

Tracing Back the Journey of School Improvement in Germany: Policies, Patterns, and Prospects

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International developments in education are subject to local adaptations. Here, we describe the commonalities and idiosyncrasies between German and international developments in school improvement. Special attention is given to the reciprocal relationship between practices of school improvement and school improvement research activities as well as to how the zeitgeist impacted the emergence of different school improvement theories. The German school improvement (research) journey shows that the international discourse on school improvement of the time was attended to and that, with a slight delay, central aspects thereof were adapted and implemented in both research and practice. Moreover, whereas the German educational system underwent a shift from input to output governance, Germany combines 'low-stake tests' and a moderate degree of autonomy and competition. A unique German innovation for school improvement is the central role of steering groups, in which elected and mandated teachers participate in organisational development outside the formal hierarchy of the school.

Keywords: school improvement journey, Germany, international comparison, research and policy development

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