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EDUCATION POLICY NETWORKS
IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE:
GERMANY, SWITZERLAND,
GREAT BRITAIN AND NEW ZEALAND

ALEXANDER K. NAGEL
PHILIPP KNODEL

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Universität Bremen • University of Bremen
Jacobs Universität Bremen • Jacobs University Bremen
Universität Oldenburg • University of Oldenburg

Staatlichkeit im Wandel • Transformations of the State
Sonderforschungsbereich 597 • Collaborative Research Center 597

Alexander K. Nagel
Philipp Knodel

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Alexander K. Nagel, Philipp Knodel
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Universität Bremen

Sonderforschungsbereich 597 / Collaborative Research Center 597

Staatlichkeit im Wandel / Transformations of the State

Postfach 33 04 40

D - 28334 Bremen

Tel.:+ 49 421 218-8720

Fax:+ 49 421 218-8721

Homepage: <http://www.staatlichkeit.uni-bremen.de>

***Education Policy Networks in a comparative perspective:
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ABSTRACT

International initiatives in education, such as PISA and the Bologna Process, have distinctly changed conditions framing domestic policy-making. This paper sheds light on the territorial and modal dispersion of national education policy networks by means of a systematic network analytical description. The focus is on changing patterns of interactions and coalitions between international and national as well as private and public actors. Therefore, we analyse four countries, i.e. Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain and New Zealand, in a comparative perspective. The findings show that in most countries there is indeed an internationalization of education politics taking place in the sense of an increasing participation of international actors. These actors apply a more and more diversified portfolio of governance instruments. At the same time, however, domestic veto players develop a rich set of strategies to cope, compete or collaborate with international actors.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS	1
METHODICAL REMARKS AND OPERATIONALIZATION	3
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	5
Structural Change.....	5
Subgroups and Positions	11
Important Actors	18
CONCLUSION	22
REFERENCES.....	26
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE	29

Education Policy Networks in a comparative perspective: Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain and New Zealand

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

PISA, Bologna, Bruges and Copenhagen, what sounds like the route of a wandering humanist, such as Erasmus of Rotterdam, is in our days an unmistakable evidence for the internationalisation of education politics. Being a traditional domain of the nation state, the political responsibility for education is now increasingly dispersed between regional, national and international as well as public and private actors (Leuze et al. 2007). Perhaps most prominently, PISA and the Bologna Process stand for processes of internationalisation in education. PISA is an internationally standardised assessment by the OECD administered to a sample of 15-year-olds in participating countries' schools. Whereas in the first PISA round in 2000 a total of 43 countries participated, 67 countries are already registered for the assessment in 2009/10. Regarding higher education the Bologna Process is an intergovernmental initiative which aims at establishing a European Higher Education Area. In 1998 four European countries signed the so called Sorbonne Declaration. Since then, the number of participating countries has grown to a total of 46. With the ministerial conference in Berlin 2003, the Bologna Process has been linked to the EU's Lisbon Agenda of making the EU 'the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world' by 2010 (Berlin-Communiqué 2003). In short, both PISA and the Bologna Process distinctly changed conditions framing domestic policy-making. It is the aim of this paper to shed light on the territorial and modal dispersion of national education policy networks by means of a systematic network analytical description. The central research question therefore is how the interactions and coalitions between international and national as well as private and public actors have changed (both qualitatively and quantitatively) within the last decade, thus to account for changes in national education policy making. The descriptive enterprise refers to four case-studies, i.e. Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain and New Zealand, which will subsequently be put in a synoptic and comparative perspective. The research aim of this paper is to yield some explanations as to the influence of international organizations on national education policy making and the capacity of national veto players to cope with that interference.

The network-study to be presented here is part of a more comprehensive research project on "the internationalisation of education politics". Therefore it stands within a broader *theoretical framework*: Generally we assume that *international organizations* trigger *changes in national education policy making* by a rich set of governance instruments, whereas these changes can be both hindered or fostered by national *veto players*.

Hence, IOs and their respective instruments are treated as independent variable, national education policy making as dependent variable and veto players as an intervening variable (for a more detailed description of the underlying theoretical concepts see Leuze et al. 2008)). Within this framework it is hold that an internationalisation of education politics, i.e. an accumulation of governance capacities at IOs, should result in changes of national education policy making. The probability and/or degree of these changes should depend on the extent to which a country is exposed to IO-governance as well as its inherent political barriers, such as veto players or veto points (ibid, 19-21).

Table 1: Theoretical Sampling

		<i>Intervening variable</i>	
		<i>Few veto players</i>	<i>Many veto players</i>
<i>Independent variable</i>	Exposed to OECD only	New Zealand	Switzerland
	Exposed to OECD and EU	Great Britain	Germany

According to our theoretical assumptions, changes in education policy making should be maximal in Great Britain – as the exposure to IOs is relatively strong while there are only a few national veto points or players – whereas it should be minimal in Switzerland, which is less exposed to IOs and characterized by a highly federal system of decision making. Basically, change of national education policy making may occur in two dimensions: policies and politics. The dimension of *policies* encompasses changes in the contents of education politics, i.e. its goals, instruments and settings. In contrast, the dimension of *politics* refers to the process of decision making itself, i.e. its modes and the actors involved (ibid, 2-3).

This is where the *network perspective* comes in. Before turning to the empirical section, some theoretical remarks with regard to policy networks should be outlined. As policy network approaches generally set out to decompose complex processes of decision making in so called “dyads” – distinct relationships between two actors – they seem to be especially suitable to discover change in the dimension of education politics. *Comparative analysis* of policy networks is still quite rare and so is the network analysis of *structural change*. The first step in the comparative study of policy networks was to analyse and compare policy networks within a nation state. A cutting-edge piece of work in that respect was the study from Edward Laumann and David Knoke on the “Organizational State” (Laumann and Knoke 1987). Here, the authors compare the policy fields of health and energy and develop a concept of public-private decision making which is both theoretically plausible and empirically manageable in terms of social network analysis. On this foundation Knoke and others embarked on a more comprehensive endeavour as they compared labour policy networks across Germany, Japan and the United States (Knoke et al. 1996). It was a particular strength of these ground-breaking

studies to combine conceptual assumptions as to the network-structure of modern, pluralist decision making with tangible network analytical empirics. Yet, from a perspective of internationalisation it can be considered a desideratum that they did not touch issues of multi-level governance (Bache and Flinders 2004; Nagel 2009, in print). Moreover, in recent years there has been a vivid methodological debate on how to model structural change and network dynamics (Suitor et al. 1997). Although the dynamic perspective has extensively been applied to interpersonal networks (e.g. Feld 1997; Wellmann et al. 1997) change in policy networks has been neglected so far. This is all the more surprising as interaction patterns in these networks can be held to be more precarious due to the instrumental orientation of the corporative actors involved: “An iterative gaming strategy develops, in which organizations continually shuffle from coalition to coalition in opportunistic pursuit of advantage (Laumann and Knoke 1987: 386).

For a structural analysis of the internationalization of education politics and its impact on national policy networks both the phenomenon of multi-level governance and the aspect of change need to be taken into account. In some countries, such as Germany or Switzerland, education policy has been a *two-level game* for quite some time due to their cultural federalism (Braun 2004; Wolf 2006). Former network approaches dealt with federalist systems in a pragmatic way as they included federal actors as one distinct type of interest groups or state departments among others (Laumann/Knoke 1987: 99; Knoke et al. 1996: 73). Thus, it seems appropriate to treat international or European organizations likewise and to conceive them as a special type of interest group within national education policy networks. The advantage of such a virtual expansion of the network boundaries is that interactions and coalitions across the territorial axis can be covered at all. The price for such a broadening of scope, however, is the disguise of relational complexity *within* the international or subnational sphere. The extrapolation of network change, finally, is a methodical rather than a conceptual challenge and will be dealt with in the following section.

METHODICAL REMARKS AND OPERATIONALIZATION

To account for the impact of international and European Actors in national policy networks we need relational data sensitive enough to reflect various governance instruments (i), abstract enough to allow for cross-country comparisons (ii) and dynamic in order to consider structural changes (iii).

To compile such data we used a mixed-method design combining quantitative content analysis and network analysis (Nagel 2008; Seibel and Raab 2003). In a first step we studied hyperlink-networks of actors likely to be involved in education policy making for each country, drawing a snowball sample from the respective national ministries

of education. In a second step we compiled a corpus of texts for each country whereas the number of documents was weighed by the prevalence of actors in the hyperlink networks. In a third step we created a codebook for each country to operationalize our general comparative categories of actors with regard to the national policy network in question. In a fourth step we performed a computer-based search for all organizations in the codebook. The resulting retrievals were scanned manually for relational contents, such as ‘organization A does something to organization B’ and interpreted according to a given scheme of political interaction in policy networks. Finally, this collection of dyads was compiled into actor-by-actor-matrices to apply quantitative means of network analysis.

Obviously, the categorization of actors and relations is a crucial step to operationalize our research question for a comparative network analysis. On the one hand, categories have to be abstract enough to cover the characteristics of all four countries; on the other hand they need to be as concrete as to allow substantial insights with regard to national decision making and its changes. Generally, nodes within the network represent types of (corporate) actors whereas lines represent types of relations between them. In the following we use a total of 16 categories of actors and 6 categories of relations, which are derived from earlier studies and pre-tests (Nagel 2006; Nagel 2008). As multiple levels of policy-making are concerned, the categories of actors encompass international organizations, especially the OECD, European and Bologna-Process Actors (EU and BFUG), state actors (e.g. national and federal ministries, parliaments) as well as public (e.g. universities) and private interest groups (e.g. economy representatives and labour unions).¹ Moreover, we assume that political interactions between these actors can be conducted by a set of different relations. *Information relations* are characterized by knowledge transfers in the policy network. This knowledge may either be related to processes of policy-making (procedural) or to specific policy issues (substantial). *Transaction relations* are similar to the first type, but indicate exchange or transfer of material goods or services in a more or less monetary form. Thirdly, *relations of symbolic affirmation* are characterized by the spontaneous or institutionalized transfer of institutional and symbolic capital. *Relations of cooperation* represent a general collaboration between corporative actors. In contrast, *lobby relations* encompass purposeful and instrumental intervention of actors on others within the policy network in question.

¹ More precisely, the 16 categories are structured as follows: International organizations, European and Bologna actors, Third States, National State Actors, Federal State Actors, Parties and Legislative Actors, Quality Assurance Agencies, Universities, Research Agencies, Student Representatives, Professional Associations, Public Interest Groups, Economy Representatives, Labor Unions, Schools and Teachers and Training Agencies, (for a more detailed description of the categories see Nagel 2006).

Finally, *power relations* apply to the exertion of formal authority. They are similar to lobby relations as an actor is prompted to act in a certain way.

These categories of relations reflect strategies of political intervention also known as *governance instruments*. In our theoretical considerations we distinguish a number of instruments international actors can make use of to influence national education politics: Discursive dissemination, standard setting, financial means, coordinative activities and technical assistance (Leuze et al. 2008: 8-9). Out of these governance instruments discursive dissemination may be operationalized by relations of symbolic affirmation reflecting affirmative speech-acts and discursive empowerment. Governance by financial means can be measured by relations of transaction while governance by standard-setting can be duly operationalized by relations of control reflecting binding prescription. As the focal point of our analysis are national policy networks governance instruments are not restricted to international actors only. Instead, national veto players or interest groups may also apply governance instruments to realize their interests in the process of decision making. Such an operationalization is consistent with earlier network-analytical approaches, e.g. the distinction of “stick”, “carrot” and “sermon” as ideal-typical strategies of intervention (Burth and Starzmann 2001: 54) or the differentiation of enforcement, incentive and persuasion (Howlett and Ramesh 1993: 255). Here, relations of control resemble the option of stick or enforcement, relations of transaction resemble the option of carrot or incentive while relations of symbolic affirmation resemble the option of sermon or persuasion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

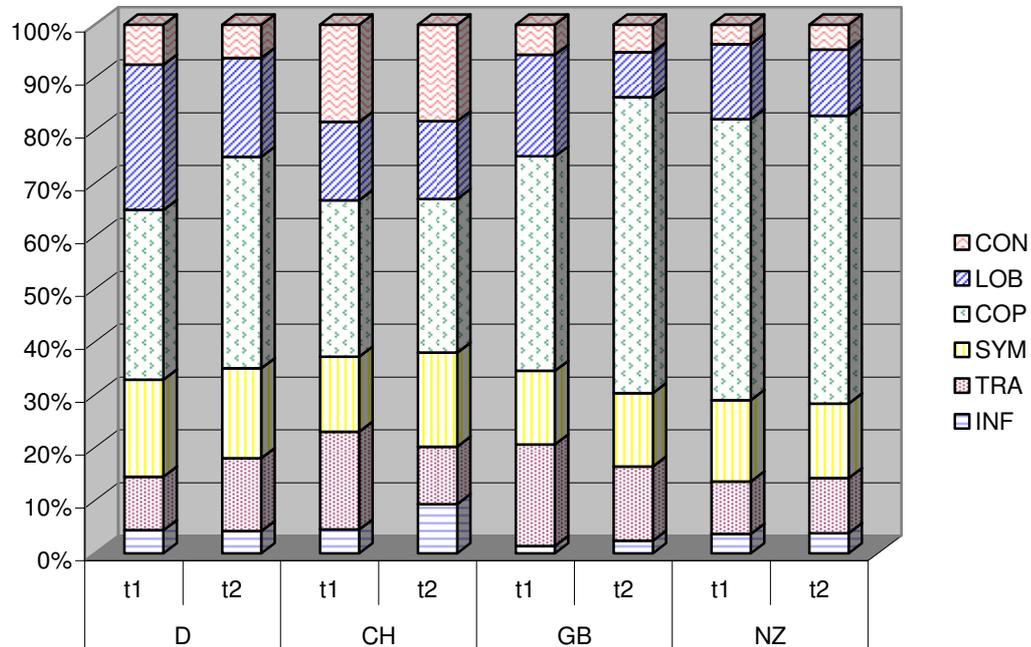
In this section we will present comparative network-analytical evidence with regard to the macro-, meso- and micro-structure of the education policy networks in Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain and New Zealand. On the macro-level we will illustrate how the patterns and modes of political interaction have changed since international and European actors have entered the arena of education policy making. Here, special emphasis will be given to variations across the four countries to account for a potential convergence or divergence of domestic education politics. On the meso- and micro-level in contrast we will have a closer look on international organizations and national veto-players and their social environment.

Structural Change

We assume that political decision making is a multiplex process which encompasses both formal and informal, manifest and discursive relations. Changes in the distribution of these relations can account for variation in the modes of political interaction. Figure 2

illustrates the composition of the education policy networks in our four countries at two periods of time (1997-2003 and 2004-2007):

Figure 1: Modes of political interaction



At a very first glance there is quite some variance within and across countries whereas variation across countries is more visible than within. To give an example of reading: In Germany the education policy network at first is mainly made up by relations of cooperation (about one third), lobbyism (about one quarter) and symbolic affirmation (about one fifth). In contrast, relations of information, transaction and control are less prevalent. In the second period of time, there is an expansion of cooperation and transaction and a reduction of lobbyism. Thus, the general mode of decision-making in education policy in Germany changes from political argument to collective action, which may be an expression of the policy cycle having advanced from programme formulation to implementation.

If we look at similarities and differences between countries by means of pair comparison referring to the number of *veto players* the education policy networks in Great Britain and New Zealand are characterized by a higher share of cooperation and a lower share of control and lobbyism than Germany and Switzerland. The latter represent political systems with a relatively high number of veto-players in a federal arrangement whereas decision making in Great Britain and New Zealand is more centralised and there are only a few veto-players. Therefore, the number and power of veto-players is reflected in the patterns of political interaction: the more veto-players, the more need to exert influence on other actors (lobbyism) and to regulate decision making in a hierar-

chical manner (control). The less veto-players on the other hand, the more need for collective action on a more mutual yet less institutionalised level. Taking a closer look at the statistical evidence of this pair comparison, however, it becomes obvious, that the impact of veto-players on the modes of political interaction should not be overestimated as the respective differences in percentage are rather low. Regarding change the disparities between the two pairs of countries tend to persist (and even increase) over time, which yields to a slight sigma-divergence.

A second pair comparison refers to the degree of exposure to *international organizations*. In our theoretical framework we hypothesized that education politics in Germany and Great Britain would be more likely to change for these countries are exposed both to the OECD and to the EU as well as the Bologna-Process. Switzerland and New Zealand in contrast, are members of the OECD only and should therefore be able to preserve national structures to a higher extent. With regard to the patterns of political interaction, however, there is not as visible a difference as with regard to veto-players. In the first period (1997-2003) the policy networks in Germany and Great Britain show a lower share of lobbyism and slightly higher share of cooperation and control, in the second period (2004-2007) we can account for assimilation with regard to lobby relations, reversion with regard to cooperation and continuity with regard to control. These ambiguous results allude that the exposure of nation states to international organizations (measured by the number of memberships) does not affect the general patterns of domestic decision making in the area of education in our sample. Instead, the variation *within* the pairs of countries is considerably higher than between the pairs. In fact, Switzerland and New Zealand prove to be most dissimilar cases as to the composition of their respective policy networks: whereas the share of cooperation in New Zealand is almost twice as high as in Switzerland, the latter shows a significantly higher share of relations of control. Obviously, the impact of domestic structures of decision making, such as a federal system and the prevalence of veto-players superposes the effect of a country being member in one or more international organizations.

The composition of education policy networks as to the modes and patterns of political interaction can provide some general evidence about changes or continuity of national education politics. A comparison of shares of several relational dimensions across countries and across time has shown that a) there has only been little change in national education politics within the last decade, b) variation between countries is and (has been) bigger than within and c) the modes of political interaction depend on domestic structures of decision making rather than membership in international organizations. Thus, the composition of national education policy networks can be characterized by *path-dependency* and continuity rather than change: political culture prevails over international impulses.

Aside from the modes of interaction network analysis can account for other structural traits of education policy networks, such as the density and centralization of political interaction. Density is defined as the ratio of all factual to all possible relations (Jansen 2003: 108; Wasserman and Faust 2007: 101). Dense networks are more egalitarian in the sense that more actors have access to the resources of more other actors, which impedes a monopolization of power positions. In contrast, (degree-based) centralization refers to the structuration of network interaction around one prominent actor and thus reflects its hierarchical structure. Subsequently, a discordant change of density and centralization may indicate a more inclusive (more dense, but less centralized) or exclusive (less dense, but more centralized) character of a network. Table 2 provides an overview about these measures for all countries and relational dimensions and their variation over time:

Table 2: *Structural Change, Synopsis*

Country	Measures	D		CH		GB		NZ	
		t1	t2	t1	t2	t1	t2	t1	t2
Information	Density	0,08	0,10	0,07	0,10	0,02	0,06	0,04	0,09
	Centralization (od)	0,20	0,25	0,28	0,24	0,05	0,15	0,24	0,40
Transaction	Density	0,08	0,15	0,10	0,08	0,11	0,18	0,07	0,13
Symbolic affirmation	Density	0,18	0,30	0,15	0,21	0,10	0,27	0,14	0,20
	Centralization (od)	0,44	0,32	0,48	0,70	0,25	0,43	0,35	0,43
Cooperation	Density	0,36	0,41	0,23	0,21	0,28	0,53	0,34	0,40
	Centralization (d)	0,43	0,45	0,34	0,44	0,53	0,47	0,56	0,53
Lobbyism	Density	0,16	0,19	0,12	0,13	0,10	0,16	0,07	0,13
	Centralization (id)	0,18	0,51	0,30	0,28	0,39	0,47	0,36	0,57
Control	Density	0,03	0,06	0,06	0,09	0,05	0,06	0,03	0,06
	Centralization (od)	0,18	0,36	0,22	0,13	0,24	0,50	0,32	0,44

(od = outdegree-based centralization; id = indegree-based centralization; d = degree-based centralization)

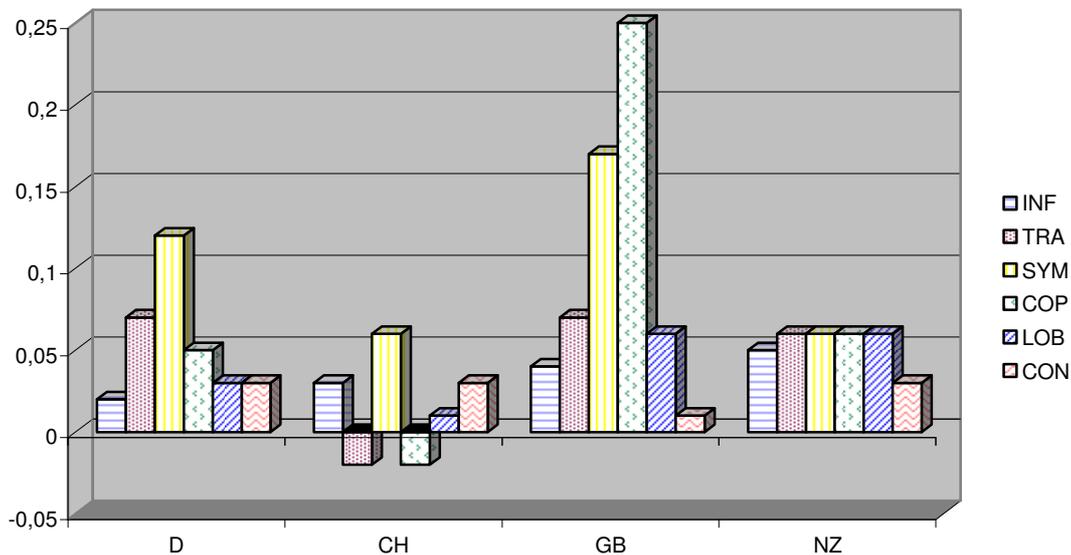
In the columns of the table there are our four countries observed in two periods of time (1997-2003 and 2004-2007). The columns highlighted in grey represent countries less exposed to the influence of international organizations while the framed columns represent countries with a high number of veto-players as to our theoretical sampling. In all countries and in nearly all relational dimensions there is a concordant increase of density and centralization. Thus, during the last decade the arena of national education politics has somewhat expanded, e.g. by private and international actors becoming increasingly involved. This expansion, however, does not lead to a more egalitarian setting, but fosters internal structuration, a process which could be classified as ‘second-order exclusion’.

A glance at the distinct relational dimensions reveals some similarities in the structural constitution of education policy networks across all countries: political interaction

in the dimensions of symbolic affirmation, cooperation and lobbyism appears to be more intense and comparably less hierarchical than relations of information, transaction and control.² Obviously, the political arena consists of two different spheres: the first sphere is inclusive and characterized by elusive discursive interaction of persuasive (symbolic affirmation) or appellative shape (lobbyism) and unspecific cooperation. In contrast, the second sphere is exclusive and characterized by specific and more institutionalised relations, such as the transfer of money, information and directions within a given chain of command. Thus, the inclusion of new actors and the general expansion of interaction in the field of education politics do not necessarily imply enhanced participation (and hence a boost of democratic quality). Neither, however, do they indicate a subversive shift of political authority from national states to interest groups of doubtful provenience. Instead, processes of internationalization and privatization of education politics seem to foster *functional differentiation* within the actor-set, an observation which will be of further interest in the following subsection.

Before turning to subgroup analysis, however, we want to take a closer look at the *patterns of change* across our countries with respect to density and centralization. Figure 3 illustrates the change of density in all countries and relational dimensions:

Figure 2: Change of Density



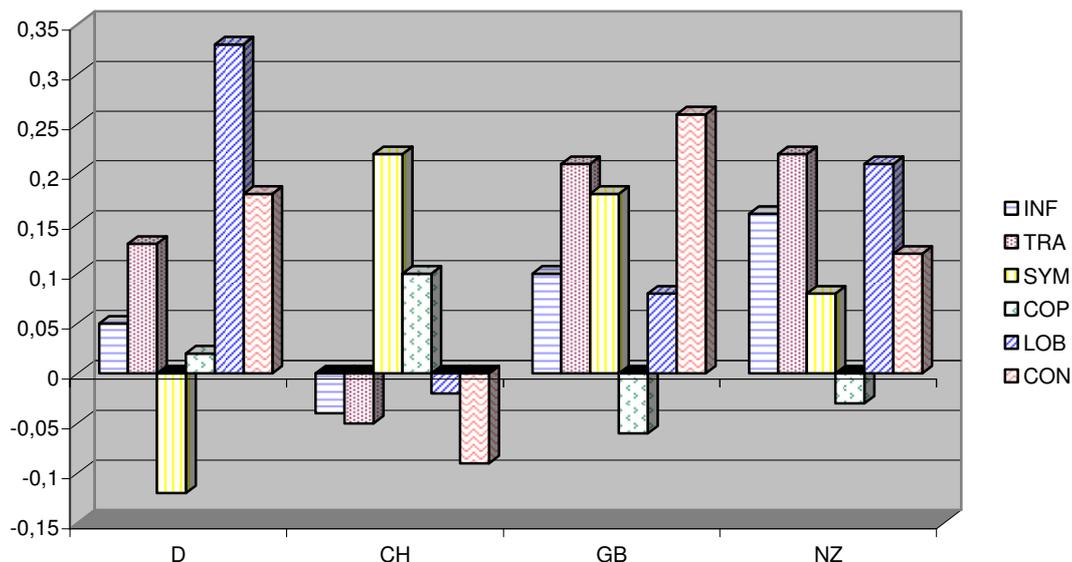
At a first glance, the diagram underlines our previous observation of an overall increase of density across all countries and relational dimensions. The degree of change, however, differs distinctly across countries. Most remarkable in this respect is the education policy network in Great Britain where intensity and thickness of political interaction

² This observation refers to the *ratio* of the centralization index and the density.

have risen considerably between the two time periods. New Zealand and Germany exhibit a moderate change whereas Switzerland shows only little and heterogeneous alteration. These results are perfectly in line with our theoretical assumptions as we expected the British education policy network to be most affected by processes of internationalisation due to its high exposure to international organizations (OECD and EU) and its relatively small number of national veto-players. On the other hand, we held that changes in education politics should be minimal in Switzerland due to its low exposure to international organizations and the big number of veto-players in its cantonal system. Finally, both Germany and New Zealand were to exhibit moderate change as they are either more (Germany) or less (New Zealand) exposed to internationalization *and* national veto-players. Obviously, the constellation of veto-players and international organizations makes a difference with regard to the intensity of political interaction: the membership of a country in international organizations creates channels of interaction and legitimates interference. The prevalence of veto-players, however, may be apt to counterbalance this effect be it due to actual exertion of veto-power or due to the higher degree of competition in the process of decision making in general.

The previous results from a comparative analysis of the density of national education policy networks underline the capacity of our theoretical framework to explain structural changes of national education *politics*. The following figure illustrates changes of centralization in these networks and thus points to internal structuration and hierarchy as other important structural dimensions:

Figure 3: Change of Centralization



The diagram shows changes in (degree-based) centralization between two periods of time for all countries and all relational dimensions. Even at a very first glance it be-

comes obvious that the internal structuration of political interaction in the field of education develops in a more heterogeneous way than its general vitality and intensity. If we build a change indicator by summing up the absolute values of relational dimensions and weigh it by their prevalence it shows that alterations in network centrality are more visible in Germany and Great Britain than in Switzerland and New Zealand. This observation does not match our expectation that education politics were about to change most in Great Britain and least in Switzerland. Yet, a tentative explanation may be achieved by pair comparison: As to our theoretical framework Germany and Great Britain are similar in being more exposed to international organizations than the other two countries. Hence, with regard to the internal structuration of national education policy networks international organizations seem to cause more change than domestic veto-players are able to impede. As pointed out earlier, the general direction of these changes clearly is a centralization of the decision making process, i.e. an increase of hierarchical interaction. Thus, increasing exposure of national education *politics* to international actors claiming legitimate interference fosters not only an expansion (s.a.), but also a closure of political interaction. From a macro-perspective such evidence remains but ambivalent: it may point to a viral intrusion and usurpation of national policy networks by international organizations replacing domestic actors at their very centre or to national actors closing ranks and forming a laager against the international level. Here, network analysis on the level of subgroups (meso-perspective) and single actors (micro-perspectives) promise further insights.

Subgroups and Positions

In terms of network analysis subgroups or cliques are cohesive constellations of actors which are reciprocally tied to one another. The formal characteristics of such groups are intensive interior interaction, social closure and symmetry (Jansen 2003: 194-5). While the assumption of symmetry seems reasonable for the study of personal networks, such as friendship or support, the analysis of policy networks calls for a broader understanding. In the following, subgroups represent closed units of political interaction which may as well be asymmetric. Table 3 (S. 12) shows the share of subgroups containing international actors (IO), European and Bologna-actors (EUB) or third state actors (TS) with regard to three governance instruments: financial means, discursive dissemination and regulation.

To give an *example* of reading: In the transaction network of Germany during the first period of time 25% of the identified subgroups contained European and Bologna-actors whereas there were no cliques containing international organizations or third states. In the second period of time, however, the share of European actors has somewhat lowered while third states form part of three out of eight cliques. These results

might reflect the ostentatious withdrawal of European actors from the implementation of the Bologna-Process and the subsequent consolidation of its intergovernmental platform.

Table 3: Clique membership of international actors

Country	Transaction		Symbolic Affirmation		Control	
	Financial Means/ 'carrot'		Discursive Dissemination/ 'sermon'		Regulation/'stick'	
Time period	P1	P2	P1	P2	P1	P2
D	EUB: 25 %	EUB: 13 % TS: 38 %	IO: 9 % EUB: 46 % TS: 9 %	IO: 29 % EUB: 36 % TS: 14 %	--	--
CH			IO: 14 % TS: 14 %	IO: 10 % EUB: 33 % TS: 33 %	--	EUB: 17 %
GB	EUB: 17 % TS: 17 %	EUB: 22 %		EUB: 10 % TS: 10 %	--	EUB: 20 %
NZ	TS: 14 %	IO: 25 % TS: 13 %	TS: 27 %	IO: 18 % TS: 27 %	--	TS: 25 %

At a first glance it becomes obvious that the prevalence of international, European or third-state actors in cohesive subgroups is highest in the network of symbolic affirmation resembling governance instruments of discursive interaction, moderate in the network of transaction resembling governance by financial means and lowest in the network of control, resembling governance by regulation: Therefore the chance of international and European organizations to participate in closed forums of national decision making depends on the binding or non-binding nature of the governance instruments in question. As a matter of course these results are in line with the strongly national or regional character of education as a policy domain: international actors are free to communicate and interfere via affirmative speech acts, may provide some financial support, but do not have formal regulative competencies of any kind. Nevertheless, the overall share of international, European and third-state actors in cohesive subgroups has increased from the first to the second period in all networks and all countries. It would, however, be premature to interpret this increase as a general trend of denationalisation. A closer look to the composition of subgroups promises evidence whether international actors have displaced national actors or if they have attached themselves to existing cliques (Genschel et al. 2008: 9-10).

First of all number and size of subgroups varies with the governance instrument in question: In the *network of symbolic affirmation* there tend to be more and bigger cliques than in the network of transaction while the network of control exhibits only a few very small cliques. Again, discursive dissemination proves to be more inclusive and more diversified whereas governance by financial means and regulation are more exclu-

sive and specialised. Obviously, the transfer of money and orders is institutionally more demanding than the exchange of affirmative speech-acts. If we look at the composition of subgroups the growing participation of international actors takes place as an attachment rather than displacement. E.g., in the German network of symbolic affirmation European and third-state actors as well as interest groups of universities, students and QA-agencies form clear-cut ‘Bologna-cliques’ in the second period of time. Yet, these new forums do by no means replace the national interaction between universities, students and ministries. Hence, internationalization seems to foster *policy-entrepreneurship* rather than crowding out. Moreover, the German case shows a change of patterns in the interaction between international actors and national state actors: In the first period there are five out of 11 cliques that brought together international or European actors and executive actors of the national or regional level. In the second period there is just one even though the total number of subgroups has increased. From a perspective of denationalisation such evidence might point to a successful emancipation of international actors from forums under national domination. A more conservative interpretation would focus on an exclusion of international actors in the course of national and regional actors closing ranks against exterior interference.

A laager of veto-players against internationalisation? If we take a look at the *network of transaction* the opposite trend is to be seen: at first international actors stick to clear-cut grants for research and student mobility, in the second period of time, however, they form part of bigger transaction cliques made up by international, national and regional actors as well as interest groups of universities and research agencies. Instead of exclusion or emancipation of international organizations we observe a consolidation of a common sphere of political interaction with regard to relations of transaction in Germany and Great Britain. In New Zealand there are no international actors involved in cohesive subgroups of transaction in the first period, but quite a number of international organizations linked with national state actors in the second period. Finally, in Switzerland we could not account for any participation of international actors in relations of transaction in the first or in the latter period of time. Altogether, these results support our theoretical considerations that Great Britain and Germany are more exposed to governance by international organizations (here: governance by financial means) than Switzerland and New Zealand. At the same time the case of New Zealand suggests that it is not membership in a number of international organizations alone which makes up for a higher impact of these organizations, but also national traditions of higher (New Zealand) or lower (Switzerland) openness towards international impulses.

Finally, the network of *control* exhibits only a few cliques which are mainly dominated by national (Great Britain) and regional veto-players (Germany; Switzerland). In New Zealand there are no subgroups of control at all in the first period. These results

indicate the ultimate responsibility of national states in the policy field of education. They support our theoretical assumption that education policy making is more immediate and centralised in Great Britain and Switzerland and more mediate and decentralised in the federal systems of Germany and Switzerland. Structural changes in the second period appear to be marginal compared to the networks of symbolic affirmation and transaction: in all countries there is an expansion of cliques on the national level which brings along a slight trend of nationalisation in the federal systems. In Great Britain and New Zealand QA-agencies gain considerable importance, which may be an expression of the more market-oriented understanding of education in these countries empowering independent quality assurance. Altogether, national and regional veto-players remain key regulators and are widely uncontested by international or private actors.

Subgroup analysis provides insights as to whether, how and to what extent international actors have succeeded in entering closed forums of decision making. Generally, international actors have managed to broaden their participation in all countries and with respect to all governance instruments thus accounting for an overall expansion of international governance in the field of education (i). Nevertheless, the potential for further intervention heavily depends on the hard or soft nature of the governance instrument in question: While international actors have become well established with regard to discursive dissemination and while they have been moderately included into governance by financial means they remain mere onlookers in the field of standard setting and formal regulation. Summed up briefly: international actors are allowed to talk and fund, but not to regulate and administer (ii). Altogether, the increasing participation of international actors in cohesive subgroups of political interaction reflects a certain pattern of internationalisation: attachment and limited inclusion instead of displacement and emancipation (iii). In a comparative perspective clique analysis underlines our theoretical assumptions as to the impact of international actors and national constellation of decision making (iv) and we may account for a slightly (sigma-) convergent development of countries regarding the growing participation of international actors in national forums of decision-making (v).

While the concept of cliques depends on the internal relations between actors we may also account for the structural similarity of actors with regard to their external relations. In such an understanding two actors are alike as far as they have similar relations to others (Jansen 2003: 212-213). In contrast to cohesive subgroups similar positions in a policy network do not necessarily indicate mutual understanding or collective action. Instead, they may point to competition and antagonism arising from the structural 'exchangeability' of actors (ibid, 213). Table 4 displays the role (or function) of international organizations and veto-players in a schematic way.

Table 4: Positional Change

Country	International Actors		Veto-Player			Patterns of Change
	IO	EUB	NSA	FSA	P/L	
Time	P1 → P2					
<i>Network of Transaction</i>						
D	P → R	S – S	S – S	P → S	0 → S ₂	Growing competition; EUB consolidate their position, IOs marginalized
CH	0 – 0	0 – 0	S → S/P	R/P → S/P	R/P → S/P	National consolidation; laager of veto-players
GB	0 – 0	S – S	S – S	S – S	0 – 0	Continuous competition bet-ween EUB, NSA and FSA
NZ	0 → R	0 – 0	S – S	0 – 0	0 – 0	Continuous national centralism
<i>Network of Symbolic Affirmation</i>						
D	R → S/P	S/P → S ₂	S/P – S/P	S/P – S/P	S/P – S/P	Emancipation of EUB/IO
CH	S → P	S → S/P	P/S → P	P/S → P	S → P	National incorporation of IO; emancipation of EUB
GB	S → 0	P → 0	S → S/P	P → P/S	P → S/P	Active exclusion of IO/EUB: crowding out
NZ	0 → P/S	0 – 0	S/P → S	0 – 0	0 → S	National consolidation; emancipation of IO
<i>Network of Control</i>						
D	P → 0	P → 0	P ₂ → S	P ₂ → S	0 – 0	Recapture of national responsibility; skirmish for national/federal competence
CH	S → S/P	S → S/P	S → S/P	S → S/P	P → S/P	Ongoing competition
GB	0 – 0	0 → S	P/S → S	S – S ₂	0 → S	Growing competition; EUB consolidate their position,
NZ	0 → S	0 – 0	S/P – S/P	0 – 0	S/P → S	National consolidation; emancipation of IO

Legend: S = Sender; R = Receiver; P = Processor; 0 = no participation; S₂ or P₂ = second block)

The letters in the lines represent schematic roles which are attributed to an actor due to its position within the network. The letter “S” indicates a position of sending money, affirmative speech-acts or directions, while “R” marks a receiving position. The letter “P” represents a position of processing or brokerage, i.e. self-referential interaction between the actors within a block. Finally, “0” describes a position which is neither sending, processing nor receiving. To give an *example of reading*: in the transaction network of Germany, European and Bologna actors as well as national actors used to be in a sending position while international organizations and federal state actors used to be processors of funds, whereas the participation of parties and legislative actors remained unclear. In the second period of time both federal state actors and legislative actors changed to become senders of funds while international organizations turned into receivers.

Altogether, the German *network of transaction* exhibits a growing competition between international actors and national as well as regional veto-players in the field of governance by financial means. In the course of this contest European and Bologna actors manage to consolidate their position, e.g. by means of traditional education programmes, such as ERASMUS or COMENIUS, while international organizations take up a more passive position. The result is neither a laager of veto-players nor a viral intrusion by international actors, but the formation of a hybrid, pluralistic and competitive

sphere of governance by financial means. Taking a look at Switzerland, international and European organizations, along with some minor interest groups are neither provider nor drawee of funds. In contrast, federal and national veto-players manage to consolidate their position as active applicants of governance by financial means. Here, we have an ideal-typical example of veto-players who close ranks against internationalisation and thus deter international actors to gain ground. Relations of transaction in Great Britain are clustered quite similar to Germany with European, national and federal actors forming one block of providers whereas international organizations, such as the OECD are not involved in governance by financial means. In contrast to both Germany and Switzerland there is a striking continuity of roles and positions. Obviously, the competition between European, national and regional actors has been successfully institutionalised. Finally, in New Zealand there is but one actor in a steady position of sending money: national state actors. All other actors are either not involved or even become clients of the first. These results underline the centralistic setting of decision making in New Zealand.

While there are both clear-cut positions and quite some continuity in the role structure of governance by financial means, governance by discursive dissemination seems to be more hybrid and fragmented in structural terms. In the German *network of symbolic affirmation* veto-players appear to be both senders and processors of affirmative speech acts whereas international and European actors are subject to positional change: while international actors advance to be active participants in the national contest for discursive dissemination, European actors manage to acquire a unique selling proposition reflected by them forming an autonomous block of senders. This development can be taken for a successful emancipation of international actors. Positional changes in Switzerland exhibit a trend of integration or consolidation: while in the first period international and legislative actors had formed a clear-cut block of senders they are now merged with national and cantonal state actors into a self-referential unit. At the same time, European actors, just like in Germany, go for a distinct, autonomous position of sending and processing affirmative speech-acts. The pattern of change can therefore be characterized as national incorporation and the emancipation of European actors. In Great Britain we could account for an antagonistic development of international actors and veto-players: while both international and European organizations lost their status of active participation in discursive dissemination veto-players have consolidated their position, a pattern that could be labelled as crowding out or active exclusion. Finally, in New Zealand national veto-players have reinforced their position as providers of legitimizing speech-acts while at the same time international organizations managed to establish an own position of discursive intervention. This pattern of change may be characterized as national consolidation combined with international emancipation.

In the *network of control* resembling governance by regulation there was a surprising degree of structural change. In Germany we observed two concurrent streams of change: international actors have lost their position as processors of directions (e.g. by giving mandates to QA-agencies by order of the national states) while at the same time national and federal veto-players have emerged from processors to issuers of directions. The recapture of national responsibility in the area of education therefore brings along an increasing competition between national and federal state actors, a process well to be seen in the German ‘Föderalismusreform’; after all, renationalisation is the cradle of national concupiscence. In contrast, relations of control in Switzerland are marked by a continuous structural similarity of international actors and veto-players. Thus, there is an ongoing competition of international or European guidelines imposed on schools or universities and cantonal or national regulation in the classical sense. More change and differentiation is to be seen in Great Britain: Here, European actors and national veto players compete for the allegiance of research institutions and QA-agencies while regional authorities administer distinct responsibilities and international organizations are not part of the game. Finally, the policy network of New Zealand exhibits minor changes with regard to governance by regulation: national state actors can preserve their regulative position, but on their part become subject to mandates by legislative actors and international organizations.

Altogether, positional analysis has revealed a significant change in the structural roles of both international organizations and veto-players in all countries, i.e. the impact and interplay of international and domestic actors changes in the course of internationalization of education politics. While international organizations, such as the OECD, are strong in the field of discursive dissemination, unsurprisingly they play a less active role with regard to governance by financial means or regulation (with the important exception of New Zealand). In contrast, European and Bologna-actors become structurally similar to domestic actors, which is an expression of increasing competition (ii). This structural assimilation of European actors is particularly visible in Germany and Great Britain, which is in line with our assumptions about the relevance of IO-membership. At the same time we can account for a moderate yet visible impact of European and Bologna-actors in Switzerland despite of it not being a member of the European Union. Obviously, the geographical and cultural proximity as well as the Bologna-Process as an intergovernmental ‘transmission belt’ creates an opportunity structure for European intervention (iii). Finally, in the whole period of observation domestic veto-players have kept their position as crucial providers and processors of funds, regulations and political legitimacy. This holds true for the more decentralised and federalist systems such as Germany and Switzerland as well as for the more centralised systems of Great Britain and New Zealand (iv). Therefore, there is quite a bit of positional change in the policy

networks which brings along an increasing participation of international actors. Yet, these actors do by no means displace the domestic sphere of decision-making, but rather find themselves attached or incorporated (v).

The analysis of subgroups and positions yields qualitative evidence as to the roles and social location of international actors and veto-players, but it does not allow for a quantitative assessment whether the actual impact of the international sphere has increased or not. In the following subsection we will therefore address changes of prominence of international actors with regard to their respective governance instruments.

Important Actors

In this last empirical section we assess the activity of international actors on the level of single actors. A basic index to characterize an actor's activity in a policy-network is the degree-centrality, i.e. the number of out- and ingoing relations. In the following, the centrality of an actor reflects his chance to influence other actors in the policy network. Table 5 lists the ranks of international and European actors weighted by the number of outgoing relations and so their exertion of influence on national policy-making.³

Table 5: Sending ranks of international actors

Country	Measures	D	CH	GB	NZ				
Symbolic affirmation	IO	0	6	5	7	0	11	0	7
	EUB	3	5	7	11	3	8	0	10
Transaction	IO	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	EUB	8	3	0	0	4	6	0	6
Power	IO	3	0	4	7	0	0	0	5
	EUB	0	0	4	4	0	5	0	0

First of all, two basic results are noticeable: There is evidence of IO-governance in all national policy networks and there are considerable differences between the countries. At a first glance, the characteristics of IO-governance instruments strongly affect their application to influence national education politics: While governance by discursive dissemination seems to be frequently used by international and European actors, standard setting as mode of governance is *more* exclusive. Symbolic interaction appears to be a more easily applicable strategy for international actors (here: governance by discursive dissemination), even though the impact of this soft instrument is rather uncertain due to its noncommittal character. Taking a closer look at the intensity of governance it appears to be in line with our case selection, e.g. the relatively high exposure to international organizations in Germany and Great Britain is reflected in a moderate degree of

³ If two actors have the same outdegree-centrality, the saldo between in- and outdegree was taken into account.

influence in the first period. Subsequently, New Zealand's policy network does not exert any influence by IO-governance whereas Switzerland appears to be a deviant case as there is a considerable activity by international and European actors. This leads to the assumption that due to the geographical position of Switzerland amidst member states of the EU and OECD there are interventions in the national decision-making processes.

Regarding governance by international organizations the *German* policy network shows an increase in the network of symbolic affirmation, i.e. there is a change in the significance of organizations such as the OECD. As a result, the formation of symbolic alliances initialized by international organizations as well as discursive benefits can be observed. To illustrate this noncommittal mode of governance, the following retrieval gives a brief impression: "We (OECD) fully agree with the statement of the largest teacher trade union GEW that 'teachers' professional identity is defined by quality" (OECD 2004: 44). Stressing a basic accordance with the position of the Labour Union GEW, this statement of the OECD creates a discursive coalition and thus has an impact on the decision-making process in Germany. If we take a look at the ranks of international organizations in the other two networks, we observe a distinct decrease of governance by transaction and standard setting: obviously, there is a *discursive turn* in governance by international organizations in the German policy network. On the contrary, European actors are able to gain significance in the network of transaction while their discursive impulses in the policy network decline. A glance at the list of retrievals shows that this reflects the enhancements of the Bologna-Process, switching from a period of agenda setting to implementation.

In our case selection *Switzerland* represents a country with a high number of veto-players and a low degree of exposure to international organizations. Nevertheless, international and European actors show a high potential of influence in governance by discursive dissemination and standard setting at first. Over time, however, there is a decrease of activity by international and European actors in all modes of governance, except from a constant level of influence of European actors in the network of power relations. Considering the autonomy and neutrality of Switzerland this evidence seems to be counter-intuitive. In fact, the list of retrievals shows that these power relations are related to the Swiss participation in the Bologna-Process, as the following sample exemplifies: "Demnach sind auch die vorliegenden Richtlinien für die koordinierte Erneuerung der Lehre an den universitären Hochschulen der Schweiz im Rahmen des Bologna-Prozesses [...] für die Vertragspartner der Zusammenarbeitsvereinbarung, d.h. den Bund und die Universitätskantone, verbindlich (SUK 2003: 2).⁴ By signing the Bolo-

⁴ „Thus, the present Guidelines for the coordinated modernization of teaching at the Swiss Universities in the context of the Bologna-Process [...] are obligatory for the contractual partners of the cooperation agreement, i.e.

gna-declaration in 1999, the policy network in Switzerland inevitably opened up channels of interaction for impulses from European actors, e.g. the Bologna Guidelines of 2003 and the corresponding recommendations for accreditation of the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS). However, if we consider the results of subgroup analysis, international actors do not replace the powerful veto-players in Switzerland: They solely act as additional actors in the federal structure of decision-making.

Similar to Switzerland, European Actors seem to be the key actors in *Great Britain*. Moreover, there appears to be an analogue effect as in the German and in the Swiss policy network: While European Actors sustain their influence in the network of transaction and they even gain significance in the network of power relations, their discursive governance activity declines. Again, the character of the governance instruments changed over time due to the developing education policy in the EU, amongst others in the context of the Bologna-Process. For instance, in the British political interaction we found several retrievals mentioning funding by the European Union, e.g. in the context of the sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP6). In contrast, international organizations, such as the OECD, play a less significant role in the British political interaction as we observe only a minor increase in governance by discursive dissemination. This evidence leads to the assumption, that EU governance overshadows the political discourse in Great Britain whereas governance of international organizations is either nonexistent or non-mentioned. Hence, the membership in international organizations does not inevitably lead to high governance activity in political interaction.

Finally, an observation of the activity of international actors in *New Zealand* provides clear-cut evidence: International organizations as well as European actors intensify their interventions in national policy-making distinctly, i.e. from no governance to influential actors in the second period. Moreover, this 'boost of governance' concerns almost all instruments, only European Actors still have no capability to influence in terms of power relations. Taking a closer look at the list of retrievals, we find a broad set of international and European Actors, from the OECD and UNESCO to the World Bank to the European Commission. Most of the retrievals are results of common projects, e.g. a UNESCO-ASPAC conference in Wellington 2006, which aimed to improve the management of the education systems as well as to promote a mutual recognition of degrees, diplomas and certificates in the Asia Pacific Region. A funding of the UNESCO "was provided to cover the Congress' infrastructural costs (venue, functions, interpretation, equipment, printing, communications etc.), as well as international travel and accommodation for participants" (Ministry of Education 2007: 146). In addition,

European actors appear in the political interaction of New Zealand as well, exemplarily shown by the following excerpt concerning the LEONARDO programme: “The programme will be jointly funded by Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and the European Commission, with participating institutions also making a small contribution”. Maurice Maxwell, Head of the European Delegation in Wellington comments the purpose of such programmes as follows: “This pilot programme will further strengthen the ties between the European Union and New Zealand and potentially serve as a model for the future cooperation in higher education”.⁵ Referring to our theoretical assumptions, the results for governance by European and Bologna actors are quite surprising, as we classified New Zealand as a country only exposed to the OECD. On the other hand, there is only a small number of veto-players and thus a more centralised structure of decision-making. Along with a traditional openness to external impulses the political system of New Zealand offers a fertile ground for governance by international and European actors.

The previous section aimed at exploring the variances in the appearance of international actors in all four countries. Besides mere description, systematic pair comparisons provide an added value of network analysis since they may allow us to explain similarities and differences regarding the case selection. To recapitulate the theoretical assumptions: We expected a high activity of international actors in Germany and Great Britain due to their memberships in international organizations. We further expected a high stability of decision-making structures in Germany and Switzerland as they are countries with a high number of veto-players.

A first pair comparison refers to the *number of veto-players*: Overall, there is evidence that the activity of international actors declines in the federalist systems with decentralised structures of decision-making. This result is in line with the above made observation that strong veto-players tend to superpose the role of international actors. Taking up the idea of viral intrusion vs. building a laager it seems that the first domestic barriers are build by veto-players: Former existing vertical channels of interaction between the national and international sphere trickle away, and political interaction is recaptured as a national affair. At first, such an evidence is not related to the question of change in national policy making, since there can also be long-term interaction effects between international and national actors. E.g., if we look at QA-agencies in Switzerland, their role in Swiss education politics changed clearly in the context of Higher Education as they became powerful actors in the implementation of the Bologna-Guidelines. In contrast, governance by international actors in countries with a smaller number of veto-players (Great Britain and New Zealand) exhibits more heterogeneous

⁵ <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/node/21396>, 03-10-2009.

changes. While there is a change of governance by European Actors, switching from discursive modes to standard setting and transaction in the British policy network, the influence of international as well as European Actors increases significantly in New Zealand. Nevertheless, there is an overall tendency to an increasing activity of governance by international and European Actors. With regard to the lack of veto-players in these countries this result shows the susceptibility of centralised decision making structures to international impulses.

Besides the number of veto-players, another pair comparison refers to the degree of *exposure to international organizations*. Here, we examine effects resulting from memberships in international organizations. Germany and Great Britain represent countries which are members both of the OECD and the EU: While the influence of international and European Actors declines in Germany, there is more of an increase in Great Britain. On the other hand the comparison between Switzerland and New Zealand as countries less exposed to international organizations shows a contrary effect: The results exhibit a decrease of governance in the Swiss policy network while international organizations gain influence in New Zealand. Similar to the analysis on the macro-level the results indicate that the variation within the pairs is higher than between them. Hence, there is no clear-cut evidence in this second pair comparison that points to a systematic correlation between the degree of exposure to and activity of international organizations.

Summing it up, even though we can not exhibit an overall expansion of governance there are significant changes in the activity of international actors. Overall, international organizations, such as the OECD, increasingly apply discursive strategies to influence national structures of decision-making, while they hardly use financial means and standard setting (i). This emphasizes the character of the policy field of education as a highly sensitive element of national policy-making, which requires just as sensitive instruments. European and Bologna actors, however, possess a broader set of governance instruments, including funding and standard setting (ii). Moreover, there was evidence that the existence of powerful veto-players in a policy network strongly affects the activity of international actors as we observed a decrease of governance in Germany and Switzerland. Despite processes of internationalisation policy networks do not inevitably open up channels of interaction (iii). In contrast, a small number of veto-players and a centralised structure of decision making appear to be a fertile ground for international impulses to bear fruit (iv).

CONCLUSION

In the previous sections we pursued a comparative analysis of education policy networks to study patterns and mechanisms of internationalisation of education politics in Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain, and New Zealand. To this end, we examined po-

litical interaction between international and European organizations, national and regional veto-players as well as interest groups of various kinds on three different levels: On the macro-level we focussed on *structural change* in the patterns and modes of political interaction, whereas on the meso-level we sought for insights into *positional change*. On the micro-level, finally, we explored governance activities of international and European actors and hence *changes in the prominence of individual actors*. As a result, we found considerable variation across (rather than within) countries on all levels of observation. While network analysis is well suited for the systematic description of structural changes of various kinds its results must be related to our theoretical framework and sampling in order to reach explanations as to the impact of international organizations and domestic veto-players on national education policy making.

Here, we assumed that international organizations may trigger change in national policy making by a set of governance instruments. The intensity and direction of change can be hindered or fostered by domestic veto-players. As *independent variable* governance by international and European actors represents a driving force towards convergence of national education policy making. Our study has brought about evidence for different levels of IO-governance in the four countries. The participation of IOs heavily depends on the governance instrument applied: E.g. they are most prominently engaged in governance by discursive dissemination since it is non-committal and not bound to any formal prescriptions. Yet, governance activities of international actors differ between international organizations, such as the OECD and European and Bologna actors as well as across countries. Table 6 provides a comparative overview of central patterns of change.

Table 6: IO-Impact, Patterns of Change

	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>	<i>Great Britain</i>	<i>New Zealand</i>
IO	Discursive turn	Withdrawal	Marginal discursive appearance	Overall enlargement
EUB	From argument to action	From argument to action	From argument to action	Overall enlargement

While European and Bologna actors are able to make use of soft as well as hard modes of governance, international organizations have proved to be restricted to soft governance, such as discursive dissemination in all countries. With regard to the exposure to international organizations, the policy networks in Germany and Great Britain exhibit some similar characteristics. On the one hand, there are mainly *discursive impulses* by international organizations such as the OECD, on the other hand governance by European and Bologna-actors represents *collective action*, e.g. funding and standard setting. Additionally, these actors become structurally similar to domestic players which points to our theoretical assumptions concerning the relevance of IO-membership. On the con-

trary, the results of the other countries are more heterogeneous as New Zealand appears to be an exceptional case. Although we expected a lower degree of IO activity we observed an *overall enlargement* of governance in the policy network of New Zealand. In Switzerland we found evidence for a *withdrawal* of international organizations, i.e. a decrease of governance which may be attributed to the high number of veto-players. However, similar to the other participants of the Bologna-Process the governance activity of European and Bologna-actors shows a turn *from argument to collective action*. This leads to the question how national structures of decision-making cope with impulses by international organizations.

Obviously, domestic veto-players make extensive use of their potential to mediate international stimuli. In their position as ‘doormen’ of their countries they may either embed international organizations in, or exclude them from political interaction. Hence, national transformation capacities represent the *intervening variable* in our theoretical model. If we take a look at the structural roles of veto-players in their respective policy-networks, i.e. national and federal actors as well as parties and legislative actors, we find different strategies to mediate IO-governance. Based on the results of positional analysis, Table 7 provides a brief overview.

Table 7: *Veto-players, Patterns of change*

<i>Symbolic affirmation</i>	<i>National consolidation</i>	<i>National Consolidation</i>	<i>Active exclusion of IOs and EUB</i>	<i>National consolidation</i>
Transaction	Growing Competition	Laager of veto-players	Continuous competition	(national) centralism
Power	Recapture of national responsibility	Ongoing competition	Growing competition	National consolidation

In general, we found evidence that in all countries veto-players have kept their position as crucial providers and processors of political resources such as financial means, regulations or legitimacy. Despite of their remarkable stability within the countries there is quite some variation of veto-players and their respective positions across countries. E.g., in the German and Swiss policy network we found spheres of national consolidation (network of symbolic affirmation), but also competition, recapture and even laagers of veto-players (networks of transaction and power). In short, federal systems tend to react with various strategies to cope with IO-governance, heavily depending on the respective political resource. Countries with a small number of veto-players, by contrast, appear either not to have or not to apply as many different strategies. E.g. the positions of veto-players in the British policy network can rather be characterised by competition whereas there is more of a consolidation in New Zealand. To summarize, as expected national transformation capacities are crucial for analyzing processes of change since we ob-

served various positions of veto-players. In our sample veto-players take up ambivalent positions between more active roles, as, for instance, in the Swiss policy network, or more passive roles as in New Zealand. However, as mentioned above these actors do by no means give up their central status in the policy networks, neither in centralised political systems nor in decentralised.

Obviously, strategies of domestic veto-players to react to international interference are just as manifold as the governance instruments applied by international actors. Their respective impact, however, can only be judged by a comparative examination of change in national education politics (*dependent variable*). A comparison of structural change in national education policy networks has pointed to stability rather than change. Moreover, variation between the countries has proved to be higher than within. With regard to our theoretical framework the modes of political interaction seem to depend on domestic structures of decision-making (veto-players) rather than membership in international organizations. Despite such evidence of path-dependency and continuity, we could observe differences in the degree of change with respect to intensity (density) and internal structuration (centralisation):

Table 8: National education politics, Degree of change

	<i>D</i>	<i>CH</i>	<i>GB</i>	<i>NZ</i>
Intensity	Moderate change	Little change	High change	Moderate change
Structuration	More change	Little change	More change	Little change

The changes in the *intensity* of political interaction are perfectly in line with the assumptions guiding our theoretical sampling: The British policy network seems to be most affected by processes of internationalisation due to its high exposure to international organizations and its small number of veto-players. On the contrary, the Swiss policy network exhibits only little change. Finally, we observed moderate change in Germany and New Zealand where there is a balance between international organizations and domestic veto-players. Yet, a glance at the internal structuration of the policy networks yields to more heterogeneous results. There are tendencies to centralize political interaction in the German and British policy network while network centralization in Switzerland and New Zealand remains relatively stable. Thus, even if international actors are able to claim legitimate interference, for instance, due to a countries membership, IO-governance does not inevitably lead to an expansion and openness of political interaction.

This paper was guided by a descriptive as well as an explanative intention. In the previous sections we provided *descriptive* insights into general modes of education policy making in Germany, Switzerland, Great Britain and New Zealand and their development within the last decade (structural change). Moreover, we explored coalitions and

positions of structural equivalence to account for roles or functions of international actors and domestic veto-players and to examine positional change. Finally, we displayed the significance of international actors in national education policy networks to account for gains or losses in prominence. To make *explanative* use of our results we pursued pair comparisons guided by theoretical sampling: While Germany and Switzerland are structurally similar due to their federal systems and hence a bigger number of veto players, Great Britain and Germany are marked by a potentially higher exposure to international actors as they are members of the OECD and the EU. It is one of our key findings that the effect of veto-players superposes the effect of IO-governance. In most countries there is indeed an internationalization of education politics taking place in the sense of an increasing participation of international actors who apply a more and more diversified portfolio of governance instruments. However, such intervention does not remain uncontested as domestic veto players develop a rich set of strategies to cope, compete or collaborate with international actors. It appears to be just like in Aesop's famous tale about the Hare and the Tortoise: the hare may be more agile than his competitor, but the tortoise always seems to be ahead making use of its lookalike kinsfolk. Within the last decade national education policy networks have become more inclusive to international actors, yet we are far from any sort of international hegemony or denationalisation. The internationalisation of education politics has taken place as a process of attachment rather than displacement. The ongoing prominence of national and regional veto players leads to path-dependency rather than convergence of actors and processes in national decision making. At the same time international actors may use their new closeness to the national policy domain to launch changes in education *policies*.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Alexander K. Nagel is assistant professor at the International Consortium for Research in the Humanities (IGKF) and the Center for Religious Studies (CERES), University Bochum.

Telephone: +49 234 322 2314
E-Mail: Alexander-kenneth.nagel@rub.de
Address: Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Universitätsstraße 150,
D 44780 Bochum

Philipp Knodel is a research fellow at the Collaborative Research Center “Transformations of the State”, University of Bremen.

Telephone: +49 421 218 8728
E-Mail: Philipp.knodel@sfb597.uni-bremen.de
Address: University of Bremen, Collaborative Research Center “Transformations of the State“, Linzer Strasse 9a, D 28359 Bremen