, who defined occupation as the core concept of individual development in life (*Lebensberuf*).

More critically, Theodor Wilhelm labelled this approach 'occupational metaphysics' (*Berufsmetaphysik*), oriented towards the male worker, not including the monotonous work most women do. Furthermore, this approach, favoured by Kerschensteiner and Spranger, does not take into account that the vocation someone trains for and the work they go on to do may be quite different. Thus, the simple identification of occupations with manual work has been eroded in an economy where division of labour, specialisation and schematic procedures in technical production are now dominant (Wilhelm, 1975, p. 98). Indeed, Spranger himself stated in his later published essay, called 'Unsolved Problems of the Vocational School', that it is difficult, after the Second World War, to design a more general model of vocations (*Berufsbilder*) because of the dynamics of the economy, which makes occupations fluid (*Berufsverflüssigung*) and hollows out the vocational framework (Spranger, 1970c, p. 401).

In the 1960s Heinrich Abel and later Karlwilhelm Stratmann and others critiqued the conservative ideas of Kerschensteiner and Spranger, which sought to legitimate the authoritarian apprenticeship system. The school component was seen in their eyes as negligible compared to the long time an apprentice was working in the firm. That was why they favoured public vocational schools or full-time occupational schools that integrated practical and theoretical work.

A different position, however, was put forward by Herwig Blankertz. He tried to modernise Spranger's thinking and especially his concept of *Bildung*, which he thought should be enriched by a Habermasian approach of critical theory and reflection (Blankertz, 1985). It was Blankertz who reaffirmed—with reference to Spranger—the focus of *Bildung* through occupations (*Bildung im Medium des Berufes*), an idea that was seen in the following years, however, as too restricted: a broader concept of employment and career orientation was needed (Kutscha, 2011).

There are not so many theories and discussions about the *Berufsschule* today. Notably, Jörg-Peter Pahl has written a substantial book on the vocational school (Pahl, 2008). He also states that this part of the dual system in Germany today is still quite stable but that it has to adapt to changes in the world of work, which means revising school curricula, modifying regulations and bringing in a new concept of competencies.

The aim of Kerschensteiner, Spranger and the other authors on VET to legitimise the vocational school as an important element of the education of young people and as a decisive part of VET is to this day a widely shared commitment in German-speaking countries; the principle is accepted without question. Sometimes the claim is raised, however, that vocational schools and the workplace should cooperate better than they actually do.

Another achievement is probably the strong emphasis on *Bildung* within the framework of occupations. This focus not only determined the curriculum but also allowed at a later stage for the development of didactic and learning-related concepts that went beyond specialised education towards a more occupationally framed general education. As already mentioned, the terms *Tüchtigkeit* and *Mündigkeit* did not appear in Spranger's publications at all. Kerschensteiner referred in a very limited way in his writings to *Tüchtigkeit* in the context of civic education and the career options of young people, as Blättner correctly pointed out. Nevertheless, the combination of *berufliche Tüchtigkeit* together with *berufliche Mündigkeit* as an idea was introduced in Germany by the Deutsche Bildungsrat only in 1970, on the recommendation of the organisation of VET (see Lipsmeier, 1995, p. 233). In this development, terms such as 'qualifications' and 'competencies', 'key qualifications' and 'vocationally based competence' (*berufliche Handlungskompetenz*) emerged. Furthermore, Spranger's notion of *Beruf* as a decisive element in the *Berufsschule* was in a way idealistic: it did not imply an occupation-based knowledge but rather a general concept of *Bildung*, which was rooted in his understanding in German (and not ancient) classics. Thus, the efforts of the reformers of vocational schools in the 1970s and in the following decades were oriented towards an occupational and economic realism.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As already mentioned in the introductory remarks, Eduard Spranger is—like the other classic thinkers about vocational education—not so prominent any more today. Their status is precarious (see Gonon, 1997), and there are two main reasons. The political assessment of the 1968 generation criticised Kerschensteiner and Spranger because they were not sufficiently distant from nationalism and, in the case of Spranger, also for the hopes he had of the Nazi regime. His alleged German idealistic nationalism became a burden, and this hindered later generations from engaging with his thinking. Furthermore, the criticism of the often authoritarian character of the apprentice–master relation, which came to the fore in the 1960s and 1970s, was of something to which Spranger had not given attention. A further and important element is, however, the shift of vocational research and thinking towards social sciences, which is today the main basis and source of the educational reform debates.

While conceding these aspects of critique, there can, nevertheless, also be seen some sense of loss when the philosophical basis of vocational education and the endeavours of the classical German writers on vocational pedagogy to legitimise vocational education are ignored. Furthermore, the legitimation of the vocational schools themselves and the thinking about the vocational as an important element of educational thinking and practice is an important advance. The establishment of the vocational school, based on vocations and occupational knowledge and skills, and functioning in collaboration with workplace learning, did not come as a matter of course—as is shown clearly by the focus of educational concern in Germany, *and much more in other countries*, reveals. In times when digitalisation is becoming more and more important, not least in vocational schools, the quest for a modernised VET aiming at a comprehensive concept of *Bildung* with adequate learning opportunities is again at stake.

ENDNOTES

¹Society for Social Policy.

²Secondary grammar school.

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