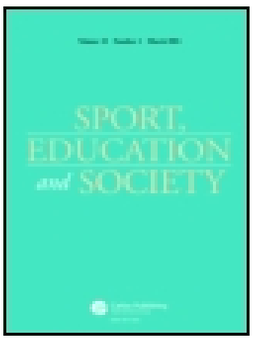

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The occupational socialization of German physical education teachers

Anne M. Merrem[a] and Matthew D. Curtner-Smith[b]

[a]Department of Sport Management, Wellness, and Physical Education, University of West Georgia, Carrollton, USA; [b]Department of Kinesiology, The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, USA

ABSTRACT

To date, most of the work on the occupational socialization of physical education (PE) teachers has been completed in the United States and Britain. The purpose of this study was to examine and describe the occupational socialization of German PE teachers who were trained prior to unification of the two German states and worked in both their old nations and the new Germany. The two research questions we attempted to answer were (a) What were the perspectives and practices of West German (WG) and East German (EG) PE teachers? and (b) What factors influenced these perspectives and practices? Participants were five former WG and five former EG teachers. Data were collected using four qualitative techniques (formal and follow-up interviews, document analysis, film snippets) and analyzed by employing analytic induction and constant comparison. Findings indicated that there were distinct and different patterns of socialization for the former German states. The WG group possessed conservative teaching orientations nurtured during their childhood and youth and reinforced during their training and by their school cultures. Perceived changes in German society and culture led to slight modifications of these orientations over the teachers' careers. Prior to reunification, the EG group possessed a high performance orientation primarily honed by the politics of the state. The perspectives and practices of WG teachers were relatively unaffected by reunification. In contrast, the transition to a new system was emancipating for four of the EG teachers who shifted to a teaching orientation. Conversely, the transition was particularly difficult for one of the former EG teachers who partially retained his high performance orientation and strategically complied with new national requirements.

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Introduction

Occupational socialization theory describes the forces that socialize individuals into teaching (Lawson, 1983a, 1983b; Templin & Richards, 2014). It has been used successfully in previous sport pedagogy research to provide in-depth analyses of how the beliefs, values, perspectives and practices of physical education (PE) teachers are shaped and developed (Curtner-Smith, 2009; Curtner-Smith, Hastie, & Kinchin, 2008; Wright, 2001). Such research has the potential to lead to improvements in the selection, physical education teacher education [PETE], work conditions, and inservice training of physical educators.

Three main phases of socialization influencing inservice PE teachers have been described in the literature (Lawson, 1983a, 1983b). During all three phases, powerful institutions and individuals act

CONTACT Anne M. Merrem amerrem@westga.edu Department of Sport Management, Wellness, and Physical Education, University of West Georgia, 1601 Maple Street, Carrollton, GA 30116, USA

to shape teachers. Teachers, however, are not passive in the process and can fight back. The resulting dialectic leads to changes in both the teacher and the system (Schempp & Graber, 1992).

The first phase of socialization, *acculturation*, takes place in the years between birth and the beginning of formal teacher education (Lawson, 1983a). Important individuals within this phase include family members, peers, PE teachers and coaches. Key institutions are sport and the school (Curtner-Smith et al., 2008). Parents, siblings and relatives who enjoy and participate in sport and physical activity are often the initial catalyst for prospective PE teachers becoming interested in their subject matter. This interest is further nurtured by adults coaching sport outside school (Volkmann, 2008), and by the perspectives and practices of their PE teachers and the programs they deliver (Vollmer & Curtner-Smith, 2016). Schempp and Graber (1992) noted that prospective teachers undergo an 'apprenticeship of observation' (p. 333) while at school and make judgments about what it means to be a teacher. This apprenticeship is crucial in the formation of a 'subjective warrant' (Lawson, 1983a, p. 3). That is, a view about what the job of PE teacher involves, coupled with the perception of one's ability to do the job.

Research suggests that PE teachers form one of two orientations to the job during their acculturation (Curtner-Smith et al., 2008). Those who participate in good quality PE programs; attend schools at which extracurricular sport is given a relatively low priority; and participate in low level major sport, high level minor sport, or non-competitive physical activity are more likely to have 'innovative teaching orientations' and view coaching extracurricular sport as a 'career contingency'. Their priority as they begin PETE will be to teach high quality curricular PE aimed at realizing recognized educational objectives. Conversely, those who participate in high level major sport, and who attend schools that prioritize the production of competitive school teams but deliver low quality PE, are more likely to develop 'conservative coaching orientations' and view teaching as a career contingency. Their priority will be to coach high level sport. Their teaching is likely to be low quality and without educational goals.

The second and weakest phase, *professional socialization*, occurs during PETE. Students who begin this phase with strong coaching orientations are often untouched by anything said or done by those responsible for training them, regardless of the strength of their programs (Klinge, 2002; Mordal-Moen & Green, 2014). Conversely, good quality PETE can strengthen teaching orientations and change the views of those who enter the program with moderate coaching orientations (Wright, 2001). Strong PETE programs are staffed by non-coaching faculty who share a set of values and focus on honing the same technical skills and transferring the same body of pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, these faculty monitor their charges' teaching carefully and make vigorous attempts to change misguided views and practices (Lawson, 1983a, 1983b).

The third phase, *organizational socialization*, includes all the effects of the workplace on newly qualified teachers. Some schools undoubtedly welcome innovative teachers and encourage them (Curtner-Smith et al., 2008). Unfortunately, the culture at most schools is conservative and preserves 'normal practice' (Curtner-Smith, 2009). Specifically, this kind of culture serves as an 'institutional press' (Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1983, p. 1) that counters PE teachers with innovative teaching orientations. Key personnel who form the institutional press include school administrators, colleagues, department heads, parents, and students (Schempp & Graber, 1992). Those with teaching orientations adopt different strategies to cope with the institutional press. They can 'strategically comply' (Lacey, 1977, p. 6) with and accept poor practice (i.e. pedagogies not focused on realizing any recognized objectives of the subject) while teaching 'properly' when not being observed. Alternatively, they can attempt to 'strategically redefine' (Lacey, 1977, p. 6) poor practice by attempting to change the PE at their schools for the better (Wright, 2001).

To date, most of the work on the occupational socialization of PE teachers has been completed in the United States and Britain (e.g. Curtner-Smith et al., 2008). The few exceptions to this rule include work carried out in Singapore (Wright, 2001), Norway (Mordal-Moen & Green, 2014), Greece (Zounhia, Chatoupis, Amoutzas, & Hatziharistos, 2006), Australia (Moy, Renshaw, & Davids, 2014), and modern post-unification Germany (Klinge, 2002; Volkmann, 2008). Researchers who conducted these studies

found that many of the findings generated in American and British schools transferred to these other cultures. However, different or nuanced patterns of socialization may exist for PE teachers in countries with substantially different systems of PE and school sport from those in the United States and Britain. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to examine and describe the occupational socialization of German PE teachers who were trained prior to the unification of the two German states and worked in both their old nations and the new Germany. Specifically, we were interested in discovering whether or not teachers from the former West German (WG) and East German (EG) states espoused different perspectives and practices regarding PE due to experiencing different patterns of socialization. To this end, we attempted to answer two research questions: (a) What were the perspectives and practices of WG and EG PE teachers? and (b) What factors influenced these perspectives and practices?

PE and youth sport in the German context

One of the most important political events of the last century was the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9th, 1989 (Frijters, Haisken-DeNew, & Shields, 2004). Reunification of West and East Germany followed in 1990 during which the WG and EG systems of youth sport and PE were merged. Sport had been an important aspect of both WG and EG life prior to reunification (Hardman & Naul, 2002). However, while the focus in the West had been balanced between mass participation in school PE and elite sport in private and/or community clubs situated outside schools, in the East the emphasis had been primarily on developing athletes capable of winning international sporting competitions (Hardman & Naul, 2002; Kurz, 1990). Moreover, WG PE was focused on a number of educational goals including motor skill acquisition, health and fitness, lifelong participation in physical activity, and personal and social development (Kurz, 1990). By contrast, EG PE was designed to foster competitiveness and act as a feeder system for elite sport (Balbier, 2007).

Following reunification, the general goal was to change the EG system of education, PE, and youth sport so that it was identical with what occurred in the West (von Below, Powell, & Roberts, 2013). While these systemic transitions were indeed made (von Below et al., 2013), there were some indications that they had an adverse impact in the East of the now unified country. For example, the amount of PE and youth sport offered in that region declined (Schmidt, Haupt, & Suessenbach, 2000).

Method

Participants and setting

Participants were 10 German PE teachers purposefully selected on the basis of their age and the location of their early teaching careers. They were assigned fictitious names. Eight were men and two were women. As shown in Table 1, all 10 teachers were Caucasian and 50 years of age or older at the time the study commenced. When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, therefore, they were at least 25 years old and nine of them had experience of working in one of the two German systems of education that existed pre-unification. The youngest and 10th participant, Sven, was completing his PETE at the time reunification took place. Five teachers had worked in schools within the former West Germany and five in schools in the former East Germany (see Table 1). Eight teachers were still working at the time the study was completed. Conversely, Bernd had retired in 2015, and Joerg had retired from full-time teaching in state schools, but was still teaching four lessons a week at a private school. Finally, Table 1 reveals that six teachers had taught exclusively in secondary schools, and four had taught in a variety of elementary and secondary schools. All 10 teachers signed a consent form prior to the commencement of the study in congruence with regulations for doing research with human subjects.

Table 1. Participants' profiles.

Biographical Detail	Markus	Holger	Bernd	Thomas	Rosa	Gaby	Sven	Georg	Volker	Joerg
Age (years)	57	56	64	56	54	53	50	52	56	67
Country of Origin	West Germany	West Germany	West Germany	West Germany	West Germany	East Germany	East Germany	East Germany	East Germany	East Germany
Race/ethnicity	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian	Caucasian
Retired/Working	Working	Working	Retired	Working	Working	Working	Working	Working	Working	Retired
Type & Number of schools worked in	Secondary (2)	Secondary (3)	Secondary (2)	Secondary (2)	Elementary & Secondary (3)	Secondary (3)	Secondary (2)	Elementary & Secondary (3)	Elementary & Secondary (1)	Elementary & Secondary (3)
Current orientation to PE	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching + High Performance	Teaching
Orientation to PE prior to PETE	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching[a]	Teaching	High Performance	High Performance	High Performance	High Performance	High Performance
Orientation to PE post-PETE and prior to reunification	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching	Teaching[a]	Teaching	High Performance	Teaching + High Performance[b]	High Performance	High Performance	High Performance

[a]Thomas did not study PETE but had a teaching orientation following his acculturation and prior to unification.
[b]Sven completed his PETE in the year following reunification.

Data collection

The first author *formally interviewed* each teacher by Skype on three occasions from January to March, 2015. Formal interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. During the first formal interview the teachers were asked about their current perspectives and practices regarding PE and their acculturation. In the second interview, they described their professional socialization, and during the final interview they discussed their organizational socialization. The first author conducted *follow-up interviews* by phone, e-mail, Skype, or in person as and when needed to confirm or expand on data gathered in formal interviews. Teachers were also asked to provide examples of lesson plans, unit plans, evaluation schemes, and other teaching materials. These materials were subjected to *document analysis* which involved making written notes on their content, focus, and depth. Finally, teachers were asked to supply *film snippets* of themselves which illustrated the values they espoused and the practices they employed. Film snippets were viewed and notes made on the pedagogies, curricular models, and teaching styles employed by the teachers.

Data analysis

Following Curtner-Smith (2001), our goal was to construct the teachers' collective life stories and histories. Data from all sources which described the teachers' current perspectives and practices and their acculturation, professional socialization, and organizational socialization were identified. Separate inductive analyses were carried out on each of these data sets using analytic induction and constant comparison (Patton, 2015). Codes were developed from German transcriptions and the subsequent analysis was conducted in English. Emerging categories were collapsed into meaningful themes and exemplars illustrating each theme were selected. Particular attention was paid to differences between the perspectives, practices, and socialization of the teachers working in the former East and West Germany. Trustworthiness and credibility were established by triangulation of data collection techniques, regular member checking, and the search for discrepant and negative cases (Patton, 2015).

Findings and discussion

Current perspectives and practices

WG teachers

All of the WG teachers were teaching oriented (see Table 1) and none viewed their career choice as being a contingency that allowed them to become sports coaches. Crucially, this was because there was very little extracurricular sport in the schools in which they taught. Consequently, their more able students participated in higher level sport within the aforementioned external sports club system which had 'few connections' with the schools. The following data extract illustrated this group's high level of commitment to school PE:

> It is really important to provide instruction that is enjoyable for the students while also promoting performance, giving space for creativity in movement, and teaching game play. I look for collaboration among the students and improvement of physical ability and skills, rather than high athletic performance. (Rosa, formal interview 1)

All five WG teachers endorsed the disciplinary mastery value orientation (Jewett, 1994) in which the primary objective was to teach 'movement'. At the secondary level (ages 10–18 years), this translated into employing the traditional multi-activity model and teaching sports and games mainly using direct teaching styles.

Both traditional (i.e. 'gymnastics', 'swimming', 'athletics', 'soccer', 'handball', 'volleyball', and 'basketball') and non-traditional sports and physical activities (e.g. 'mountain-biking, hip-hop dance,

ice-skating, uni-cycling, and karate') were included in the latest editions of the secondary teachers' written curricula. Typical unit length was between six and eight lessons. Methods of evaluation at the secondary level included 'comparisons with performance tables', and observations of student work to check for 'the correct execution of technical elements', 'performance improvement throughout the year', and 'the ability to work in a team'. The WG group described good teachers as being 'all-rounders' 'capable of demonstrating well' in a number of the sports and physical activities, and 'requiring good performance' as well as being 'supportive' of students.

Objectives and curricula for older elementary children (ages eight to nine years) espoused by the WG group appeared to be similar to those employed at the secondary school level. For younger children (ages five to seven years), however, they thought that the focus should be on the acquisition of fundamental movement skills and abilities including 'physical coordination', 'endurance', 'balance', 'catching', 'throwing', 'kicking', 'striking', and 'swimming':

> Teaching fundamental movement skills is increasingly important today. … I have noticed that these days, about 50% of my students in fifth grade do not have basic skills in catching and throwing. A forward roll has to be taught with methodological tricks to make it fun; and basic movement skills like running, hopping, throwing, and catching are missing. (Holger, follow-up interview)

The curricula they advocated, therefore, consisted of units of 'between four and nine lessons' on various skill themes, educational games, and aquatics. Evaluation methods employed by Rosa and supported by her secondary oriented WG colleagues included 'self and peer assessment of skills', 'observation of technical skill execution', and 'observational evaluations of psychological and social aspects'. Moreover, in line with most versions of the movement education model, the WG group supported the use of more indirect teaching styles with younger children so that they could 'explore movement'.

A secondary objective espoused by the WG teachers for all age groups was 'health-related fitness'. Specific goals mentioned within this focus were improving 'strength and endurance', and eliminating 'sedentary life styles', 'inactivity', and 'obesity'. Typically, this objective was achieved as a 'by-product' of their sports-dominated curricula rather than as a consequence of their providing specific health-related units.

Finally, the WG teachers endorsed the self-actualization and self-responsibility value orientations (Jewett, 1994). Specifically, they believed that it was easier to make 'connections with students' in the gymnasium than the classroom and aimed to enhance their students' personal and 'social learning', especially 'respect for each other and collaboration'.

EG teachers

At the time the study was conducted, four of the EG teachers' (Gaby, Joerg, Sven, and Georg) perspectives and practices regarding objectives, curricula, teaching styles, and methods of evaluation were very similar to those of their WG counterparts. Equally committed to the subject, these teachers also possessed teaching orientations (see Table 1). Relatively progressive, they argued that the subject should 'satisfy … children's need to move', 'support motor learning', 'promote success', and 'teach social skills and the ability to handle emotions'. In contrast to the WG cohort, they prioritized health-related fitness through participation in physical activity over skill acquisition, and saw improved performance occurring as a result of this focus:

> [The most important objective of PE is] to inspire students to play sports outside of school, to be active after school. … We no longer have a high performance orientation, but look for healthy recreation. Improved performance will be a by-product anyhow. (Sven, formal interview 1)

Volker, the fifth EG teacher, was relatively conservative. While being teaching oriented, in that he was interested in the achievement of 'all his students', he also possessed what Sven termed a 'high performance orientation' (see Table 1). This meant that an additional and major goal of his was to produce high level sportsmen and women:

> I have been really successful with field days and swimming competitions. … I just had a big success with rowing in fifth grade. The [club] rowers are looking for talent. I trained 12 students and we won the State Championships in three competitions by large margins! (Volker, formal interview 1)

While the curricula that Volker espoused at both the elementary and secondary level were similar in terms of content, organization, and evaluation to those of the WGs and his more progressive EG colleagues, the pedagogies he supported were more direct, and his priorities were focused on 'training', 'conditioning', and 'performance':

> The most important goals for PE are to stress the body within reasonable limits, to demonstrate how sport works and to teach principles of training. … I teach those by setting up stations, and the students experience how they can perform optimally. (Volker, formal interview 1)

Factors influencing the perspectives and practices of WG and EG teachers

Acculturation

WG teachers

The pattern of acculturation for the WG teachers was fairly consistent with previous research conducted in other countries and led to the teachers entering PETE with teaching orientations (see Table 1). Key reasons for them being attracted to the profession were their interest in and enjoyment of participation in sport and physical activity. The main forces which shaped their subjective warrants for PE teaching were their apprenticeships of observation in schools and their experiences in child/youth sports clubs.

Initial interest in sport and physical activity was nurtured by an active family life. For example, the WG group recalled older 'athletic' siblings being 'role models', 'going skiing as a family', and 'going to the public swimming pool together'. They remembered being 'very active' as children and 'constantly [playing] in the streets or somewhere in the woods or in the meadows' with their friends. By 'the age of 5 or 6', they recalled being enrolled in sports clubs in which they were instructed by coaches, and practised and played modified games. As Markus and Rosa explained, typically, younger children would start their sport experience by 'joining a gymnastics club', and then move on to or add 'track and field and games … mainly soccer, handball, or volleyball' as they got older. Importantly in terms of their future career choice, most of this group's experiences of club sports and club coaches were positive:

> I grew up in a small village and there was little to do outside of joining a sports club. … I enjoyed the club and my coaches, so I participated wherever I could. We had championships where I loved participating and competing. (Rosa, formal interview 2)

WG teachers also had fond memories of their PE experiences, which appeared similar in nature to the type of PE they were now advocating. Specifically, these consisted of the acquisition of fundamental movement skills such as 'balancing, climbing, swinging, crawling, running, jumping, and throwing' at the younger elementary level, and 'learning sports' and games (e.g. 'gymnastics, track and field, and skiing') at the older elementary and secondary levels.

The WG group also explained that many of their PE teachers had been 'great role models' and were 'admired' for their sporting and pedagogical skill. For example, they noted that their own PE teachers 'could always demonstrate things', 'would break things [i.e. skills] down', and were 'motivating'.

Bernd also emphasized the positive influence on his career choice facilitated by the shift away from 'authoritarian' to 'student-centered [teaching] methods', which took place in the 1960s, and led to the subject became 'more enjoyable':

> From '68 on, a lot changed. A lot was critically scrutinized. Some of the teachers stepped back from their … authoritarian behavior. So then everything began to relax in the late '60s, early '70s, and with it, instruction and methods in schools took on new forms. (Bernd, formal interview 1)

Set on a career to pursue, three of the WG teachers (Bernd, Holger, and Markus) went straight into PETE. By contrast, Rosa and Thomas decided that they wanted to be PE teachers 'around age 35' and '31 years', respectively.

EG teachers

The EG teachers' acculturation was radically different from their WG counterparts since their earliest perspectives and practices were mainly shaped by a state looking to create the 'leading sports nation' (Dennis, 2012, p. 2258) which would 'symbolize' the positive effects of 'civil unity and education'. Consequently, all five teachers possessed the aforementioned high performance orientation to PE prior to entering PETE (see Table 1). Gaby noted this was because they 'didn't know anything different' and were 'manipulated'.

Specifically, the EG group recalled as system in which PE 'had a much higher social significance' and teachers were rewarded financially for identifying talented students as young as 7 years old to be sent to special 'training centers' and then, if good enough, to 'elite sports schools'. The main objective of these sports schools was 'to produce high performance and future Olympic athletes'. Students who reached this level were given 'celebrity status' through participation in public 'flag ceremonies', received 'many privileges', and might have an opportunity to 'go past the national borders'. Georg was the only one in the group who made it to an elite sports school, but noted that, 'thankfully, [he] wasn't good enough and had to leave after three years'. In contrast, Volker recalled that, although it was 'tough to adjust to the system, the regime, during puberty', he was bitterly disappointed when he failed the test to enter a sports school:

> I went to the entrance exam at an elite gymnastics school. It went pretty well, but they ousted me by saying, 'No, that won't work, we measured you anthropometrically; you'll be too tall and too heavy. We have no use for you here'. … I was told to leave. I was quite upset about that, of course. (Volker, formal interview 1)

The EG group described their PE teachers as 'militaristic', recalled 'marching' in PE classes, 'counting off', 'lining up in order of height' and explained that the content they were taught during secondary lessons mostly consisted of 'Olympic sports'. In addition, they described the 'terrifyingly' high expectations:

> Performance expectations were high. We, the girls, had to do a forward roll on the balance beam before we could leave [class]. That was terrifying. We couldn't do it. And we had to practise until we could and before we were permitted to take showers. (Gaby, formal interview 1)

Despite this state of affairs, the EG group recalled their teachers fondly noting that they were 'respected, even loved'.

A secondary goal of the PE experienced by Sven, Joerg, Volker and Georg was to 'advertise and recruit for the military':

> We had to participate in the Hans-Beimler competition in eighth grade. This included hand grenade target throws, air gun shooting, cross country runs, and orienteering. … Male PE teachers were supposed to attract boys to a career in the army. (Volker, formal interview 2)

Illustrating the dialectic nature of socialization, however, these three teachers explained that they had not taken this component 'very seriously' as students. Nevertheless, when they began their PETE, their expectation was that they would be trained to teach as they were taught and they accepted that they would teach both sporting and military content.

Encouraged throughout their schooling 'to become a teacher', often by their own physical educators, all of the EG group made the decision to attempt to get into PETE while still at school. For example, Sven explained that he 'wanted to become a PE teacher in fourth grade' (age 10 years) and that he 'imagined [he] would have interested, motivated students, go to competitions, get societal approval, and be satisfied with his work'. The male teachers knew, however, that if successful, this training would be delayed by at least 18 months of compulsory military service.

Professional socialization

WG teachers

Holger, Bernd, and Markus went through virtually identical and orthodox 6-year PETE programs that led to the award of a master's degree. These programs comprised four years of coursework and a two-year 'apprenticeship' in a local school with '10–12 periods of teaching per week under a mentor teacher'. Philosophically, these programs were compatible with the perspectives the teachers had gained during their apprenticeships of observation and reinforced their existing conservative teaching orientations (see Table 1). Consequently, they 'never questioned' the programs' 'content or structure' and were 'appreciative' of their instructors' efforts.

Two broad components within their PETE served to solidify the teachers' teaching orientations. The first consisted of 'practical [content] courses' in which they were taught to perform 'classic sports'. Although 'methods' were 'woven into these courses', the main idea was that knowing about and performing these sports would enable preservice teachers to teach them:

> Compulsory courses were the classic sports—soccer, handball, basketball, volleyball, gymnastics on apparatus, and track and field for four semesters, swimming for two semesters, and gymnastics for body-shaping. … Each sport had a final practical and written exam. (Holger, formal interview 2)

Some practical courses included early field experiences. For example, Holger recalled that 'students from local schools would come to the university and work with us on the track'.

The second component consisted of classroom-based 'theory' courses mainly on the exercise sciences and included 'science of training', 'sport psychology', and 'physiology and anatomy'. Again, the focus of these courses was on improving sporting performance with the assumption that this knowledge would translate into pedagogical effectiveness.

By contrast, two of the WG group took an unorthodox path into teaching. Rosa earned an alternative 'three-year degree' that certified her to 'teach gymnastics and sports'. Thomas was invited to become the PE teacher at his first school without undergoing any formal training and 'learned on the job' from his qualified colleagues. This was because the school was situated in a remote rural area and its administrators had 'no funds to hire a credentialed PE teacher'. Moreover, these administrators were confident in his content and pedagogical knowledge because he had 'participated in martial arts, handball, soccer, field hockey, tennis, rowing, and canoeing' and had taken 'some professional development courses'.

EG teachers

The four- or five-year university programs undertaken by the EG group were also compatible with the beliefs, values, and expectations they had formed during their acculturation. Consequently, they reinforced the teachers' high performance orientations (see Table 1). These programs consisted of university-based work culminating in a six-month 'big practicum' (i.e. teaching practice) in an assigned school. The programs were difficult to get into and involved passing 'tough' practical 'entrance examinations' in 'swimming, gymnastics, track and field, and games' which Sven estimated 'half of the [applicants] failed'. In addition, entrance was contingent on applicants passing a 'language or voice test … to show that [they] were suitable regarding [their] voice and [their] dialect', and providing an explanation of why they wanted 'to become a teacher' that was congruent with government policy and 'proved that [applicants] were faithful to the political system'.

While the emphasis was obviously different, the core structure of the EG PETE programs was similar to those followed by the WG teachers. Specifically, they also included a classroom-based science component focused on performance in which preservice teachers studied 'psychology', 'theory of coaching', 'motor development', 'sports medicine', and 'theory and practice of Olympic sports'. In addition, they included practical sports courses on 'soccer, handball, volleyball, basketball, gymnastics on apparatus, track and field, swimming, judo, and rhythmic gymnastics'. Again, the focus

of these courses was on performance, the implication being that good performers would be effective teachers.

There were also some marked differences in the EG programs. Teachers recalled taking courses in the military content they would be required to teach and being mandated to study Russian as 'part of the curriculum'. Moreover, they were required to study 'Marxism/Leninism', the inference being that what they learned from coursework on this subject matter would permeate their teaching. The EG teachers suggested that these efforts at 'political indoctrination' had little impact on them and that they strategically complied with their instructors so as to remain in the program:

> Anne: How many Marxist/Leninist classes did you attend?
> Gaby: Don't know. Once a week. No clue. It was like you just went. … It was just part of it. Some stuff was interesting, but don't ask me what. … Everything was connected to economics—politics of economics or something like that. I thought it was totally boring. (Gaby, follow-up interview)

Organizational socialization

WG teachers

All five WG teachers had worked in at least two schools during their careers (see Table 1), although, initially, two of them (Holger and Markus) found jobs difficult to secure. Prior to unification they noted that, like themselves, most potential sources of influence, including colleagues, administrators, parents, and students, supported and took for granted the sport-focused PE that they had experienced and that been espoused during their PETE. This agreement on the nature of PE, coupled with having 'high quality' facilities and equipment and 'manageable' class sizes of 'about 30 students', supported their teaching orientations (see Table 1). Consequently, four of the five teachers noted that it was relatively straightforward to implement the kind of curriculum they had been trained to deliver, or, in Thomas's case, become acquainted with during his acculturation. The exception was Rosa, who took a position 'at a special school for kids with disabilities' in which her role was to provide 'movement therapy'.

The impact of the formal unification of the country in 1990 on schools and teachers in the 'old states' (i.e. the former West Germany), the WG group believed, depended on the school's location and the degree to which teachers were curious about the 'new states'. Teachers who lived 'far from former East Germany', they thought, experienced 'little change' or 'effect on [their lives] at all'. Conversely, teachers who lived close to the EG border or were 'interested' in the 'new states' were more affected. For example, Rosa explained that she had contemplated moving to a 'beautiful area in one of the new states' but 'saw that the culture was too different, too restrictive' and decided she 'didn't fit'. In addition, WG teachers found it difficult to form a relationship with EG colleagues directly following 'the wall coming down:'

> We got together with colleagues from the new states and we all took a ride on a ship. It struck me that the people from the East were really very careful with what they said. Just platitudes, general stuff, nothing in detail, no background, because they didn't know whether there was someone there collecting information on them. Later we found out that one of them had indeed been a high-ranking [officer in the] Stasi [i.e. the EG secret police]. (Bernd, formal interview 3)

Despite these difficulties, Markus decided to move to and teach in the East of the country in 1993. This was far from easy as the local teachers resisted official changes to PE and sport and facilities were poor:

> I took a job as PE teacher in one of the new states. It was a church school. They had a bit more of a humane approach than … the state schools which were much closer to the [former EG] regime. The gym was a catastrophe. It was a former indoor riding arena. There were almost no balls, just a few pieces for gymnastics. You had to improvise heavily. It was a real adventure. (Markus, formal interview 3)

Interestingly, it was not reunification, but the more recent changes in the collective German culture which modified the WG group's perspectives and practices (see Table 1). Specifically, their focus

shifted to health-related fitness due to increasing rates of 'obesity' and 'inactivity' observed in the 'changed student population'. Moreover, the insistence of 'overly involved parents' and students that 'everything be fun and entertaining' led them to expanding the sports and games offered in their curricula. In addition, they became increasingly concerned about their ability to deal with the effects of mass immigration into the country, noting that they were teaching 'migrant children with upwards of 25 different language and cultural backgrounds' and that 'these cultures' [differing] views of PE', made teaching challenging.

EG teachers

Having been assigned their posts by the government, all but Volker of the EG group worked in at least two schools during their careers (see Table 1). Despite being hampered by 'a lack of good equipment and facilities', their pre-unification transition from PETE to work was relatively seamless and supported their high performance orientations (see Table 1) because the expectations in their schools were congruent with their training and existing beliefs:

> PE was rather conservative, the basic sports were taught and the focus was on performance because we wanted to take our students or teams to competitions. … I liked that I taught all age groups. You had to adjust your teaching to the reality of your class. (Georg, follow-up interview)

Moreover, even had they wanted to, there was little room for the EG teachers to resist their schools' cultures as accountability measures were strict. New teachers underwent a 'two-year probationary period' during which they had to 'prove that they were congruent with the political system' before being 'secure'. Furthermore, as well as the expectations of their school administrators, there was constant scrutiny from government officials:

> When I started work as a teacher there was so-called 'depth control'. … They [i.e. government inspectors] came in non-stop. The school was deeply vetted. They visited, classes were sat in on, and then you had to evaluate everything. (Volker, formal interview 3)

In addition to this open and formal accountability, the EG teachers recalled having to be careful of both 'unofficial collaborators' (i.e. teachers who 'were in close contact with government institutions') and 'colleagues' who were 'planted' by the government to spy on other teachers.

Reunification and the 'total dismantling of the political system' had a mixed impact on the EG group. On the upside, they were now free from the suffocating regime-driven accountability, since informants 'close to the establishment' were 'pushed out' and 'whoever was a Stasi member had to go'. They were also exposed to different ideas about PE when they 'visited schools in the old states' to learn about the 'other system', and 'didn't have to infuse political messages in [their] teaching any longer'. This led to all but Volker of the EG group questioning the 'high performance focus' of the former regime, moving to a teaching orientation (see Table 1), and attempting to strategically redefine their schools' curricula, at times against considerable resistance:

> I got a job at an elite sport school which was now guided by the new high school framework. But the old teachers wanted to keep teaching the old way. … I realized how spoiled they had been. They only wanted high performance athletes. They were used to getting athletes who had been scouted and medically measured, and they had only derogatory names for non-elite students. (Gaby, formal interview 3)

Other downsides to reunification for the EG group included disagreements with colleagues over 'discipline and structure' when they moved to the West for 'better pay' and the negative impact on their status in the community and remuneration if they remained in the East. In addition, the pace and extreme nature of change initially left two of the EG teachers dazed and confused:

> I was able to sit in and observe how we were now supposed to work. The schools [in the West] were equipped completely differently. They were 10 years ahead of us. We considered PE as a performance subject. The impression I got there was like, 'Okay, let's sit down first and talk about our problems'. This … was definitely a culture shock for me. … I didn't understand the world any longer. I had to get used to that [way of teaching PE] first. (Joerg, formal interview 3)

Although Volker embraced much of the 'new system', he was less enamored with it than his transformed colleagues and retained his high performance orientation at the time data were collected (see Table 1). He lamented his own and the subject's loss of 'respect', and was critical of a government that 'failed to mix the good things from both systems', allowed 'too much leeway … and didn't always make sense'. Instead of the existing system, he advocated 'a central education doctrine with precise guidelines'.

Finally, the entire EG group believed that teaching had become 'more stressful' and shared their WG colleagues' concerns about working with an increasingly diverse student population, particularly in terms of 'socio-economic status'. They were also particularly critical of modern German parents who did not 'understand the children's … need for movement', and provided 'medical excuses [for their children] to stay out of PE'.

Summary and conclusions

This study described and illustrated cultural differences in the occupational socialization of PE teachers in the two former German states. It served to remind scholars working in this area that although the mechanisms by which socialization is achieved and the phases during which socialization occurs may be similar in different countries, the results of this socialization can be contrasting and distinct.

Key findings in the study were that the WG teachers possessed conservative teaching orientations to the subject originally fostered during their youth and childhood and, with the exception of Thomas (who had not undergone formal training), subsequently reinforced during their PETE and by their school cultures. Importantly, and unlike other countries, the fact that youth sport took place in clubs outside schools in West Germany meant that PE did not have to compete for the attention of its teachers with the allure of extracurricular sport. For this reason, there was little chance of the WG teachers entering PETE with a coaching orientation or adopting such an orientation once employed.

The socialization of the EG teachers was also straightforward prior to unification. The high performance orientation to the subject they possessed was also nurtured during their childhood and youth and by their PETE and school cultures. Unlike other studies of physical educators' socialization, however, it was apparent that the overriding power which shaped the EG teachers was the politics of the state.

In congruence with the type of political, social, and educational changes made in Germany following reunification, the perspectives and practices of WG teachers were rarely affected unless they took positions in former EG schools. In contrast, the EG teachers were greatly influenced by reunification. Specifically, the transition to a new system was emancipating and four of them shifted from a high performance orientation to a teaching orientation. Conversely, the transition was particularly difficult for Volker who partially retained his high performance orientation which led to him strategically complying with new national requirements.

During the years following reunification and regardless of their orientation to the subject, both groups of teachers were also affected by a number of cultural factors. Chief among these were the perceived changing nature of parents and their children, unhealthy behaviors displayed by students, and the increasing diversity of the German population.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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