1 History, context and overview: Implications for teacher education policy, practice and future research

Brian Hudson and Pavel Zgaga

History and context

This book is the result of over 20 years' collaboration through projects supported by the European Commission and especially from 10 years' collaboration within the Teacher Education Policy in Europe (TEPE) network. In particular, these chapters have their origins in contributions made at the network's eighth annual conference held at the University of Zagreb, Croatia, in 2014 on the theme of 'Overcoming Fragmentation in Teacher Education Policy and Practice'. The TEPE network was established in 2006 at Umeå University (Sweden) and the first TEPE conference was organised at the University of Tallinn (Estonia) in February 2007. Annual conferences have been organised every year since then and taken place in Ljubljana, Umeå, Tallinn, Vienna, Warsaw, Helsinki, Zagreb, Dundee and Malta.

The TEPE network itself built on earlier initiatives and in particular on the Thematic Network for Teacher Education in Europe (TNTEE) that is discussed in detail below, and which can be traced back over a period of more than 30 years overall. Prior to the 1990s, teacher education in Europe was rarely discussed as an issue of European or international cooperation in higher education. At a practical level, a new era was marked by the introduction of the European Union's Erasmus, Socrates and Leonardo programmes in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Direct collaboration between education institutions from EU countries increased substantially as a result. The 1990s were, at the same time, the beginning of a period of European Union enlargement. It was also very important

for teacher education that special EU cooperation programmes were launched that supported broader cooperation in education among EU (Erasmus) and non-EU countries (Tempus; Erasmus Mundus).

The Socrates-Erasmus programme opened new perspectives for European cooperation in general education and made good progress in the early 1990s, particularly through the programme action on 'university cooperation projects on subjects of mutual interest'. Similarly, as in other areas of higher education, a thorough evaluation of teacher education was prepared in this context during the mid-1990s. In 1994, within a larger framework of investigating the Erasmus programme's effects, the European Commission funded a pilot project in this area: the Sigma–European Universities' Network. Within this network, 15 national reports[1] were produced for an Evaluation Conference that took place in June 1995, the proceedings of which were edited by Sander (1995) and published by Universität Osnabrück. These reports presented an extremely fragmented picture of the teacher education systems in the EU-15 of that time. Reports focused on initial teacher education as well as on in-service training in national contexts, but also reflected on new needs and perspectives in Europe.

In addition, a special report was included in a publication dealing with European cooperation in teacher education of that time, particularly regarding perspectives on the Erasmus programme in the area of teacher education (Delmartino & Beernaert, 1998). This publication was based on the lessons learned from the elaboration of the RIF (Réseau d'Institutions de Formation–Network of Teacher Training Institutions), which developed steadily from January 1990 onwards, following the organisation of the first European Summer University for teacher educators in October 1989 at the Hogeschool Gelderland, Nijmegen (NL), within the Erasmus programme. This publication is one of the most relevant information sources on European cooperation in teacher education for the period up until the mid-1990s. It may also be seen as part of a wider effort regarding research on teacher education in Europe, which began in Osnabrück in 1995, and as such represents the very first major transnational research programme in teacher education across Europe.

Subsequently, the European Commission supported 28 Thematic Networks in the 1996/97 academic year with the aim of enhancing the European dimension of university studies as part of the Socrates-Erasmus programme (Action 1). The Thematic Network on Teacher Education in Europe (TNTEE) was the only network devoted exclusively

to teacher education. Its main objective was to establish a flexible multilingual transnational forum for the development of teacher education in Europe by linking together as many universities and other institutions as possible. The network was coordinated by the Board of Teacher Education and Research, Umeå University, Sweden. The sub-networks of the TNTEE focused on: (1) the culture and politics of professional formation; (2) the development of innovative strategies of cooperation between TE institutions, schools and education services; (3) promoting lifelong learning in and through teacher education: evolving models of professional development; (4) teacher education as a powerful learning environment – changing the learning culture of teacher education; (5) searching for a missing link – subject didactics as the sciences of a teaching profession; (6) developing a 'reflective practice' of teachers' work and teacher education by partnerships between researchers and practitioners; (7) intercultural education in teacher education; and (8) gender and teacher education.

The TNTEE had a close relationship with the European Educational Research Association (EERA) as well as national research associations across Europe from its inception. This close relationship has since been maintained through the TEPE network. In relation to the former, its work was launched in the EERA through a TNTEE-sponsored symposium within the Teacher Education Research Network at the European Conference on Educational Research (ECER) in September 1997 at the University of Frankfurt.[2] Another evaluation study of teacher education in EU countries was conducted within the TNTEE at the end of the 1990s (Sander, 1999). Further, the network organised a conference that was held at the Catholic University of Lisbon in May 1999.[3] However, the most significant output of the TNTEE was the *Green Paper on Teacher Education in Europe* (Buchberger et al., 2000), which was the first policy paper on teacher education in Europe produced in collaboration with experts from European teacher education institutions. The TNTEE formally ended in 1999, although it influenced further cooperation and networking and its website[4] is still active and well visited to this day.

One of the most direct outcomes of the TNTEE network at the level of institutional cooperation was an Erasmus Advanced Curriculum Development project, which aimed to develop joint European modules at doctoral level. The project was coordinated in the first phase by Umeå University (2000–2) as the Europeisk Doctorat en Lärarutbildning (EDIL) project, and in the second phase by the Pädagogische Akademie

des Bundes in Upper Austria, Linz (2002–5) as the European Doctorate in Teaching and Teacher Education (EUDORA). The core group was based on a consortium of ten teacher education institutions from various European countries. Within this project, five intensive programmes and modules were developed and conducted, each on several occasions. These consisted of the following themes and, in most cases, provided opportunities for students to publish their research studies:

- educational policy analysis (EPAC)[5]
- innovative mother tongue didactics (IMUN)[6]
- active learning in higher education (ALHE)
- e-learning in higher education (eLEARN)[7]
- researching the teaching and learning of mathematics (MATHED)[8]
- researching social inclusion/exclusion & social justice in education (SI).

Summer schools were organised in various countries from 2002 onwards, the largest of which was held in Tolmin, Slovenia in 2005. This event involved about a hundred doctoral students and staff who worked in three parallel modules (EPAC, IMUN, MATHED).

It was against this backdrop that the Teacher Education Policy in Europe (TEPE) network was established as a self-supporting academic network at a meeting hosted by members of the Faculty of Teacher Education at Umeå University in 2006. As mentioned earlier, the first TEPE conference took place in Tallinn in 2007 while the second was hosted by the Faculty of Education at the University of Ljubljana in February 2008. The second conference led to the formulation of recommendations for teacher education policy at the local, national and European levels, which have helped steer the work of the network since. These conclusions and recommendations are published in Hudson and Zgaga (2008) and focus on the need to improve the image of teaching and the status of the teaching profession, and also on the importance of involving teacher education institutions as partners in the process of policy development. In particular, they highlight the need to advance research in and on teacher education, promote mobility and the European Dimension in Teacher Education, and to support the development of cultures for quality improvement in teacher education.

Publications aiming to present policy-related research in teacher education have continued to be produced following the conferences in Umeå, Tallinn, Vienna, Warsaw and Helsinki (Hudson et al., 2010;

Eisenschmidt & Löfström, 2011; Harford et al., 2012b; Michalak et al., 2013; Niemi et al., 2013). The relationship with the European Educational Research Association (EERA) has also continued, in particular through the financial support given by the EERA Council, to help fund a colloquium on quality assurance and teacher education at University College Dublin in 2010. This event resulted in a further publication by Harford et al. (2012a).

These developments led to further innovative projects in the context of European teacher education, including the Erasmus project EPTE (European Primary Teacher Education, 2009–11) that led to the creation of a one-year joint programme that links and integrates students and teachers from various schools and/or departments of teacher education from several European countries.[9] The programme was accredited in several countries and is carried out annually for groups of students at different locations. Credits acquired in this programme are fully recognised at home institutions under the Erasmus exchange principles.

OVERVIEW

Successful responses to the challenges of our time always depend, last but not least, on our understanding of historical processes and on taking account of the lessons we have learned from this. In reflecting not only on the history of the TEPE network but also on the history and context that immediately preceded its establishment, two trends become apparent. The first is an increasingly active process of internationalisation that goes beyond the 'Europeanisation' process referred to in the network's position paper from 2007. This process is apparent in some of the contributions to this book, and is reflected by the input of invited speakers at the conference in Zagreb. For example, Edem Adubra, Head of the Secretariat, International Task Force on Teachers for EFA at UNESCO, spoke on the theme of 'Fragmentation of Teacher Education: Responses from the Teacher Task Force Network' while Kwame Akyeampong, who is also a contributor to this book, spoke about 'Reconceptualising Teacher Education for a Post-2015 Education for All Agenda'. It was also reflected in the most recent TEPE conference at the University of Malta in May 2016 on the theme of 'Teacher Education from a Global Perspective'. The second trend that becomes apparent is the steady continuing growth of policy-related research in and on

teacher education that was first initiated at the Sigma Network conference in 1995 (Hudson & Zgaga, 2008; Hudson et al., 2010; Eisenschmidt & Löfström, 2011; Harford et al., 2012; Harford et al., 2012b; Michalak et al., 2013; Niemi et al., 2013).

Specifically in relation to the theme of this book, the need for greater coherence between the different aspects of teacher education has been the focus of discussion in debates about teacher quality and teacher professionalism over a long period of time. Since the integration of teacher education within the university system (Zgaga, 2013), one of the most challenging issues has concerned the tension between subject studies and pedagogy – see Hudson et al. (1999). In addition, the 'universitisation' of initial teacher education is often perceived as a process that has widened the gap between the theoretical basis of the educational sciences and school-based teacher practice. Further, it has been observed that in the majority of countries there is no firm alignment between initial teacher education, induction and continuing professional development. The issue of what constitutes a 'European teacher' has been also raised at a broader European policy level since the mid-2000s (Schratz, 2005).

Accordingly, the following sub-themes were established prior to the Zagreb conference in order to explore this general theme of overcoming fragmentation by:

- linking educational sciences with subject methodologies
- addressing the relationship between university faculty and school-based teacher educators
- bridging the gaps between initial teacher education, induction and continuing professional learning, and
- embedding the 'European dimension' within national contexts.

In addition to these four sub-themes, participants were invited to interrogate other relevant aspects of fragmentation in teacher education. Important drivers within the European context have been the so-called Bologna Process and the EU strategies on education and research arising from the corresponding Lisbon Strategy (Zgaga, 2013). While these policy drivers are transnational in nature, those associated with teacher education are related to national systems and in many ways represent conflicting forces on teacher education institutions. Against this background, it can be seen that neoliberal policy initiatives have exerted

influences that have resulted in even greater fragmentation in many ways, and we return to this discussion later.

The book as a whole is structured according to two organising principles from beginning to end. The *first* principle follows the logic of the teacher education continuum from initial teacher education through induction to continuing professional learning. The *second* organising principle reflects a focus from the local to the global. For example, the book begins with a consideration of the national contexts of Ireland, Finland, Poland, Sweden and Scotland before considering the European (Caena) and then the global (Younie, Leask and Akyeampong).

The contribution in Chapter 2 by Harford and Gray concentrates on the link between teachers' professional identity and how teachers perceive and carry out their roles. They draw attention to the impact of a student teacher's 'apprenticeship of observation' and the impact of initial teacher education on the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of that experience, which has been widely researched in the field of teacher education. The main purpose of this chapter is to use the student-teacher voice as a basis for exploring the underlying fragmentation, or otherwise, of teacher education. They argue that fragmentation arises because teacher education has been challenged in making connections between the vast amount of in-depth research conducted at the level of the individual teacher, and the world of policy in which education is essentially seen as a systemic, industrial activity. In other words, a nuanced understanding of individual teacher characteristics and values does not translate into policies that acknowledge these characteristics and values. They argue further that student teachers do not enter the world of teaching via teacher education, but are always already within it as a result of their own schooling. In relation to student teachers, teacher education is, therefore, a 'phase change' between school-as-pupil and school-as-teacher, rather than 'entry into a profession'. In analysing their data, the tension is highlighted between teaching as an individually constructed set of beliefs, with 'care' as a central concept, versus teaching as an activity to be managed for optimum efficiency and competitive advantage, as in so-called new managerialism.

In Chapter 3, Niemi focuses on the training of mentors for new teachers in Finland. The chapter describes a pilot induction programme (2011–13) to support new teachers through mentoring. It summarises the needs of new teachers in Finland and how the pilot programme was developed using Finnish contextual knowledge and the experiences of

the New Teacher Centre in California. The chapter also describes how the mentors who were developing the programme viewed their role in the induction. The mentors were interviewed in 2013. At the start of the chapter, the special features of the Finnish education system are described in order to provide a holistic picture of why new teachers need support in Finland, even though they have a high level of teacher education, including effective practicums, before they begin teaching. The pilot programme made visible the urgent need to create a teacher education continuum and support teachers through induction. Recommendations are made at the chapter's end on how to make induction a sustainable part of the education system.

The focus of Chapter 4 by Madalińska-Michalak is on the issue of the quality of teacher education in Poland. The contribution emphasises the importance of coherent, career-long development of teachers' learning in a changing context and of creating conditions for preparing teachers who are continuous learners themselves. It presents an overview of changes in teacher education in Poland from 1990 onwards in the setting of improving the quality of teaching and learning and, at the same time, the quality of higher education. This overview should be read as a description of the most important changes affecting teacher education and the teaching profession, and as an investigation into their aims and context in Poland. The chapter directs attention to future policy, research and practice related to a highly relevant need to develop a continuum of teacher education in Poland with a focus on teachers' career-long professional learning and their support in different phases of their professional career.

In Chapter 5, Åstrand discusses the issue of fragmentation in relation to teacher education in Sweden and the conditions for the struggle over academic rigour and professional relevance. He takes an historical perspective and outlines a series of reforms involving divergent strategies over the past century aimed at countering fragmentation. The analysis of improvement strategies addresses issues of cohesion, fragmentation and formation of teacher students. Teacher education has historically been described as primarily a training problem, a learning problem and as a policy problem and, accordingly, the ideas on what constitutes high-quality teacher education have shifted as well – and with that also strategies for countering fragmentation. Over a period of 100 years, several national as well as local strategies have been proposed in Sweden as unifying backbones of teacher education to overcome fragmentation. These

fall into three classes according to their orientation towards, first, content; second, form of organisation and mode of execution; and, third, types of understanding. The first is considered in relation to subject-matter preparation as well as particular dimensions (for example the European dimension), preparation in foundations of education, scientific training and teaching practice. The second involves systemic models for teaching practice, formal models for collaborating schools and teachers, organisation of general studies and the organisation of institutions for teacher education. Third, the types of understanding involve a consideration of teachers as practitioners, professionals and civil servants, as well as one or several professions. Reforms for advancement of teacher education have also aimed at countering fragmentation and emphasised ideas that have complex roots in those classes of means but which have also suffered from 'historical amnesia' at times. This chapter draws upon historical records, contemporary records as well as research, and aims to reveal how different levels of fragmentation have not only survived but also increased despite various attempts to reduce fragmentation.

The approach taken in Scotland for supporting the development of teacher professionalism is the focus of Chapter 6 by Finn. The need for high standards for academic learning and professional education in the development of most modern professions is noted as being widely recognised. In Scotland, which has a fully independent professional regulatory body for teaching, these are key features of a new professionalism built around a consensus that teachers must accept responsibility for the development of their professional skills throughout their careers.

This is presented as an approach in which the need for trust is balanced with reasonable expectations of accountability. In summary, teachers are supported in keeping their skills and knowledge up to date, and they remain accountable for the quality of their work. The Scottish approach, while consistent with current international research, contrasts strongly with emerging trends in some countries and particularly in the neighbouring country of England, where a policy of increased deregulation and flexibility is leading to significant systemic change in schools. The chapter explores the advantages and risks arising from these different approaches to teacher education. In doing so, it reviews the key components of professionalism and of teacher professionalism; considers the perceived status of teaching as a profession; takes account of the reported views of teachers, researchers and parents; reports on

a number of international perspectives; and, finally, offers a way forward that can enhance professionalism and protect high standards in the future.

The contribution by Caena in Chapter 7 looks at the background of the European policy drive to link initial teacher education, induction and CPD by building bridges across the worlds of higher education, schools, stakeholders and policy-makers, both within and beyond national contexts. Taking stock of the complexity and diversity of a 'messy' policy field, it views teacher education from a multi-level, socio-ecological perspective. Teacher education is seen as an activity system, the aims and outcomes of which are culturally shaped by its contexts, rules, roles and actors. Activity systems are characterised by ongoing contradictions and change, and are constantly interacting with neighbouring activity systems. The global dimension of teacher education – the pressure towards convergence, transparency, integration and consistency along the professional-learning continuum – could therefore be perceived as an external influence acting as a catalyst of change. The 'Europeanisation' of teacher education – traditionally characterised by cultural-historical peculiarities embedded in national contexts – is then bound to sharpen the existing contradictions, as well as boost innovative solutions to overcome issues and constraints. As a consequence, the teacher education continuum is viewed not only as related to underlying values of schooling and citizenship – which seem to mirror a global focus shift from knowledge input to competence outcomes, in a developmental and equitable perspective – but also in relation to its systemic relationships with other teacher policy areas. These might represent key variables locally, as hurdles or development factors: teacher status, career and motivation, selection and recruitment; quality control, assessment and evaluation for university providers, schools and teaching professionals, with the key role of effective teacher competence frameworks; and governance mechanisms balancing autonomy and control in relationships and roles of key stakeholders. This holistic, system perspective highlights the pivotal role of partnerships between universities and schools, as learning organisations for the development of individual teachers, teacher educators and professional communities. It also highlights the importance of reflective practice as a boundary object spanning different contexts, roles and cultures.

In Chapter 8, Younie and Leask address the issue of overcoming fragmentation between research and practice by managing and mobilising