

# **Collaboration and/or Competition? Modes of Coordination in Processes of School Development**



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# Question



**Has the policy of school autonomy led to a weakening of state-led “bureaucratic-hierarchical coordination of schooling”?**

- Are modes of coordination
- *within* and
- *between* schools changing in the wake of present reform policies ?
- If yes, in what way?

# Categories for analysing *action coordination*



## Basic governance mechanisms (Lange & Schimank 2004, pp. 20)

- *observation*
- *influence*
- *negotiation*

**Fig. 1: Characteristics of „classical models“ of action coordination**

	bureaucracy (hierarchy)	market	community	network
basic mechanisms	influence	observation [short-term negotiation]	observation	negotiation
relationships	long-term, hierarchical, fixed group of partners	short-term, multitude of partners	medium-term, unclear membership,	medium to long-term, relatively equal, autonomous partners
orientation	directives	price, individual usefulness	values	long-term balance of exchange
relating give and take	„relational contracts“ – global assignment	transparent performance	subjective evaluation, sense of belonging	no exact quantification, distributed over time
development through	planning, hierarchical coordination	„invisible hand“ [plus regulating interventions]	external pressure, charismatic leadership	better information, negotiated alliances

# Processes of developing „school profiles“ (Altrichter, Prexl-Krausz & Soukup-Altrichter 2005)



- Main idea: *study schools in situations when they use “school autonomy” = developing specific “school profiles”*
  - (= in-school curricula with a specific thematic and/or methodical focus used for promoting the school or class)
- three *case studies* of secondary schools with ‘school profiles’ in new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)
- *Competition as a mechanism of coordination between schools*
- “Schulprofile” = central instrument to compete with

# ICT may be very special → Selection of thematic areas



	<b>„enhanced employability“</b>	<b>„less employability“</b>
<b>affinity to „established subjects“</b>		
<b>„new fields of learning“</b>	<b><i>ICT</i></b>	

# ICT may be very special → Selection of thematic areas



	<b>„enhanced employability“</b>	<b>„less employability“</b>
<b>affinity to „established subjects“</b>	<b>foreign languages</b>	<b>arts / creativity</b>
<b>„new fields of learning“</b>	<b><i>ICT</i></b>	<b>social learning integration / inclusion</b>

# Follow up-study – *Design*

*(Altrichter, Heinrich & Soukup-Altrichter 2009)*



- For each thematic area: 2 secondary schools (1 Hauptschule, 1 Gymnasium) - selected by internet analysis, validated by regional inspectorate
- For each school:
  - documents (plans, leaflets, protocols, excerpts of media coverage) were collected
  - 10 qualitative interviews (5 “functionaries”, 5 by theoretical sampling)
- analysed by thematic coding
- case studies about every school
- cross-case analysis



# System-wide coordination - results:



impulses for *developing a specific profile*:

- competition
- internal normative ideas of teachers
- internal problem analysis

*establishing the profile*

- success in competition indispensable - because of
  - external reasons (securing sufficient student numbers)
  - internal reasons (sceptical colleagues, conflicts)
- If not successful: replaced by a new profile (as in school A) or complemented by a new and more attractive profile (as in school C)
- demands and directives from administrative hierarchy help to protect profiles against internal criticism

# System-wide coordination - results:



- “*employability*” is not the only argument for attractive school profiles
- “*special educational care*” and “*special teaching concepts*” (may be more easy for Gymnasium)

# System-wide coordination - results:



## Selection/selectivity as an indication of quality?

- new processes of selection
- status hierarchies between schools and classes
- competition *within* school types
- used for
  - external promotion
  - refusal of applicants
  - internal selection
- results in excluding specific groups of students (less able and migrant children) from more attractive services

# Internal coordination - results



- *voluntary participation* – to prevent teacher resistance
- Teamwork and decision making
  - Increased *teamwork* of teachers actively promoting the new profile
  - close to the classroom, built on normative coherence and personal relationships
  - rarely *more formal institutionalisation of cooperation* (such as fixed meetings of class teachers, formal positions)
- *innovative teaching* in some schools
- *new in-school instruments of coordination* (school programmes, self evaluation) do *not* play an important role in the every day work of schools

# Summary



## Macro level - coordination between schools

- increasing *competition*
- *bureaucratic* elements persist, very little *networking*
- *differentiation* → old hierarchy between schools and new hierarchy between classes → „coordinates“ student access

## Meso level – coordination within schools

- Informal „*community-type*“ coordination between teachers
- Very few new *institutions /structures*

## Micro level – coordination in classrooms

- sometimes, but not necessarily changes in student-teacher-relationships