Tracing Curriculum Dynamics within and across Contexts. An Introduction to Stefan Thomas Hopmann's work

Kirsten Sivesind & Wieland Wermke

In the context of globalization and international policy dynamics, where international organizations and assessments are increasingly influencing the pace and direction of educational reform, it is imperative to examine how schooling is evolving as a political and practical endeavor, and how research is engaging with current changes. Curriculum research addresses issues central to understanding the dynamics of both continuity and change, including the rapid changes and threats to democracies in contemporary societies.

Stefan Thomas Hopmann's scholarship represents one of the most thorough and insightful efforts to examine curricular processes across historical and cultural contexts. In doing so, he stands out as a key scholar in this field of research. Hopmann's research spans a wide range of research areas and perspectives, including cross-disciplinary reasoning and topical analysis, integrating insights from classical theories to late-modern approaches. As such, this book of Hopmann's collected works provides both broad perspectives, theoretical explorations, and concrete knowledge, useful to researchers and students, and those working practically with curriculum and didactics.

Throughout his long research career, Hopmann has explored the various drivers of curriculum change and has highlighted why certain research approaches are too simplistic to fully understand the complexity of how politics interact with programmatic and practical contexts. By advancing theories of how curriculum processes unfold, Hopmann challenges academics and various stakeholders to rethink their underlying views and beliefs about public schooling. His theories and conceptual approaches, which imply an underlying critique of conventional perceptions, are undoubtedly of considerable value. For a broad set of purposes, Hopmann has greatly contributed to uncovering the interplay between various dimensions of curriculum work. By focusing on the relational aspects within and across national and international contexts, Hopmann offers a deep understanding

of curriculum dynamics and their complexities. However, so far, Hopmann's works, published in various languages, have not been presented in a coherent collection of writings in English.

This edited volume aims to put the pieces together to promote Hopmann's scholarly work and increase his recognition within the international community of academics and professionals. To this end, we have chosen the most significant essays in Hopmann's scholarship. This means that this collection contains those essays that have significantly contributed new ideas and concepts to the field of international and comparative curriculum studies. The volume at hand, consequently, is supposed to cover Hopmann's various conceptual contributions. His list of publications is, however, longer than the 19 chosen pieces, and that also comprises work presenting similar ideas in varying languages (such as English, German, or the Scandinavian languages). Our main criterion of choice has been the ambition to present those texts, which were the most prominent (often printed in English publication channels) or which presented new concepts for the first time.

Some of the writings in this collection were translated from German to English and are therefore available for an English-speaking audience for the first time. We have also edited the texts' layouts and references to ensure coherence and consistency throughout the volume; typos and obvious language mistakes have been removed. Moreover, we have received the resubmission permits from Hopmann and the publishers and various co-authors of the original versions and made the works available as an open-access volume. The collection and publishing work have been made possible by project funding from the Swedish Research Council for the project "From Salamanca to PISA. The Professionalization of Special Educators Since 1990 From a Comparative Perspective" (VR 2020-03652).

In an endeavor to make Hopmann's publications accessible in a coherent form, we encourage readers, including researchers, students, experts, and others, to rethink both historical and contemporary perspectives on public education and revisit scholarly discourses on how public schooling relates to the larger society, which is one of the core themes in Hopmann's work. We hope that the book will motivate people to actively question underlying ideas and assumptions that are taken for granted and to engage with curriculum problems in both political and practical contexts. Based on our review of the articles available online and building on personal archives collected over

many years, we have compiled a volume of key texts covering the core themes and approaches central to Hopmann's research. We cannot, of course, cover every aspect and dimension of theoretical value, but have purposively chosen themes and perspectives that may contribute to advancing international and comparative research on schooling and curriculum. Finally, we hope to revitalize research topics and encourage researchers in the educational sciences to continue Stefan Thomas Hopmann's work.

The book is available open access. Some texts in it can also be found elsewhere, in particular, the newer essays of this volume, republished under a Creative Commons license. Again, the major purpose of this volume is to present Hopmann's conceptual contribution in one place. Our conceptual contribution is the collection, categorization, and critical summarization of Hopmann's collected work in this introduction. Nevertheless, all chapters, i.e., Hopmann's various essays, can be downloaded by interested readers separately. This format is supposed to encourage using individual parts of the volume in university courses at different levels and in various countries. The volume at hand would then offer a theoretical contextualization to each chosen essay; in other words, the "context" of each text. This introduction begins with an overview of Hopmann's professional life and work, highlighting the projects and achievements that have defined his career as a researcher. Thereafter, we present his work in three sections, with the following themes that align with the overall structure of the volume: (1) *state-regulated curriculum work: historical and comparative perspectives*, (2) *curriculum coordination across social and cultural contexts, and* (3) *curriculum constitutive mindsets*. Finally, we briefly situate Hopmann's work and this collection of essays within the context of contemporary research.

Stefan Thomas Hopmann's Professional Life and Work Degrees

Stefan Thomas Hopmann was born in Göttingen, Germany, in 1954. Through numerous academic projects, collaborations, and esteemed positions, he has established himself as a prominent scholar in the field of education research. After completing his studies in education, sociology, and psychology at Justus Liebig University Giessen, he earned a Magister Artium (M.A.) in education. Hopmann was a graduate student at Christian Albrechts University in Kiel

from 1985 to 1986 and obtained his Dr. Phil degree in 1988, for which he received a faculty award. In 1997, at the University of Oslo, he was honored with a professorship in education with a specialty in comparative and international research.

Professional Positions

Hopmann has held various professional positions that have expanded his influence and expertise over the years. Between 1976 and 1980, he received financial support from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and from 1977 to 1984, he gained valuable experience as a teacher. Hopmann's research career began in the mid-1980s when he served as a research fellow at the Institute for Science Education (IPN) at the University of Kiel, from which he also graduated and obtained his doctoral degree. At IPN, he engaged in a large empirical research project under the guidance of Hennig Haft and colleagues. In 1994, he worked as a professor of education at the University of Potsdam, Brandenburg (*Lehrstuhlvertretung*).

Hopmann moved to Norway in 1996 and became a full professor at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim, where he also served as the director of the laboratory for technology, a position he left in 2002. He also served for 6 years during this period as an adjunct professor at the Department of Education, University of Oslo. A call to take on new responsibilities as a professor and director for the Center for Research on Teaching (Didaktik) at Agder University College in Kristiansand resulted in another move to the southern part of Norway, where he lived for 3 years. In 2005, he accepted the position of chair at the University of Vienna, where he completed his professional career as a professor of education. He also continued as an adjunct professor at NTNU from 2002 to 2007. During all these years as a professor in education, he supervised a large group of doctoral students.

In Vienna, Hopmann devoted his research to the field of historical and comparative education. He also lectured in a variety of courses, ranging from school theory and reform pedagogy to comparative curriculum studies. Among his many professional affiliations, Hopmann has been a member of German, European, and American research associations, and over the years, he has initiated and chaired several expert committees, working groups, workshops, seminars, and meetings. One of his most important roles was as

editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, a position he assumed in 2010 and continues to hold.

Research Projects and Collaborations

Didaktik Meets Curriculum

Hopmann's research projects are distinguished by their broad scope and analytical lenses. Between 1991 and 1996, he played a central role in the research project *Didaktische Theorien und Modelle im internationalen Vergleich* [Didactical Theories and Models Within an International Perspective], also labelled *Didaktik Meets Curriculum* at the beginning (Hopmann & Riquarts, 1992, p. 24). The IPN in Kiel supported this project financially, and, in the end, it involved a large group of both national and international scholars. The project explored the intersections and differences between Didaktik, the prominent scholarly tradition in education in Northern European contexts, and the curriculum field, which was widely recognized among English-speaking researchers belonging to this field. The aim was to trace the development, dissemination, and reception of these two traditions across different contexts and, through this, to exchange knowledge and learn from each other's fields.

The idea of the project was conceived in Oslo in October 1990. Professor Bjørg Brandtzæg Gundem and colleagues organized an international symposium at the University of Oslo entitled "*Curriculum Work and Curriculum Content, Theory and Practice, Contemporary and Historical Perspectives*" (Gundem, 1991). The 1990 conference was, from Gundem's point of view, a follow-up of a doctoral course in 1988 to which American, UK, and Swedish scholars were invited. According to Gundem (1991), the 1990 conference addressed two distinct and overlapping audiences: doctoral students following the doctoral polit program at the University of Oslo, and the national network associated with the research group for curriculum studies at the Department of Education. This network was affiliated with the Curriculum and School Subject project, financed by a Norwegian research grant, and coordinated by Gundem, Brit Ulstrup Engelsen, and Berit Karseth at the University of Oslo.

Several researchers, who later became a node within Hopmann's research network, gave lectures at the 1990 conference. Besides Hopmann, William A. Reid, University of California, Riverside; Peter Pereira, DePaul University,

Chicago; and Ian Westbury, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, were invited to exchange their knowledge, expertise, and perspectives from their own research contexts. At a dinner with Gundem, Ian Westbury and Stefan Hopmann launched the idea about an international project or a "dialogue project," which later became what is widely known as the "*Didaktik Meets Curriculum*" project. The vision was to bring together prominent representatives of both traditions and to explore the contexts and discourses in which they worked.

At that time, researchers were devoted to historical research on curriculum processes, with which Ivor Goodson, University of Western Ontario; Barry Franklin, University of Georgia, Kennesaw College; Tom Popkewitz, University of Wisconsin; and Tomas Englund, Uppsala University were engaged. At that time, Gundem (1989) also researched the history of curriculum reform and the school subject English, as demonstrated by the chapter written for the Society for the Study of Curriculum History, which she published in 1989 (Gundem, 1989). This society assembles and still assembles each year in concurrence with the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). It was founded in 1977 under the leadership of Laurel Tanner and sought to strengthen the historical orientation of curriculum studies (Kridel, 1989; Tanner & Tanner, 1990). In this context, both Ian Westbury and William Reid were known for their dedication to Joseph Schwab's work. Westbury and Reid also succeeded each other as editors-in-chief of the *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, where Hopmann today serves as editor-in-chief. They were all engaged in revitalizing the research on institutional practices of curriculum processes and contributed to international scholarly debates, particularly with William F. Pinar and the reconceptualists, which over the years shaped another community of researchers devoted to curriculum theorizing (Pinar, 1975).

About one year later, after the conference in Oslo in 1991, Rudolf Künzli organized an international symposium in Aarau, Switzerland, on curriculum and didactics entitled "Was ist Didaktik? Didactics Meet Curriculum." Presentations from this symposium were later published in a special issue of the German journal *Bildung und Erziehung* (1992). As is evident from the introductory article "Didaktik-Renaissance" by Künzli and Hopmann (1992), the symposium reflected diversities and controversies about what the Didaktik tradition means to various groups of scholars. The same was true for the field

of curriculum studies in the United States, with traditionalists on one side and reconceptualists on the other. Hence, the dialogue, they argued, must switch from hasty unanimity to exuberant polyphony. They also stressed that there is no clear translation of the key concepts within Didaktik into English, and vice versa, which makes international comparative analysis challenging and important.

Despite these differences, the international dialogue about curriculum and Didaktik continued. During an association-sponsored symposium at the AERA meeting in San Francisco in 1992, entitled "European Didactics and the American Curriculum Tradition: The Beginning of a Conversation," the group of researchers rejoined. In this symposium, Stefan Hopmann, Rudolf Künzli, Bjørg B. Gundem, and Walter Doyle presented their views and approaches in exploring curriculum problems. This symposium resulted, among other papers, in the article co-written by Stefan Hopmann and Kurt Riquarts (1992), entitled "Die skandinavische Theorie-Renaissance: Didaktik – Didaktikk – Didactics" ("The Scandinavian Theory Renaissance: Didaktik – Didaktikk – Didactics"). Here, the authors reflect on the renewed interest in German Didaktik scholarship within Scandinavian research contexts. As noted in the first paragraph, the article draws on insights gained through the authors' collaboration with their international colleagues Bjørg B. Gundem (Oslo), Uwe Hameyer (Kiel), and Karl Frey (Zurich), all of whom had lectured on this topic at the IPN in Kiel. For this reason, Gundem published articles on this topic as well, which also included the French traditions, which very few people at that time knew about in the German-and English-speaking parts of the world (Gundem, 1998).

The next seminal symposium was held in Kiel in 1993 and had around 50 participants (Hopmann & Riquarts, 1995). By discussing the common roots of Didaktik and curriculum, this symposium engaged the participants to reflect on the historical trajectories of the respective fields and how they constituted cultural traditions and semantics that could inform each other across contexts. According to Gundem (1995), this was not an easy task due to various institutional conditions that shaped the choices and meanings of terms and concepts that the scholars used:

> An approach lending itself to comparative analysis is conceptual. It may, however, seem fruitless to try to equate concepts like *Allgemeine Didaktik* and *curriculum theory*, *Fachdidaktik* and *pedagogical content knowledge*, even if it has been done and

> probably will be done still more. What seems to be lost in such comparisons is the institutionalisation of those terms, especially in a Scandinavian and continental European context, but also in a U.S. context. And when trying to compare and equate terms and concepts, the complexity and extensive nature of Didaktik seem paramount. (Gundem, 1995, p. 54)

Discussions centered around *Allgemeine Didaktik* [general didactics] and *curriculum theory*, *Fachdidaktik* [subject didactics], and *pedagogical content knowledge*, which, at this moment in history, evolved into subfields of curriculum studies. The following conference at the University of Oslo in 1995, "Didaktik and/or Curriculum – A Continuing International Dialogue: The Didaktik and Curriculum of the 1960s into the 1970s," marked, along with a symposium at the AERA meeting in New York in 1996, the formal end of the project. The conference in Oslo was the source of the essays in the book published 2 years later (Gundem & Hopmann, 1998). In the closing chapter, Hopmann and Gundem (1998) conclude, "Those participants who were continuously involved in the project's activities became more and more aware of the implications and fallacies of a transnational discourse on education (p. 339)."[1]

A couple of years later, Westbury et al. (2000) co-edited another volume, *Teaching as a Reflective Practice. The German Didaktik Tradition*, in which they included some of the essays from the 1998 book in addition to the translated texts of key scholars, including Wilhelm von Humboldt, Eric Weniger, Christoph Lüth, Peter Menck, and Wolfgang Klafki, to mention a few. This book was written to transfer and translate the theories of Didaktik into the Anglo-American context and focused on subject didactics for mathematics as well. Importantly, a complementary project emerged that focused on subject didactics drawing on the work of Hopmann and colleagues. One source that documents this is a report published by the Thematic Network of Teacher Education in Europe (TNTEE) (Hudson et al., 1999), partly funded by the European Union. A similar network is still in place to nurture research on general didactics and subject didactics.

The collaborations and dialogues among international colleagues, both at the IPN Kiel, Zurich, and Oslo during the 1990s, and among researchers participating in the AERA conference, culminated in three co-edited volumes. Moreover, these partnerships and book projects undoubtedly and profoundly

[1] See also work 15 in this volume.

shaped Hopmann's academic work and recognition in the field of educational research. Moreover, these international collaborations encouraged the development of comparative curriculum studies, for which Hopmann is still referenced.

Comparative Curriculum Studies

The most concrete result of empirical comparative research from Hopmann's work draws on projects coordinated with Riquarts and Künzli. The first comprehensive study that examined state-regulated curriculum work in Germany was conducted in 1975 by Hans-Dieter Haller (1976). This was a seminal work that influenced the later projects of Hennig Haft, who became the doctoral father of Hopmann. During the mid-1980s, the research group[2] at the IPN in Kiel, coordinated by Haft, decided to replicate the Haller study with some adjustments. This new project examined the composition of state-appointed committees in West Germany that were involved in curriculum-making processes between 1980 and 1985. In addition, to explore the differences between the various states in terms of political and administrative conditions, they examined the shared experiences of curriculum development and the disciplinary, pedagogical, and didactic-methodological issues that the stakeholders faced in the course of their work (Haft et al., 1986). Hopmann (1988) drew on the survey material from this project in his dissertation. Then he contributed to two other externally funded projects; From 1984 to 1988, Hopmann engaged in the "Process analysis of curriculum development. An empirical study on state-run curriculum change in Germany," which was funded by the German research foundation. Between 1986 and 1991, Hopmann compared historical sources within the project: "The history of state-run curriculum change. A comparative study on the history of curriculum change in Denmark, Prussia and the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein."

These projects were further continued in the new research project that Hopmann organized together with colleagues from IPN, Kiel, and Aarau, Switzerland, during the 1990s, where the Haller and Haft surveys were expanded by the addition of new groups of respondents and thematic areas.

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[2] Karl Frey, Henning Haft, Stefan Hopmann, and Klaus Westfphalen. In addition, Peter Menck from from Siegen and Roland Mackert from Sachsenheim, participated.

The Swiss project (1994–1998), was funded as part of the research program "Wirksamkeit unserer Bildungssystem" by the Swiss Research Council "Schweizerischen National fonds für Forschungsförderung für ihr Vertrauen und die Unterstützung unserer Arbeit." The other project in Germany from 1995 to 1998 at IPN, Kiel was funded by the Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft [The German Research Council] and was entitled "Sekundäre Lehrplanbindungen: Vergleichenden Untersuchungen zur Entstehung und Verwendung von Lehrplanentscheidungen [Secondary Curriculum Linkages: Comparative Examinations of the Creation and Use of Curriculum Decisions]." Also, this project aimed at studying curriculum reform from initiation to realization. It was initially chaired by Riquarts at IPN, Kiel, and Jürgen Baumert, who moved to the Max-Plack-Institut für Bildungsforschung during the project period. In the German project, Jörg Biehl worked as a doctoral candidate and Frank Ohlhaver as a post-doctoral researcher. When Hopmann accepted a position at the university in Potsdam, Ohlhaver took over Hopmann's responsibilities with the aim of habilitating, which he did, and which resulted in a book about the structure and problems of state-based school regulation (Ohlhaver, 2005). Despite Hopmann's move, first to Potsdam and later to Oslo and Trondheim, he continued as part of the project group, primarily as a mediator between the German group and the researchers in the Swiss partnership project, which Künzli coordinated with Hopmann.

In this period, and as an extension of the Swiss and German projects, Hopmann also received funding from the Research Council of Norway for the project "Structures and Strategies in Curriculum Work" that involved Kirsten Sivesind as a doctoral fellow (Sivesind and Hopmann, 1997). All three projects were based on the same idea and drew on the same analytical framework, called "Aarauer Lehrplannormal," a research framework that Hopmann and Künzli (1994) developed together. Notably, the framework was at different stages in the project, adjusted, and further extended in order to become a model for future research projects.

All three projects compared the state's work in developing new curricula and added a cross-level approach and various groups of respondents. One goal was to study curriculum implementation processes across three institutional arenas: the political arena, the programmatic arena (with two sub-levels), and the practical arena. Moreover, within the German and Swiss projects, the

involved researchers aimed at comparing curriculum work between states in Germany and cantons in Switzerland, that became a responsibility of Ohlhaver and Moritz Rosenmund, who collaborated in the project.

Key themes of the research included:

- The interaction between everyday "common sense" knowledge and academic research
- The role of subject matter as a central frame of reference in curriculum-making processes
- The balance of autonomy and control at various levels of the educational system

In parallel, this collaborative effort brought together four national research projects that were unified by attempts to develop a common set of research instruments. The first conference of the Norwegian project was organized in December 1997 at the University of Oslo, entitled: "Curriculum Making and Curriculum Studies: Comparative and Empirical Research on Curriculum Change." A significant outcome of discussions during this conference was the Organizing Curriculum Change (OCC) project, a collaboration in which Moritz Rosenmund, Ian Westbury, Anna-Verena Fries, Svein-Erik Hansén, Jessica Aspfors, Betinna Backström Widjeskog, and Kirsten Sivesind participated. Hopmann dedicated his article (1999), "The Curriculum as a Standard of Public Education," to the OCC project (*see work 5*). Another conference, in December 1999, expanded the international interest. It was organized by Rosenmund, Anna-Verna Fries, and Werner Heller and resulted in a publication "Comparing Curriculum-making Processes" with 22 national chapters (Rosenmund et.al., 2002). The international collaborative network project of researchers from five countries, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, Finland, and the United States, resulted in a special issue almost 20 years later in the *Journal of Curriculum Studies* (Sivesind & Westbury, 2016; Westbury et al., 2016). This fact demonstrates the robustness of the network itself, first initiated with the Swiss and German projects.

During the 2000s, the research networks initiated by Hopmann expanded significantly, involving numerous PhD researchers and colleagues in new projects. To support these efforts, Hopmann secured funding through applications to research councils and agencies in Norway and Austria.

During the 2000s, the Norwegian Research Council granted two major research projects chaired by Hopmann. The first project, "Tools of curriculum change," aimed to evaluate a large-scale school reform program in Norway through an empirical multi-level study on the process of curriculum change (Evaluating Reform 97). The project engaged Kari E. Bachmann as a doctoral fellow (Bachmann, 2005) and Azita Afsar and Kirsten Sivesind as co-researchers. Also, this project drew on the German-Swiss research design, but added new perspectives and additional research material on evaluation and assessment practices among school principals, teachers, administrators, textbook authors, and others (Bachmann et.al., 2004). The second Norwegian project in the 2000s, "Accomplishing School Accountability in Practice" (ASAP) from 2003 to 2007, was also financed by the National Research Council in Norway and succeeded the international and national projects by bringing in material and analytical perspectives on the new role of national test instruments. This project was coordinated by Gert Langfeldt, University College Agder, in collaboration with Hopmann, who the first years, served as a professor at this college. Here, nine research teams from various parts of Norway gathered to examine the impact of new forms of assessment, evaluations, and accountabilities on the education system. Also, this project resulted in a joint anthology (Langfeldt et.al., 2008) together with international articles (Elstad, 2009; Hopmann, 2008 (*see Work 17*)).

Hopmann's extensive international network greatly enriched these initiatives, encompassing both projects focused on technology-enhanced learning in local settings (Nesje & Hopmann, 2002) and explorations of the underlying rationales and functions of assessment programs in international contexts (Hopmann et.al., 2007). Using contacts established through major conferences and research networks, Hopmann organized research seminars and workshops that brought together prominent scholars from different countries. Meetings in Trondheim, Oslo, Bodø, Bath, and Vienna attracted internationally renowned researchers including Larry Cuban, Dennis Shirley, Wolfgang Klafki, David Berliner, Robert Linn, Christopher Hood, Melvin Dubnick, Richard Elmore, and Jennifer O'Day. Throughout international seminars, participants engaged in in-depth discussions that addressed contemporary educational challenges and contributed to the global discourse on curriculum, knowledge, accountability, and assessment reforms. These

exchanges bridged geographical and disciplinary boundaries and established lasting relationships and research agendas.

Importantly, a series of research seminars in Vienna brought together researchers interested in advancing curriculum studies, like Gert Biesta, Michael Young, Moritz Rosenmund, Ian Westbury, and Zongyi Deng. One of these seminars fostered a shared dialogue among researchers in Hopmann's network, focusing on what constitutes powerful knowledge in curriculum development and reform and how to further develop frameworks to study curriculum-making processes. This and related questions turned later into various thematic strands of the Journal of Curriculum Study. Thus, the resulting projects brought forward by communities of researchers, did not only generated new avenues of research but also continued to influence scholarly debates on curriculum topics.

Nordic Didactics and Transition Studies

During his period as a professor at the University of Agder, Hopmann initiated and chaired the network on Nordic Didactics (NORDID), which drew on his and his colleagues' interest in the professionalization of teachers. Gert Langfeldt became a key collaborator in this period and in the years that followed. Both Ilmi Willbergh (2008) and Jorunn Midtsundstad (2010) completed their doctoral research projects as part of the NORDID initiative. In addition, in 2016, Nicole Veelo, PhD, was connected to this network's work (Veelo, 2016) as well as Bernadette Hörmann, who defended her PhD-degree in Austria (2015) and continued as a post doc at University of Oslo. The network included a series of research seminars over 8 years and the establishment of joint postgraduate courses for the participating members. In addition, the network resulted in publications relevant to both general and subject-specific didactics in the Nordic region.

For all his efforts and work, Hopmann was invited to hold the Helga Eng lecture at the University of Oslo in 2013, and he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Gothenburg in Sweden (2014). His engagement in the field of didactics also resulted in the emergence of new research networks, entitled Didaktik, within the Nordic Educational Research Association, where Tobias Werler and collaborators became key conveners. Hopmann also engaged in the establishment of a similar gathering in the European Educational Research Association—the Didactics—Learning and Teaching

network together with Nordic and European colleagues, further developed by colleagues in the following years. Researchers acquainted with Hopmann's work on restrained teaching as an expression of Didaktik (*see Work 10*) developed this strand of research in, for example, the United Kingdom, where Brian Hudson and Zongyi Deng work as professors.

Notably, the Nordic curriculum theory conferences were also sites for recalibrating how to understand Didaktik within an international context. Hopmann and Westbury were invited by the Swedish professor Ulf P. Lundgren to the first of this series of conferences, which counted 10 in 2025, when the conference was organised by Karseth and colleagues in the research group CLEG (Curriculum, Leadership and Educational Governance) at the University of Oslo. After the conference in 2013, organized at Uppsala University, a Swedish-Norwegian research team organised a special issue about the challenges presented by the emergence of curriculum theory over the past 20 years, in which Wieland Wermke served as a leading editor (Pettersson et al., 2015). In this issue, Hopmann published his work on what he considered the conditions under which Didaktik can develop today. We have included this article in our volume (*see Work 12*).

As already mentioned, in the last stage of his professional career, Hopmann served as a full professor of Historical and Comparative School and Education Research (*Historische und vergleichende Schul- und Bildungsforschung*) at the Department for School, Education, and Society (*Forschungsabteilung für Schule, Bildung und Gesellschaft*) at the University of Vienna. During this period, Hopmann coordinated the research project NOESIS, which began in 2009. This initiative involved a multidisciplinary team of PhD scholars, researchers, and research assistants and focused on documenting the introduction of the Lower Austrian Middle School, which began in 2010. The NOESIS project followed Lower Austrian students from the 4th to the 9th grade and analyzed the transition processes across educational stages.

As in other research projects, the examinations and findings from NOESIS resulted in numerous research reports, book chapters, and academic articles (see e.g., Geppert, 2017; Geppert et al., 2012). The project also inspired Hopmann to engage more actively in public debates, addressing politically charged issues related to public education. Drawing on

theoretical frameworks and arguments rooted in his early academic background, he assessed the development of comprehensive schooling in Austria, often challenging political narratives and policies.

Recently, Hopmann returned north of Europe, both as a part-time researcher at the Linneaus University, Växjö, Sweden and as a part-time researcher, at the University of Southeastern Norway. His contributions to ongoing projects, which encompass evaluation, theoretical developments, research, and public advocacy, have had a profound and lasting influence on the field of curriculum studies in various parts of Europe and elsewhere. As an active promoter of PhD courses, research panels, and conferences and in his role as editor-in-chief at the *Journal of Curriculum Studies* over the last 15 years, Hopmann has promoted the development of new research perspectives, shaped academic discourses and willingly shared his experiences and academic insights with a broad community of scholars, constantly proposing new topics to delve into in the curriculum field. Hopmann has supervised numerous doctoral students over the past few decades and, not least, inspired several generations of young researchers to continue studying curriculum processes and their expected outcomes.

In the following section, we present the three core topics of Hopmann's research production. In three sections, we present altogether 19 works of Hopmann and colleagues. We have collected articles, chapters, and conference proceedings that inspired the title of this book, each of them labelled as "works."

Core Research Topics in Stefan Thomas Hopmann's Scholarship

Section I: State-regulated Curriculum Work: Historical and Comparative Perspectives

The curriculum as a course of study is a matter of concern for all those responsible for education in schools. Questions are often raised about the legitimacy of subjects and the organization of curricular programs and processes. In Northern Europe, these responsibilities and related issues have been a state affair at different historical moments in the 19th century. During the 20th century, curriculum-making evolved into comprehensive development projects, but notably at different places and in various forms, as teachers, school administrators, academics, experts, and others worked together to

accomplish common goals. In Germany, stakeholders engaged in "curriculum work" (*Lehrplanarbeit*) at the state level, which unfolded through organizational processes and discursive communication among various stakeholder groups. Inspired by organizational theorizing, the researchers labelled the common activities for *curriculum work*, a concept that they later replaced with *curriculum-making*, of which the chaired accomplishments resulted in *curriculum development*.

By reading German books on the curriculum from the 1970s to 1990s, one discovers striking characteristics. One relates to the scientific orientation that partly challenged philosophical and humanistic-oriented theory. Because scientific legitimation was crucial to making enquiry critical in the Habermasian sense, researchers engaged in empirical studies that informed both *curriculum-making processes* and *curriculum research* in general. Both curriculum work and curriculum development became key areas of research in Germany in the 1970s. For this purpose, scholars developed conceptual and analytical frameworks to explore the interrelationships between politics, policy, or administration, and practice, parallel to conceptualizations in political science and sociology, which the curriculum researchers drew on. Despite academic debate about the value of empirical research in curriculum enquiries, curriculum researchers dedicated time and economic resources to examine how the members in curriculum committees that prepared new curricula perceived their roles as stakeholders in curriculum-making processes and how they were dependent on regulations and their surrounding environments. Some investigated how curriculum-making involved larger societal systems in societal terms, such as politics and the educational system, and the functional and structural role of curriculum work therein.

German curriculum research from 1970s to 1990s, represented a lighthouse for sociologically oriented research in the field of education, and the IPN Kiel attracted various international scholars from American, Scandinavian, and German-speaking contexts. Through individual visits, seminars, and conferences, researchers exchanged knowledge about curriculum studies in general and curriculum-making processes in particular. Publications resulting from these events referenced both classical sociologists, such as Simmel, Weber, Marton, and Parsons, and, even more frequently, the critical sociologists associated with the Frankfurt School, such as Adorno and Habermas.

The sociologist, Niklas Luhmann, provided novel insights in this regard. As early as 1975, curriculum scholars addressed the relevance of system logics and functional approaches to studying curriculum development (see e.g., Lipp, 1975; Strzelewicz, 1975). For Luhmann, one of the most influential sociologists in Germany at that time, this interest continued simultaneously as the researchers elaborated on the organizational dimensions to understand the coordination of curriculum work. Both new institutional theories and linguistic-oriented models were referenced, with Dürkheim and Bernstein as their counterparts. This theoretical interest in combining perspectives drove Hopmann's desire to study curriculum at a meso-level, both by developing theoretical-analytical models and by conducting empirical-comparative research. It is this backdrop of sociological-educational theorizing, as well as historical reasoning, that framed Hopmann's research on curriculum administration.

Hopmann's doctoral dissertation from 1988 compared the differentiation processes within public reform projects in 11 federal states in West Germany. Two of the works we have republished in this volume illustrate well how Hopmann unfolded the complex realms of curriculum-making as a multiplication of differentiation processes, comprised of organizational discourses that legitimated state curriculum work. He also discussed how such processes permitted professional freedom and autonomy for various actors. In *Work 1* in this volume, *Retracing Curriculum History: The Multiple Realities of Curriculum Making*, Hopmann examines the contents and activities of curriculum-making, curriculum administration, and "everything related to curriculum in daily use in regard of various contexts" (p. 49).

Within this work, Hopmann defines curricula as instructional guidelines in two ways: by instructing what will be taught and by serving social functions. In the latter sense, the curriculum is regarded as a symbol of political action, as a sign of what has been accomplished in someone's career, as an instrument to keep conflicts away, or as an agreement between all those with responsibility or interest in public schooling. Thus, formal curricula are not only educational in essence, but they are also political and historically constructed documents. In this work, Hopmann takes a phenomenological stance by referencing Alfred Schütz's conceptions of *multiple realities* to sketch out three basic features of curriculum-making processes as they historically evolved in the German state of Prussia from the early 19th century. He adds that similar patterns are persistent in other European countries as well, due

to states' needs and wishes to develop curricula to govern policy processes and public schooling.

Features of state-regulated curriculum work evolve as differentiation processes that curriculum researchers identify through empirical studies. Notably, conceptualizations of these features are developed along with their enquiries. Hopmann labels the first feature *compartmentalization*, which is the process of distinguishing between various topics, areas, competencies, and disciplines in curriculum work. This feature historically developed from 1816, when the Prussian state authorized the "Normalplan" for upper secondary school. Hopmann considers compartmentalization as a form of topic control. Determining what to teach during this period was not the result of what the state authorities regulated by law, nor what naturally could be taught in terms of knowledge, faculties, etc., but was a result of decisions in which various social realms intersected. Through compartmentalization, a division of knowledge areas evolved, legitimizing which subject matter areas structured public schooling and which competencies were necessary to qualify teachers. School authorities invented the formal curriculum as a supervision tool that guided teachers and could be used in formal inspections. At the same time, the formal curriculum empowered the expertise of those who could decide on the content of public schooling versus knowledge of general interest.

The second feature, *licensing*, relates to the differentiation processes that create social arenas in which some processes structure others without necessarily having total domination or control of the outcomes. In addition, licensing historically relates to the features developed in Prussian curriculum administration, in which the state differentiated between the responsibilities of the state and what took place in schools, which divided who is in control of what. One way to create such limits was by distinguishing between content and methods, the former formalized by the state, and the latter the main responsibility of teachers. Moreover, in this way, the state disengaged from executive responsibility, creating the leeway for teachers and others to make their own decisions within organizational limits, a principle that also changed how content matter was defined differently from earlier reform-educational practices.

The third feature of *segmentation* implies a temporal differentiation that enables decision-makers to access and hinder information that is transferred between the work inside curriculum-making and outside the curriculum

work, according to stakeholders' interests. Due to the modernization of political systems, actors outside the state bureaucracy demanded increased control over curriculum decisions. Thus, the new coalitions of stakeholders who sought to influence the secondary school curricula in Prussia made differentiation processes necessary. During the mid-1900s, formalized principles segmented curriculum-making processes into stages. Stakeholders were engaged in consultation or so-called "hearings" in which those with legitimate interests could have a "say" in the curriculum-making process. This feature can be seen as generalized across the world, where state-regulated policies exist to both govern and legitimate societal interests.

In Hopmann's and his colleagues' work, the differentiation processes resulted from a functional analysis of embedded structures that institutionalized schooling and created evolving structures of curricula in Prussia during the 19th century. In his doctoral thesis, and presented in the *first work* in this volume, a figurative model illustrates these features. Using three pillars, Hopmann shows how politics, administration, and curriculum represent three strands of work that form a structure in keeping the different realities apart, with discourses bridging them together. This discourse implies that the differentiated nature of curriculum-making processes is not expressed by dividing them into fully independent realities but rather by the way researchers and others enquire into the organizational dimensions of curriculum development as a sub-differentiated system. Thus, an organizational view of differentiation processes is the key to understanding the complexity of curriculum-making processes. Moreover, how discourse evolves within this kind of organization is a question that Hopmann returns to in several publications.

In the *second work* included in our volume, "The Current Structures of Curriculum Making in the Federal Republic of Germany and Their Impact on Content", Hopmann provides an overview of how officially guided deliberation processes on education policy and curriculum development are structured into segmented stages, from preliminary deliberations to implementation processes. The work summarizes empirical observations of how large such projects can become in terms of how many hours are spent on curriculum-making in German states, which people and competences are involved, and how frequently a state curriculum is revised or developed on average in the German context. By comparing the survey material with Haller's study (1976) conducted in 1973, Hopmann empirically demonstrates

historical changes in the percentages of professions involved as committee members. Interestingly, in both periods, state committees developing new syllabuses consisted mostly of teachers (two-thirds) besides representatives of other institutions, such as teacher education organizations, state institutes, administrations, universities, and others. They were all involved in the decision-making that led to specialized branches representing problematic policy areas and potential conflicts, which reflect the complex nature of curriculum work. Moreover, because of their central role as curriculum-makers and knowledge providers, the research provided important insights, not only for academics but also for developers and users, including the teachers and students to whom the curriculum documents addressed by aims and subject matter content.

A key problem in curriculum policies that Hopmann addresses in the *third work* included in our volume relates to the rise of mass education across the world. In "The Monitorial Movement and the Rise of Curriculum Administration: A Comparative View," Hopmann theorizes about the case of an educational program that emerged in the early 19th century with the promise to address many problems of mass schooling. The so-called *monitorial system* was closely connected to the names Bell and Lancaster, who developed the method of mutual instruction for poor children in England. The method, originally inspired by work at the Male Orphan Asylum in Madras, India, was widely implemented throughout the British Empire and in many European countries. Here, monitorial instruction implied using pupils as assistant teachers who helped organize schooling for low costs. However, this system was neither necessary nor successful in all the tested contexts; although it had a splendid start, it disappeared in several countries. Hopmann states:

> A comprehensive review of all these arguments reveals that during the first period of expanding mass education, monitorial instruction offered a cheap and versatile system of teaching and control, which was readily applied. At the zenith of its popularity, in the 1830s, the system was practised at more than 20,000 schools all over the world (an almost unbelievable success, given the conditions of that early period of organized education!) (p. 20)

From this starting point, and by comparing various national contexts, the essay theorizes about in which contexts education programs can succeed at scale and, almost more importantly, can be sustained. The most important

dimension of such success is the existence and nature of a school administration, i.e., the institution that can organize a vast number of schools in relation to each other and thus enable the implementation of new ideas in the practices of schools throughout the country. The other dimension, which has similar relevance, pertains to how the teaching profession is developed and the level of professionalism of the administration. When systems, for example, the monitorial system, present an educational one-size-fits-all solution with little local discretion, they will encounter resistance from professional teachers and school administrators. As Hopmann states:

> The monitorial movement was able to succeed as a transient phenomenon peculiar to the process of the curriculum authority of the state. It was successful only where the expansion of mass education went along with already existing governmental means of implementing a curriculum policy, but where it did not have to face a specialized governmental curriculum administration, which was charged with undivided curriculum authority but incapable of prescribing the details of local instruction, and thus had to have recourse to less binding programs of improving classroom teaching. (p. 27)

This historical case continues to highlight important theoretical aspects today. International methods, as standardized as they may be, will unavoidably take various forms in different contexts. However, by comparing the context-specific implementations and their outcomes, we can learn about the nature of school systems, their various units, and the interactions of these units.

To make curriculum theories and their conceptual frameworks more accessible within the German research context and, at the same time, develop a theoretical framework that distinguishes between various types of policies in European and American contexts, Hopmann wrote about curriculum-making processes and how they differed between countries and continents. Together with Biehl and Ohlhaver, he published the article, "How Do Curricula Work? Models, Strategies, and Contradictions" [Wie wirken Lehrpläne? Modelle, Strategien, Widersprüche] (*Work 4 in this volume*). The article was published as part of the German project with Riquarts at IPN, Kiel, which lasted from 1994 to 1998, as presented earlier.

In this work, the authors state that worldwide education systems differ according to which policy regimes school authorities use to restrict the curriculum and lesson content taught in schools. Such restrictions could include

various "frameworks, specifications, result controls, or other requirements." By drawing on curriculum history literature and German research projects, Hopmann and co-authors present an ideal-typical typology that distinguishes between four forms of curriculum control that are either process-oriented, with state-regulated curriculum documents, such as (1) the *philantropic model* typical of Schleswig and Holstein and the Scandinavian countries and (2) the *classical model* characteristic of Prussia and the German states, or product-oriented, without state-regulated curricula, such as (3) the *examen artium model* that originated on the U.S. East Coast, probably drawing on ideas borrowed from France, and (4) the *assessment model*, also called the West Coast model, involving California in particular, which specifies standards for evaluation.

Interestingly, while models (1) and (4) differ in several respects, with one being process-oriented and the other product-oriented, both share the feature of controlling schools directly with their tools, as they are less differentiated by bureaucratic structures than the other two forms. In contrast, models (2) and (3) structure curriculum-making according to divisions of who is responsible for what tasks. These two alternatives use tools to influence schools through indirect control. This happens through documents that require either expertise or academic-professional knowledge to be fully enacted, which may explain why experience-based knowledge and negotiations between various groups of stakeholders are more pertinent in U.S. states such as California or countries such as Sweden, Denmark, and Norway.

The dynamics of the composition and the fact that the figure places the models considered highly contradictive on the same side, offer a unique contribution compared to all the other curriculum research frameworks developed in parallel during the 1980s and later (such as, for example, the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) model by Sahlberg (2012). Notably, the classification of Hopmann and colleagues resonates with contemporary comparative insights into assessment policies today; for example, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) developed assessment frameworks that legitimize both process and product control, thereby gaining authority in various parts of the world so far states and the involved actors accepted such control in view of how they normally enact policies.

The fact that Germany belongs to this community of countries can be considered a mystery, given their longstanding classical tradition of structural

differentiation between politics, policy, and practices and the use of indirect control. However, Biehl, Ohlaver, and Hopmann argue that the German tradition merged with the philanthropic model, in which both content and methods are objects of curriculum control, which also explains why state curriculum administrations have expanded in Germany. Thus, according to the article, a *mix of strategies* can be empirically experienced and observed, depending on the way curriculum work develops, and moreover, there has been a steady shift between various poles for political-administrative reasons for this development, rather than educational ones.

Hopmann provides further explanations for the underlying rationales and mixed strategies of policy control in an article he published 3 years later, "The Curriculum as Standard of Public Education," which, in our view, is the most prestigious and insightful work he has published during his career. We have included this as *Work 5* in the current volume. Hopmann, as the sole author, explores the history of ideas and historical and empirical research about curricula as a tool for governing public schooling. He uses four perspectives to retrace curriculum history: analytical, political, programmatic, and practical. The new dimension in this article, compared to the former ones, is the sociological-analytical approach in which Hopmann suggests that curriculum work inevitably involves a three-part process of planning, learning, and outcome. This three-part process is equal to the premises of curriculum control, i.e., how the process is structured, how steps are taken toward what can be decided by those involved, and finally, the decisions that construct the result, always contingent on the larger environment, the evolving processes and those in power to define the endpoint.

Because assessments use measures or standards to make final decisions, these may both indirectly and directly govern or steer education. This is an important feature of curriculum control, Hopmann argues, although standards cannot steer in expected ways. The role and function of assessment, must therefore be considered along with the tripartite structure of curriculum work, as outlined in his earlier writings, in which the political, programmatic, and practical arenas of curriculum control are both independent and interdependent through the division of discourse that also depends on how we see and do research.

Hopmann presents the three arenas as levels of curriculum control and describes what the different actors and institutions might expect of control

that is dependent on the interplay between them. Of key importance is the notion of how the levels, including the discourses, are coordinated negatively, that is, what is not going to be directly controlled by, for example, formal regulations. Negative coordination implies governing mechanisms that disallow one body, arena, or discourse to steer another by positive means. The *negative coordination principle*, for example, shows what a common framework allows for in terms of formal coordination and not. Simply said, it defines the borders of what is allowed and not its contents. This principle enables us to understand why curricula are instruments for creating stability rather than change. Curricula are frameworks that set boundaries of changes, without the capacity to instruct individuals in detail how to act and behave in a particular context. The principle implies that curriculum-makers most often deal with margins of change rather than pursuing radical transformations, which encourages them to take small steps forward.

Drawing on the article co-authored with Biehl and Ohlhaver (see *Work 4*), Hopmann ends by describing the four forms of curriculum work and a fifth imagined strategy in which no formal state curriculum work exists. He concludes that such a strategy must fail due to the role and function of curriculum work to frame education and to hold schools accountable, however, without making the practice of teaching impossible to enact from the teachers' own perspectives.

In *Work 6* of this volume, "On the Evaluation of Curriculum Reform," Hopmann examines shifts toward standards-based evaluation. By applying a historical and comparative lens and focusing on various evaluation perspectives and tools, Hopmann presents *evaluation* as an expression of the two forms of curriculum control that he labels (1) *process evaluation* and (2) *product evaluation*. Not surprisingly, the two models refer to two of the poles in the four-field form of curriculum control presented above. Germany and the Northern European countries are associated with one pole, the first model, and the second with the other two, which emerged in France and the United States. In this work, Hopmann placed contemporary issues up front, which at that time were highly pertinent due to the international assessment tests, such as Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), that became tools for international curriculum control.

Hopmann argues that evaluation control has been rare in traditional process-oriented systems because, in such systems, school authorities develop

curricula based on "more or less educated guesses" rather than systematic evaluation that generates evidence-based knowledge. Against this backdrop, he gives a rough sketch of what evaluation implies for the two models and their institutionalization. He also foresees an alignment of the models as the patterns become blurred from an empirical point of view. In the article, Hopmann presents three levels of analysis: *how people are involved*, *which processes they engage in*, *and the products these processes generate*. Instead of thinking of single individual matters or idiosyncrasies as the main factors that constitute evaluation models, Hopmann refers to systems, such as institutions or organizations. Interestingly, the nature of the professionalization of relations between people and processes creates institutionalized models, which explains how evaluation models develop.

In this regard, Hopmann refers to situations in which institutions deal with *ill-defined problems*, that is, when situational adjustments and assessments are necessary to make decisions, and when situational judgement necessitates professions that can deal with such problems. He also considers evaluation from the other side, such as how products are evaluated and how processes become a question for assessing the production of learning and outcomes. Hopmann argues that both models imply a decision about where to begin the evaluation process, either from one end, including people and processes, or from the other end, including the products and the processes, which in both cases depend on the evaluator's position and role within or outside the process itself.

By adding the viewer's perspective, role, and position, Hopmann compares self-evaluation and external evaluation as two opposite types, the first closely tied with what a person evaluates, and the second characterized by a clear distance between the evaluator and the process and products that are evaluated. In between, he presents peer evaluation as an option, which aligns with the traditional evaluation model. Finally, Hopmann presents a table in which he compares the three types with the three levels and concludes that in almost all countries in Europe and elsewhere, institutionalization processes lead to an increased focus on the external evaluation of products, especially in modern societies with ill-defined problems that cannot be identified clearly and therefore cannot be solved.

Alongside the theoretical elaborations that Hopmann undertakes in this work, the exploration of ill-defined societal problems represents a unique

contribution, not least by identifying the characteristics of public institutions that, according to Hopmann, are set up to deal with such problems. Most importantly, it is in the eye of the beholder whether a *problem* is seen as *well-defined* or *ill-defined*. The same situation can lead to very different processes of institutionalization, depending on how the professions are able to define their own roles and services. The professionalization of standards and services is therefore a powerful tool to build trust in public institutions and thus stability, despite the high risks in societies in which the public demands more control. Interestingly, Hopmann assesses this problem from a historical perspective, a view that helps in understanding how institutions are built to deal with ill-defined problems at the same time as these problems arise due to increased interest in public control. This gives rise to paradoxes based on a functional view of the interface between processes and products.

Against this background, Hopmann sees education as an institution that tries to deal with so-called *undefined problems*. These are problems that arise within the school systems to which all children have a right of access, every day of the week, year after year, and which, according to Hopmann, are characterized by paradoxical concerns that no one can solve because of the way the system works. Nevertheless, a variety of models exist for how professionals can approach this situation, and which provide alternative options for how to deal with ill-defined problems. Regarding scientific solutions, Hopmann is, however, highly skeptical. At best, he notes, scientific diagnoses and prescriptions based on scientific measures lead to naive conceptions of how schooling develops and plays out in everyday practice. Moreover, despite good intentions, the evidence-based approach implies an overestimation of its potential to facilitate improvement.

Section II: Curriculum Coordination Across Social and Cultural Contexts

Hopmann has also developed theories about how curricula are created and how they change in response to societal shifts, providing insights into how curriculum coordination occurs across different social contexts, from public policy to school teaching. From this contextual viewpoint, Hopmann explores the world of schooling in all its complexity, paying attention to the history of how practices have worked and work, then and now, and there and here. By starting with an interest in curriculum-making, programmatic work

becomes essential to governing the school system. In adding his perspectives on how professional semantics arise and connect policies and practices, he describes how curriculum-making policies produce both direct and indirect couplings through the various tools actors use. Hopmann explains the nature of educational science and didactics as a necessary basis for thinking about the ways in which tools mediate the curriculum in teaching practices. The nature of and need for the curriculum are illustrated by Hopmann's conceptions of teaching, which help in understanding why some see teaching as a craft, others as an art, and still others as the application of evidence-based methods.

According to Hopmann, the manyfold couplings of the different units in a system that covers politics, policy, and practice have a significant function. First, there is the coupling between teaching practice in schools and some form of a standardized curriculum. There are also couplings between various stakeholders at different levels in the system. Besides illustrating the fact that couplings exist, he also describes what they look like. According to Hopmann, couplings can be discursive, i.e., characterized as ideas that frame schooling; however, they seldom totally determine educational practices. Therefore, couplings are also context-bound and characterized by ideographic conditions. This fact helps in understanding how the various arenas interplay, creating both interrelated and, at the same time, independent curriculum processes. To avoid a one-dimensional approach, Hopmann suggests developing a didactic conceptual apparatus that connects and distinguishes politics from policy and policy from practice. This approach serves as a vehicle for exploring how schooling has developed into various traditions of teaching and how the professionalization of teaching changes in response to societal transformations.

In the *seventh work* in our volume, "Impostors and Other Educators" [Über Hochstapler und andere Pädagogen], Hopmann clarifies the nature of teaching by presenting it as pretending to do something that someone is not allowed to do but does anyway without being exposed by others. Simply put, teaching is the staging of competence in something. Moreover, it is precisely in the observation of teaching that showing something that is not true (pretending) comes into play. Through this staging, teachers systematically demonstrate to others what a good teacher is, and Hopmann sees this act as the beginning of didactics. The idea of pretending reminds us of Pfadenhauer's (2003) argument that an important part of professionalism is the staging of competence. This means that professionals must perform their practice in a

way that various clients and society recognize as good professional practice and, therefore, accept. For this reason, professionalism relies to some extent on symbolic actions or, in the view of neo-institutionalists, on certain myths and ceremonies. These symbolic actions help us understand the nature of teacher education and teacher education examinations. Hopmann plays with a chronic legitimation deficit in the teaching profession (hence the allegory of imposition), since any member of society who has undertaken a career in education may have learned enough about teaching by observation alone. To cope with this legitimation deficit, teacher educators and teachers attempt to make a good teacher visible, even though some imposed characteristics may not be necessary for student learning and may even be counterproductive in some cases.

In the national case of Germany presented in this work, this phenomenon has, according to Hopmann, led to a tremendous increase in the number of examinations that teacher candidates must take and the number of competences that must be demonstrated in each examination. In this sense, "more" means "more significant," which leads to teacher education becoming more imposing. Such a practice is prominent in the German case of teacher education and elsewhere. Those of us who work in Nordic universities, for example, have seen an enormous increase in university pedagogy, which is operationalized by the requirement for university teachers to take more compulsory courses in their academic careers. It is unclear whether such courses improve university teaching in the proposed ways, and the legitimation deficit of higher education pedagogy continues, if not grows. People within the system accept this state of work, and like student teachers in schools, all involved keep the imposition alive.

Hopmann emphasizes that imposition alone cannot legitimize schooling for the public. His collaboration with Rudolf Künzli and their efforts to demonstrate how teachers are mandated by relative autonomy help to clarify this point of view. In the *eighth work* presented in this volume, "Leeways in Curriculum Work: Basic Features of a Theory of Curriculum Planning" [Spielräume der Lehrplanarbeit], the authors note that curriculum processes primarily involve social negotiation among multiple actors within public education systems. Teacher professionalization alone cannot serve the public purpose of legitimizing schooling. Nor can theoretical reflection and research alone guarantee education that is well received among the public.

Of course, theories and scholarship can support *curricular processes*, and they may streamline the negotiation process, but they can neither capture the complex social realities that underpin the development and application of curricula nor replace them. Neither can a generalized lesson planning procedure solve this problem. For this reason, various discourses about schooling and the languages of teaching appear simultaneously, with implications for how curricula are developed.

The essay by Hopmann and Künzli presented in this volume is the result of years of collaboration. The objective is to evaluate the current state of curriculum planning theory, which includes determining how to analyze curriculum work that covers both political and social features and the topical-rhetorical elements underpinning the didactics of teaching and learning. In this way, *curriculum work* is extended as a concept to cover not only the social processes that occur within the state bureaucracy but also all the activity that is aimed at constructing the content of public schooling, wherever it takes place. This means reformulating a topology of curriculum planning by focusing on the *selection* and *justification* of teaching content at the state, school, and intermediary levels of curriculum administration, in teacher training, and in the production of teaching materials. As the authors state, "Curriculum work thus facilitates the difficult business of keeping the organization of the school system socially and pedagogically tractable despite its complexity and momentum." This occurs through *ordering*, *sequencing*, and *selecting* content in curriculum planning. In this chapter, the authors highlight the huge variation between curriculum policies in various countries and how the modes and social arenas or realms of curriculum making interact, depending on institutionalized traditions and available means. However, they argue that despite the differences, curriculum work will necessarily draw on both history, that is, in passing on cultural heritage, and, at the same time, safeguarding the future by various means.

Moreover, there is no enduring consensus on how to mediate between these tasks, which again creates curriculum problems on which those involved must decide. Interestingly, general didactics and subject matter didactics, among other means, help create order as a key mode of curriculum work. The authors regard this matter as mediated by *secondary curriculum linkages*, institutional mechanisms that help clarify how curriculum serves as a mediating tool. Since the state curriculum has traditionally served as the core

parameter for what to teach in schools, it is considered the prime tool that governs how other tools are implemented. Other tools could include, for example, teaching material, information of various kinds, and evaluations. These tools inform teachers indirectly about the key content and messages in the state curriculum.

Interestingly, the authors do not merely consider institutionalized means as governing tools, such as leadership and teacher education, but also concepts and other framing elements, including "epoch-typical key problems, or the labelling of curriculum-constituting teaching levels in virtue catalogues, key qualifications," etc. According to the authors, these tools were created as counter-productive means to achieve a certain balance between the social realms because the curriculum had become too educationalized during the 20th century. The authors describe the tensions as a dynamic discourse:

> The tense relationship between political-programmatic discourse on the one hand and programmatic-practical discourse on the other almost inevitably leads to friction and contradiction in phases of increased public interest in schools and teaching. What appears to be didactically necessary is not necessarily politically feasible. (Hopmann & Künzli, 1995)

In this work, Hopmann also writes about *negative coordination*, which is, as described earlier, when relationships between components and levels hinder or exclude each other, a phenomenon that becomes a problem with the multiplicity of decisions and acceleration of change that characterize contemporary societies. Negative coordination is operationalized through licensing. That is framing of professional action by expected minimum standards, while professionals have considerable autonomy within these frames. Moreover, superiors only intervene when the frames are harmed (hence, the "negative" coordination).

This structural feature is also addressed in *Work 9* in this volume, "The School Subject as a Framework for Action – Traditions and Perspectives of Research," written with Kurt Riquarts (Riquarts et al., 1999) in a book edited together with Ivor F. Goodson, which contains chapters on comparative didactics. The essay by Hopmann and Riquarts first examines the historical development of didactics, focusing on the institutionalization of subject-specific teaching in different regions and how this institutionalization corresponds to the topical structure of general didactics, subject didactics, and

school subjects. In this chapter, the authors compare these subject areas from historical and social perspectives, as well as with reference to geographical locations. They show how educational structures had evolved from ancient rhetoric to modern standardized curricula by the early 20th century. The development of subject didactics as a professionalized field of knowledge varied globally, with notable delays in Scandinavia compared to Germany.

According to the authors, the trends at the time the article was written showed a shift toward the integration of subject didactics in teacher education and curriculum work. Hopmann and Riquarts argue that didactic research rarely has a significant impact on pedagogical reasoning in policy or practice. Moreover, the academic disciplines of didactics and subject didactics are seldom the focus of the scholarly output. In this essay, the authors first show the historical development of the subject and how its success story is related to the practice and challenges of teaching, educating, persuading, and training. The fact that the academic discipline(s) of didactics and teacher didactics have an ambivalent relation is due to their varying scholarly nature. Hopmann and Riquarts explain this relation by distinguishing between the different forms of scholarship introduced by Ernest Boyer (1990). Boyer distinguishes four types of scholarship: *discovery, application, integration, and teaching.* Starting from this analytical frame, they analyze the self-understanding and relations of teachers and didactic researchers at Swiss and German universities, as well as what they contributed to. Perhaps depressingly, both groups—teachers and didactics researchers (in general and subject didactics)—were only very loosely coupled in Germany and Switzerland in the 1990s. The coupling became even looser as more time passed since their teacher training. Moreover, and indeed ironically, the less didactic the research is employed, the more positively teachers see the possible impact of this academic work on their teaching.

This paradox leads to the thought that the value of didactic research is more for the legitimation of practice than for the practice itself. Boyer (1990) explains why the academic sciences of didactics and schoolteachers are not coupled more tightly. At universities, the scholarship of discovery has the highest value, and scholarly work in this direction is related to higher status and more resources. Other scholarships, particularly for teaching, have a significantly lower value. For teachers, didactics, as in the scholarship of application and indeed for teaching, are the most important. Simply stated, both groups engage in different competitions but use each other for legitimation

and defense of their own practice. In this case, it is not so important for teachers what is produced in research; they only accept the pieces that confirm their reasoning to "make their practice research-based." The legitimation game works the other way around as well. Although even for academics in didactics, the scholarship of discovery is most valuable, they need the scholarship of teaching, as this is their main function. Without teaching, there would not be a Didaktik as a university discipline. That is why they produce legitimating arguments for their practice by claiming value for practice and close-to-practice research designs.

Hopmann and Künzli conclude that didactics develop primarily through practical reasoning and thus rely on a possible fifth type of scholarship, "the scholarship of common sense," which involves teachers navigating and shaping everyday practice without taking professional didactical discourse into regard. On this topic, the chapter discusses the challenges facing subject didactics as an academic discipline and calls for more comparative research to understand and reform educational practices, considering the socio-constructive nature of school subjects.

Perhaps the most influential English publication on the nature of Didactics, or Didaktik, is presented in the essay "Restrained Teaching. The Common Core of Didaktik," the *10th work* in this volume. Here, also, Didaktik as an idiosyncratic term is put forward, which is rather hard to translate by didactics. We keep Hopman's suggestion here. In a very comprehensive form, Hopmann explains Didaktik as the science of teaching, i.e., of the planning, delivery, and evaluation of instruction in a systematic way for educational purposes, which ideally manifests as a more or less detailed form of curriculum, which can be an examination or textbook. By using the analytical instrument of the Didaktik triangle, he presents various dimensions of instruction in relation to each other: instructional content (what is to be taught), teacher teaching, and students (in a plural form). Interestingly, the German Didaktik tradition frames how Hopmann considers the relationship between the students, the content, and the teacher, which is very different from what English scholars associate with the technical term "didactics."

Institutionalized within the Didaktik-tradition, Hopmann refers to a group of individuals when writing about the didactic triangle, like in a school class, where students are taught by a teacher, and which Hopmann recognizes and labels as *school instruction*. Moreover, Hopmann describes

other specialties teachers need to know that are associated with the teaching process, as understood in the Didaktik traditions. Planning as a teacher practice does not start with a certain teaching method; it is more fertile to start with the content in relation to the available methods. This is called the *primacy of content*; without content, there is no method. In addition, when starting with the content to be learned as the guidance, the lesson frames (having, let's say, a duration of 45 minutes) are only one of the many aspects to be considered. Teachers plan units, i.e., unpack content for the students over several lessons, using various methods. Another aspect that makes the work of teachers complex and increases the need for teaching science (i.e. Didaktik) is the assumption that a certain matter can mean different things to the students. Thus, *matter and meaning* must be separated. However, with the help of Didaktik tools and, indeed, Didaktik research, the teacher can be supported in anticipating what matters means for certain students and steer toward what it should mean by the end of the learning process.

Didaktik as a phenomenon and program is elaborated further in the *11th work* presented in this volume. In an essay co-authored with Jorunn Midtsundstad (2010), "Diversity United. The Scandinavian Traditions of Lesson Planning," teacher autonomy is partly explained by the professional semantics shaped within the interplay between politics and practice. According to the authors, teaching has some common features in the Scandinavian countries, which are normally considered a common linguistic area consisting of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. Professional semantics, nourished by cultural and social conditions, share common roots, ideas, and beliefs about what constitutes good teaching and well-organized planning. The semantics that teachers use to reflect upon these features create both opportunities and room for maneuvering, not least in relation to their own autonomy and their efforts to promote lively dialogue with active pupils in the classroom. This essay presents various forms of lesson planning that exemplify how materials can support this type of pedagogy. Hopmann and Midtsundstad warn that the accountability mechanisms prevalent today in educational policy risk overlooking the broad content and everything that students are expected to learn. Therefore, they recommend reducing the importance of assessment systems and balancing them with other forms of curriculum control.

How assessment and accountability operate according to their own logic is a topic that interests Hopmann and which he discusses in the essay, "Didaktik Meets Curriculum revisited: historical encounters, systematic experience, empirical limits," presented as the *12th work* in this volume. Hopmann (2015) argues that new education policy and reform create new types of contracts between schools and society. First, Hopmann explains that curriculum and Didaktik are ways to organize teaching as "gap management." This means that instruction is about bridging the gap between what state authorities intend to be learned and what is actually learned by the students in the classrooms. In Hopmann's work, it is about the transfer from matter to meaning. According to Hopmann, some countries train their teachers for this endeavor through Didaktik, a system of professional semantics that can be used to reason about this gap management in any given context. It is important to understand that Didaktik needs a plan for the content, for example, a canon. This is the German and Nordic version of a curriculum, a "teaching plan" (in German, *Lehrplan*; in Swedish, *läroplan*), which is a list of what subjects must be taught and when. First, the Didaktik planning process can start with the content, and by presenting this to the students within the context of interaction with the teacher and each other, it can become meaningful for them. Highly proficient didactic planning can ensure that the intended meaning is achieved in an interactive context.

Teaching in curriculum traditions works under other premises as well. It starts not with a list of which competences or meanings for students the teaching process must achieve. In such a tradition, often with the help of educational psychology, it can be evaluated whether students have learned what they were supposed to learn. When the meaning is unclear, complex manuals as pathways to the intended meaning can be offered. When the expected competence has not been learned, however, the method either does not work or the teacher has not followed it with the fidelity required. In the curriculum tradition, the curriculum is the course of study, including the whole way of teaching what, how, and for what purpose, and how the learning achievements can be measured. Today's university teachers probably recognize such logic from Biggs and Tang's (2011) idea of constructive alignment, which states that course plans must show that particular intended learning outcomes are related to specific teaching and learning activities and

course literature. It must also be clear what form of examination will assess the intended learning outcomes.

We argue that the varying meaning of curriculum in both traditions and the fact that the term curriculum is attached to one tradition might have led to the misunderstanding that Didaktik is the magic recipe for the autonomous teacher. In contrast to the Didaktik tradition, the curriculum, in its described form, plays a very important role as well. Without the curriculum, there is no Didaktik. However, Hopmann's most important point is that instruction in mass schooling must be organised and controlled in a certain way. How, in context, the work of teachers, students, etc., is organised is contingent on what he terms constitutional mindsets. There are various functionally equivalent strategies that build on the constitutional mindsets of what schooling is, what teachers are, what has to be learned, etc. What is termed Didaktik grew within the context of a Prussian German system, with foreground figures such as Wilhelm von Humboldt, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Georg Kerschensteiner, or Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. What is called the curriculum was developed in a different cultural context in which John Dewey or Edward Thorndike was active. Thus, Chinese instruction cannot be explained by the tools of the institutional frameworks developed by German Didaktik traditions. Also, for schooling in France, the conceptual apparatus associated with the constitutional minds of Prussian history and practice reaches its limit very quickly. In addition, strategies developed in various contexts come at a certain price. In the United States, schools must face the problems of teaching to the test because of the assessment systems, while in Germany, teachers are not controlled due to their autonomy within the school system. It is no wonder that education officials dream of other solutions in times of education crises. However, copying approaches naively across boundaries or mixing up different approaches might lead to devastating results, Hopmann warns. Notwithstanding, Hopmann provides a toolbox with the analytical frameworks and models, which provides us with analytical instruments to understand and explain how and why reforms fail.

In the *13th work* presented in this book, the essay "School Leadership as Gap Management: Curriculum Traditions, Changing Evaluation Parameters, and School Leadership Pathways," Mariella Knapp and Stefan Thomas Hopmann (2017) further develop the concept of *gap management*. As in the aforementioned work, the authors show how Didaktik and curriculum collide

as contemporary school leadership faces continually evolving and rapidly increasing expectations regarding what schools are expected to accomplish. However, it is an activity deeply rooted in the existing structure and culture of education, with different school traditions significantly influencing the role of school leaders. Thus, comparing various traditions and current practices of school leadership with the educational contexts in which they have developed could be valuable. The authors argue that the Didaktik and curriculum traditions affect the leadership "pathways" that are shaped by new schooling expectations. This approach becomes particularly intriguing empirically when the two traditions intersect, such as through the implementation of control measures from the curriculum tradition within a Didaktik setting. For instance, how do school leaders react when assessed by criteria traditionally outside their purview?

Various ways to organize schooling, for example, building on German Didaktik traditions or Anglo-American curriculum traditions, also have implications for how school leaders can and must exert their work. For example, in Didaktik countries, principals have fewer opportunities to impact their teaching staff's work, since each Didaktik plan is idiosyncratic and cannot be compared. This phenomenon has been referred to as the pedagogical freedom of teachers in German-speaking countries. With their toolbox of standardised testing, curriculum countries deliver better arguments for educational leadership. However, such tools do not come free for principals either. Not only can instructional units in a school be compared, but schools can also become objects for imposed improvement.

When we view teachers as gap managers, principals can be called second-order gap managers. They are supposed to manage that the gap bridging in the classrooms happens in a particular way. Here, many frictions and issues must be dealt with. What is important again is that, when looking at education leadership internationally, even this phenomenon is contingent.

Curriculum Constitutional Mindsets

Hopmann puts forward the importance of organizing schooling through programmatic reasoning and decision-making, i.e., regarding the actions that relate many schools in a system to each other, the politics that legitimize schooling, and the legality manifested in the formality of schooling. He further offers the idea of *constitutional mindsets*, which guide cultural ideas on

how curricula create certain paths that historically institutionalize teaching and learning within environments. Works with this theoretical focus are provided in the last section of this volume.

From the beginning of his career, Hopmann distinguished various forms of reasoning that characterize curricular and didactic traditions. Several of the essays in this volume trace the development of these traditions. The first work presented in this section (the *14th work* in the whole volume) is "Didaktik and/or Curriculum. Basic Problems of Comparative Didaktik," written by Hopmann and Riquarts. This essay highlights the existence of context-specific and historically evolved ideas about planning, organizing, and evaluating teaching practice. The text identifies the relationships between issues that Hopmann sees as at the heart of public schooling, and where systematic research contributes to pedagogical knowledge by answering questions such as the following: What should be taught, by whom, and under what conditions? How are stability and change handled within the machinery of public education? Indeed, Hopmann and Riquarts show that public education is highly complex and contingent, and therefore not easily coordinated and controlled. Nevertheless, public schooling can be understood in terms of historically evolved rationales that keep systems stable despite the constant demands for change inherent in the system of schooling. This work also demonstrates the fruitfulness of historical-comparative approaches in educational research for understanding and explaining school reform, school improvement, teacher education, teacher autonomy, and so on.

These ideas are elaborated further on in the essay "Didaktik Meets Curriculum: Towards a New Agenda" by Hopmann and Gundem (1998) (*the 15th work* in this volume). Both this work and the one before provide concrete and unambiguous answers to the question of whether schooling traditions converge across countries and continents. While several Didaktik and curriculum scholars at the time argued that European and North American schooling share several commonalities that can be interpreted in the same way, regardless of institutional mindsets and styles of reasoning, Hopmann and Gundem argue that there are more obstacles to this exchange than opportunities. Because of languages and different constitutive mindsets, there are more differences than commonalities that come to the fore when comparing the didactic and curricular traditions.

In a very short essay, he elaborates further about exactly about such translation issues, Hopmann writes again about gap management, but now about how it is determined by various contextual particularities. In the *16th work* presented in the volume. Mind the gap: "Dewey on Educational Bridge-Building," he presents a good example of what we call *functional equivalence reasoning*. Functional equivalence is the ecological phenomenon in which multiple species representing a variety of taxonomic groups can share similar, if not identical, roles in ecosystem functionality. Simply said, phenomena can have similar functions but different forms. This is a foundational thought of comparative methodology (Schulte & Wieland, 2019). The function of schooling is probably very similar in many societies, and so is the problem of existing gaps to be managed. It is about cultivating youngsters to become valuable members in a society and, at the same time, equipping them with the proficiency to have an autonomous and hopefully fruitful life, despite different individual conditions. According to Luhmann (2002), the function of an education system is to teach children something valuable for the future. However, how this function is operationalized can differ, even in the way in which we talk about it. The issue of translation can be problematic, since not only practice but also language is culturally determined.

Even though teaching as gap management between matter and meaning might mean the same thing in Deweyan philosophy as in humanity-inspired pedagogy, the representatives of the two camps must still not, are even worse, do not want to understand each other. Hopmann exemplifies this with his own academic experiences as a traveler between the various worlds of gap management, from engineering education in the north of Norway to teacher education in Austria. Deep mindsets can be rooted in institutional, academic, and professional practices that are, by themselves, conditioned by nation-specific particularities. Hopmann concludes:

> Thus, to impose new structures based on research or politics will not do the job. Without a fitting tact based on former practical experience, old 'habits' cannot be put away. Only if practitioners are freed to develop new circumstances, allowing for a new kind of tact will lasting change occur. This requires, in Dewey's words, 'creative adventurous minds', who will have to combine 'individual courage' with 'the aid of non-educational sciences', if the aim is 'achieving education as science and an art' (p. 5). Thus, education as engineering requires a dialectical approach in which 'tact' bridges the gap between ongoing practice development and future directions in research. (p. 38)

In the essay "No Child, No School, No State Left Behind" (*the 17th work* presented in the volume), Hopmann (2008) further explains and operationalizes his idea of "constitutional mindsets." Here, we find the first real definition of the phenomenon that conditions the reception and consequences of global education trends in various cultural contexts. We can even learn what "constitutive" means from his perspective:

> Constitutional mindsets are deeply engrained ways of understanding the relation between the public and its institutions. For example, the U.S. constitution is constructed as a protection of the individual against the misuse of power by governments and others. It sees the rights of individuals as a given and the intervention of government as limited by these rights, and protects citizens against any infringements of their constitutional freedoms. (p. 39)

Again, it is a question of negative coordination, what governments and others are not going to enact to create leeway for individuals as citizens. To explain this idea, Hopmann gives the example of the OECD's PISA study, which shows the global shift toward global accountability regimes in education. Accountability reforms' first and foremost impact on, among others, the education system, is a change in its couplings. In Hopmann's terminology, *management by placement* will be or is assumed to be replaced by *management by expectations*. Briefly explained, ill-defined problems in education, such as learning and its determination of complex individual and social circumstances, have traditionally been managed, at least in the cultural contexts of continental and northern Europe, by delegating the responsibility for taking care of such issues to well-defined professions. These professions are well defined by a clear societal mandate, extended decision-making power, and autonomy. This means that professionals, as long as they stay within their licensable practices, are also allowed to fail.

From this perspective, in relation to the idea of constitutional mindsets, Hopmann argues that accountability in education is a nation-specific, conditioned phenomenon. In other words, education reform, such as a shift from management by placement to management by expectation, interacts with constitutional mindsets on what schools, teachers, and students must be, know, and have responsibility for. Accountability in education also determines the governance of schooling. This intellectual contribution helps us understand contemporary education policy, such as the impact of PISA on

specific school systems, with its contradictions and paradoxes. Briefly, PISA has had a very modest impact on U.S. education policy because this system builds traditionally on a quasi-positivistic starting point that education outcomes and improvement can be measured by scientific means, as the added value of the education method, teacher quality, and various types of intervention. This thinking was strongly evident in the *No Child Left Behind* legislation. The focus on the individual student and his or her learning is, according to Hopmann, the leading U.S. mindset. The added value of PISA is only more of the same, but of worse quality.

In northern Europe, the guiding mindset could be described as *no school left behind*. In other words, the mindset that leads to apparent improvement relates to the quality of schools. PISA, with its system of accountability for educational outcomes, first showed an apparent crisis and then proposed reforms. These reforms had to fit into the Nordic way of thinking about schooling, which refers to the individual school as part of a community and social world that frames an individual's learning. In other words, unlike in the United States, learning is not an individual matter; the Nordic mindset is therefore the idea of no school left behind. Finally, in the German-speaking countries, according to Hopmann, the logic of the national league tables in PISA corresponded to the way of thinking that later turned into discourses of learning and assessment. Crises in this setting meant being worse than others. As a result, the entire school system was placed under a microscope. The mindset of German-speaking countries, according to Hopmann, is *no state left behind*. In conclusion, each cultural context responded to an international trigger with a toolbox based on its traditions.

In the essay "No Exceptions for Hottentots! Methods of Comparative Educational Science for Special Education Research" [Keine Ausnahmen für Hottentotten! Methoden der vergleichenden Bildungswissenschaft für die heilpädagogische Forschung], Hopmann develops his framework of management by placement versus management by expectation further by looking at the academic discipline and professional practice of special education. This is the *18th work* presented in this volume. Here, he focuses on special education issues in school systems in an era of standardised large-scale testing. His argument is that special education, with its high complexity in learning strategies and personalized approaches, challenges the epistemological and methodological foundations of standard testing,

which typically build on linear logic with assumed mean values, normal distributions, and standard deviations. Such methodological problems lead to the phenomenon that students in special education are jeopardized by their invisibility in the school system. In addition, their performance is sometimes not measurable, which is a huge problem for enacting management by expectation.

The school system and administration can solve this problem through the practice of special education. According to Thomas Skrtic (1991), special education keeps the machine of mass education running. In his essay, Hopmann explains how this is done. He argues that management by expectation, which is built on measurement, can produce what he calls measurement failures. Modern special education in management by expectation governance regimes has the role to work with these "failures." Prominent strategies are moralizing, for example, in terms of colonizing benevolence or by the production of a plethora of interventions, which are assumed to cover up students' apparent deficits in relation to the standard measures. The truth is, however, that, according to Hopmann, modern special education provides not remedies for students in need but for the school system as such. Today's special education is a significant part of the management by expectation regime.

In this piece, Hopmann shows us again the complex couplings between various units in an education system and the units' particular functions. The rationale goes as follows: A school system must, through its administration, allocate resources to the students in its schools. The organization works with the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. The excluded are then included in one way or another again. In particular, the "excluded" must, in administration logic, be labelled in a way that makes certain alternative inclusion strategies available for them. For example, exclusion from regular classroom teaching opens the door for inclusion in smaller teaching groups. Moreover, exclusion produces a significant need for legitimation, both for rationalizing why a child is treated differently than his or her peers and why a child might get more resources and more support than others. In the school system, particular academic disciplines, such as special education, come into play. By both medical and educational means, they produce programs of legitimation for extra support or exclusion. This is very important since schooling relates to life chances and raises expectations. That is, the label of not being able to do something must be explained thoroughly.

With the help of Hopmann, we can learn that school systems applying one or another governance regime are well aware of their methodological problems, frictions, and blind spots, especially when it comes to providing equitable and equal life chances. In particular, the disciplines of education, special education, and didactics have the function of elaborating on the problems at hand, explaining their origin, and producing eventual solutions, or perhaps only apologies. In the essay, "The Equity Paradox" [Das Equity Paradox], which *is the 19th and final work* in this volume, written with Sonja Bauer-Hofmann, we can learn exactly what (special) education "measurement" actually means in the practices of a school system. Measurement in schools is important and necessary, since schools in a modern society are built on meritocracy, i.e., life chances must be based on certain performances. Moreover, in its function to secure reproduction, it must also select students in particular groups connoted with the opportunity for certain biographies in society. At the same time, schools are supposed to treat all students equally and equitably. However, what is problematic for this goal is that students enter the school system with various conditions, some better and some worse.

Equity and the need for compensatory support for certain groups of students produce a dilemma that must be solved. The school system employs various strategies to address these issues, with special education as one. Another is the production of bureaucratic procedures that make granting extra support legally secure. Extra support must be motivated by systemic diagnostics and labels visible to everybody: "No, exceptions of Hottentots." Here, the circle closes in the conceptual world of Stefan Thomas Hopmann. Education is always mass education, and it exists with many paradoxes and contradictions, with many reasons and eventual consequences that are not immediately visible. However, he strengthens our capabilities to at least understand failing and sometimes successful reforms and the continual tension between stability and change in public education. He does so by providing clear and rigorous analytical tools and encouraging us to look back in history and to compare various contexts and cultural traditions.

Stefan Hopmann's Collected Work and Curriculum Studies Today

Although Hopmann is often associated internationally with the study and description of the Didaktik/curriculum distinction, his contribution spans a wider range of issues, both in curriculum studies and in areas of teacher

education research. As this introduction documents, curriculum studies established itself over the past 50 years as a scholarly field, rooted in the academy and responsive to educational change. In particular, contextual differences have given rise to diverse research interests and perspectives, but simultaneously, contributing to a perception that it is highly fragmented. Nevertheless, researchers have continued to produce handbooks and reviews that synthesize and summarize key developments, theoretical frameworks, and methodological approaches to systematizing curriculum studies, often integrating international and comparative perspectives. This volume, with a collection of Hopmann's work, contributes to this body of research.

One of the best-known handbooks is Conelly et. al (2008), which provides a broad overview of curriculum theory and practice. It includes thematic chapters on the history, philosophy and theory of curriculum; how to understand knowledge, content and decisions about what to teach; curriculum politics and policy; curriculum making and implementation; teacher education; curriculum and cultural diversity in educational practice; and international perspectives that might help researchers and others to understand the complexity of curriculum issues and to address them through new policy or educational practice. Interestingly, Hopmann's close collaborator, Westbury (2007), contributed a highly recognized chapter to this handbook. Moreover, Hopmann's name is announced in this chapter as an authoritative source for understanding and conceptualizing curriculum-making processes. Connelly et al. (2008) reflect key insights from traditional curriculum theory, which has emphasized issues of both theory and context, from policy to practice, and not least how to combine disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge to shape subject matter content. Both descriptive and normative views of curriculum design and implementation are informed by this research. It is our view that the engagement and initiative of Westbury to develop this handbook and the work of Hopmann and colleagues have undoubtedly contributed to the Handbook's efforts to move this field of curriculum study forward.

In contrast, reconceptualist theories have foregrounded political claims, examining how the curriculum needs to address diversity and contentious issues that are often obscured in academic and public discourses. This body of knowledge highlights the importance of political-geographical perspectives as well as biographical orientations in curriculum theorizing. Interestingly, Pinar's (2014) handbook includes chapters from different parts of the world

and argues for internationalization as a key to approaching conversations about the curriculum today. Although Pinar was involved in the Didactics/Curriculum project, his and his colleague's handbook does not resonate to the same extent with Hopmann's work, mainly because Hopmann's essays emphasize the institutional conditions necessary to shape education for all (general or public education), which is not a major theme of reconceptualist theorizing. Nevertheless, Hopmann also addresses political issues that call for a renewed awareness of what makes the educational system more equitable, where teaching and complementary pedagogies are adapted in relation to students, both in groups and as individuals.

More recently, Berit Karseth and Ninni Wahlström (2023) edited the section "Approaches to curriculum and its politics" for the fourth edition of the International Encyclopaedia of Education. This part provides a comprehensive overview of contemporary curriculum research, focusing on both the theoretical and political dimensions of curriculum studies. In this section, chapters address the governance of schooling as a social institution; the organization of knowledge within school curricula; the politics of curriculum in relation to societal debates and power relations; and globalization, transnational trends and policy flows that call for the application of comparative perspectives in the analysis of contemporary curriculum issues. Thus, a comparison between the three handbooks and the current volume of Hopmann's essays may invite others to further discuss what justifies education as a political, educational, and public project.

Certainly, while theories help to clarify what makes education accessible and workable for students at different stages, there is no quick fix that solves curriculum problems in particular places, within and across social and cultural contexts. For this reason, state governments are constantly working to reform and renew education, especially for young students. In response to a perceived imbalance between states' rapid interventions to transform curriculum and academic efforts and outcomes, Wyse et al. (2016) edited a major handbook in 2016. In this volume, the curriculum is linked to new strands of pedagogy and assessment. Similar to Conelly (2008), the book is organised thematically, but with an emphasis on more technical perspectives, including chapters on epistemology and methodology; pedagogy and curriculum design: subjects and curriculum areas such as STEM, languages, the arts; traditional disciplines and interdisciplinary approaches; assessment

in education and education policy; and issues related to children's learning, teacher agency, policy and performativity, and the impact of globalization.

More recently, another handbook on curriculum studies has targeted the temporalities of curriculum theories, practices, and their contexts, such as the book edited by Trifonas and Jagger (2024), in which a new ecology of curriculum and a perspective on education yet to come set the research agenda. The editors have organised their book around curriculum processes and activities, more in line with Wyse et al. (2016) than Connelly (2008). It is structured around a series of subtitles: curriculum as beginning, as placing, as caring, as storying, as changing, as liberating, as designing, and as teaching. With these subtitles, the volume contributes a combination of perspectives, from highly technical chapters to chapters with political and moral messages. Geopolitical issues are also highlighted.

In contrast to these two books on curriculum and pedagogy, Hopmann and colleagues contribute knowledge on the theory of teaching practice, in line with the Didaktik tradition. Importantly for Hopmann, this body of knowledge is neither a technical body of knowledge nor a set of moral principles to be enacted. Hopmann's greatest expertise is undoubtedly in Didaktik thinking and reasoning, seen as a science informed by policy, research, and practice. Interestingly, Hopmann looks at Didaktik mainly from a school perspective, which relates to his own context as a northern and continental European scholar. European perspectives are his preferred point of comparison. Consequently, there is a risk of bias. Indeed, Hopmann sometimes seems 'too good' to persuade the international reader to favor the constitutional thinking of the northern and continental tradition at the expense of others. Didactics may appear to the reader to be more coherent and better described than their counterpart, curriculum studies. So, it is perhaps not surprising that Hopmann's work has contributed to a kind of ideologization of didactics, especially in the northern part of Europe. Then there is the tendency for Didaktik to be sometimes presented as the magic wand of the fully professionalized autonomous teacher, licensed to teach in his or her own domain, the classroom, for the sake of *Bildung*. On the contrary, the curriculum tradition becomes a metaphor for ways of thinking that, because of their accountability connotations of various kinds, pose a danger to this kind of idle identity, often associated with a kind of utopia or nostalgia.

However, as we have shown in our summary of Hopmann's work, there is no Didaktik without curriculum, although curriculum can exist without Didaktik. With this in mind, it is of enlightening value to compare Didaktik as a frame of reference with other sciences and ways of thinking and acting. Rata (2024) has recently published a research handbook on curriculum and education. This book begins by presenting what Rata calls scientific frameworks, i.e., social realism, Didaktik, and cognitive science. In doing so, the book draws attention both to key issues presented in earlier handbooks and, more importantly, to national debates about what counts as curriculum knowledge, elaborating on how to decide what to teach in schools, a topic also covered by several chapters in our volume. According to Hopmann, there is an ever-increasing learning crisis in the Western school system, which is created by explanatory requests to search for diagnoses of how processes and products are interlinked as paired priorities, independent of longstanding traditions and institutionalized mindsets. In these systems, the question about what to teach in schools will neither disappear nor be resolved. However, there have been many attempts to remove the barriers by evidence-based change and improvement (Salmen, 2021). The works of Hattie, Hanushek, Wössmann, and Schleicher, with their empirical and conceptual contributions, are driven by political and scientific demands to produce knowledge about what works and how to improve schooling in terms of both processes and products.

Despite all the questions and problems this emphasis on learning crisis has generated, there is no escape from thinking and writing about the intricate relationships that characterize public education, according to Hopmann. Of crucial importance are the ways in which school authorities and persons within the school system set priorities and how various conditions structure processes that turn outcomes into observable units. Moreover, the expected impact of research on the interlinkages between the many processes in public education may reshape systems and structures in surprising ways. These will create a continual need for research and investigations. Due to this interest, the number of studies on apparent facilitators or barriers to successful teaching, school improvement, school leadership, and inclusion that are intended to close the gap between what we know and do not know has exploded.

Stefan Thomas Hopmann's scholarship represents one of the most thorough and insightful efforts to examine the paradoxes and ill-defined problems

of curriculum processes and how they are pursued by different strategies and actors, within and across historical and cultural contexts. His research spans a wide range of policy and educational areas and includes interdisciplinary approaches, integrating insights from classical theories to late-modern perspectives. Many of the problems and solutions that politicians, bureaucrats, experts, teachers, advocates, and researchers are discussing today are not new but have developed over several decades in terms of puzzling issues in education. Moreover, as this book of Hopmann's collected works shows, curriculum studies as a field of research evolves along with societal changes, bringing the history of curriculum research and practice into discussions of urgent and contemporary problems.

As Hopmann's collected works provide a comprehensive framework of different theoretical perspectives, analytical lenses, and terminologies to address the complex and often ill-defined problems facing researchers today, we consider this book to be both timely and exceptionally relevant. The perspectives Hopmann offers push the boundaries of what reputable scholars commonly take to be true in order to develop new understandings and to examine the politics of schooling, its programs and practices in different places, times, and spaces.

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