Detours to Promotion: American Doctorates as Upward Social Mobility in Germany, 1870s-1920s

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Higher education offers not merely knowledge, but credentials that open the door to specific professions and positions.[1] However, access to higher education is not equally available to everyone, and different social groups have unequal opportunities to obtain qualifications.[2] As a result, higher education itself produces inequality and shapes the career and status opportunities of those who hold degrees and those who do not.[3] Academic titles and credentials such as diplomas or doctorates make these status hierarchies explicit. In German-speaking countries, for example, the abbreviation "Dr." is placed before a person's name, indicating not only academic merit but also an elevated social position.[4]

At the end of the nineteenth century two contrasting trends emerged in the German Empire: The title "Dr." became increasingly

1 Ingrid Miethe, Dominik Wagner-Diehl and Birthe Kleber, *Bildungsungleichheit. Von historischen Ursprüngen zu aktuellen Debatten* (Opladen/Berlin/Toronto, 2021), 10.

2 Wilfried Rudloff, "Ungleiche Bildungschancen, Begabung und Auslese," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 54 (2014): 193-244, here 193.

3 Anna Brake and Peter Büchner, *Bildung und soziale Ungleichheit. Eine Einführung* (Stuttgart, 2012), 15.

4 See Laetitia Boehm, "Akademische Grade," in: Rainer Christoph Schwinges, ed., *Examen, Titel, Promotionen. Akademisches und staatliches Qualifikationswesen vom 13. bis zum 21. Jahrhundert* (Basel, 2007), 11-54, part. 28; Ulrich Rasche, "Geschichte" der Promotion in absentia. Eine Studie zum Modernisierungsprozess der deutschen Universitäten im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert," in ibid., 275-352, part. 276.

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important in everyday life: In a "title-saturated environment" where traditional noble titles and old military ranks prevailed and a complex hierarchy of official and professional titles had developed, the distinction "Dr." – which originally dated back to the Middle Ages – increasingly played an important role as cultural capital.[5] In his 1914 book on the fraudulent use of academic and other titles, German lawyer Richard Biermann explained matter-of-factly that "no other country in the world places as much importance on titles."[6]

At the same time, the traditional holders of doctoral titles wanted to protect their exclusive status. Initially, it was only possible to obtain a doctorate in the four classical disciplines: theology, law, philosophy, and medicine.[7] Since the founding of the first universities, students of general medicine had been able to attain a "Dr. med." after passing an oral exam and writing a dissertation.[8] But this was not the case for practitioners of the specialized disciplines into which the field of medicine was branching out in the late nineteenth century, including psychiatry and neurology, as well as veterinary and dental medicine.[9] For these new disciplines in particular, the title became an important milestone on their path to professionalization. As a contemporary veterinarian emphasized regarding his colleagues' title aspirations, the "Dr." was not only a sign of academic achievement, but also an important part of the professional designation: "medics need the title of 'doctor' because, since time immemorial, the general public has been accustomed to referring to them as 'doctor' rather than 'physician'."[10] However, general practitioners repeatedly expressed "serious concerns about any specialization of the doctoral title" that would split their field.[11]

5 Harm-Hinrich Brandt, "Promotionen und Bildungsbürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert," in Schwinges, 625-706, here 627 and 628.

6 Richard Biermann, *Der Schwindel mit Hoflieferanten-, Kommerzienrats-, Geheimrats-, in- und ausländischen Doktortiteln sowie der sonstige Titel- und Ordensschacher in Deutschland, nebst den juristischen Bestimmungen über Führung in- und ausländischer Titel, insbesondere des Doktortitels* (Fallersleben, 1914), 5.

7 Max Baumgart, *Grundsätze und Bedingungen zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde bei allen Facultäten der Universitäten des Deutschen Reiches* (Berlin, 1884), 45.

8 See on the history of doctorates in medicine Nils Hansson, Michaela Clark and Thorsten Halling, eds., *Dissertation Cultures in Medicine. Histories of Academic Merit and Accreditation* (London, forthcoming).

9 Claudia Huerkamp, "Ärzte und Professionalisierung in Deutschland: Überlegungen zum Wandel des Arztberufs im 19. Jahrhundert," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 6 (1980) 3: 349-382, here 351; more general, Wolfgang U. Eckart, Geschichte, Theorie und Ethik der Medizin (Berlin, 2021), 251.

10 Reinhold Schmaltz, "Das Promotionsrecht der tierärztlichen Hochschulen," *Berliner Tierärztliche Wochenschrift*, 14. 1906, 5. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's.

11 Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (GStA PK), I HA Rep. 76 Kultusministerium, Va Sekt. 1 Tit. VI, No. 1 G, Supp. 1, Vol. 1: Zahnärztliche Doktortitel, Zeitungsartikel, 1912-1914: "Preußen gegen die Verleihung des zahnärztlichen Doktortitels," December 12, 1913.

Eventually, they feared, this might put the new specialized disciplines on a par with general medicine, thus making practitioners less distinguishable not only in academic terms but also concerning their social standing and earning potential.

Unable to satisfy their status aspirations within the Empire, German dentists took advantage of opportunities that opened up abroad in this era of globalization, which increasingly also affected higher education.[12] Already since the 1860s, aspiring German dentists ventured to the United States to obtain the degree of "Doctor of Dental Surgery" or one of the many similar dental titles which had existed there since the 1840s due to the early professionalization of dentistry at the numerous newly established dental schools.[13] Soon the "American doctorate" became so important that ten per cent of dentists practicing in the German Empire held one.[14] At the same time, dental technicians and dental artists working in the rapidly expanding field of dental care also ventured to the United States to acquire professional titles as they had no chance of obtaining degrees for their work in the German Empire.[15] Given the limited prior qualifications of many of these title seekers, so-called "title mills" proliferated, offering credentials in exchange for money.[16]

This article argues that the possibility of acquiring these professional titles in a transatlantic setting gave these different kinds of "American dentists," as they were called despite their diverse backgrounds, the chance to mitigate inequalities engrained in academia. Given the strict hierarchies between the different social groups working in the medico-dental field in the German Empire, going to the United States became a means of achieving upward

12 For a more general account, see Isabella Löhr, *Globale Bildungsmobilität, 1850-1930. Von der Bekehrung der Welt zur globalen studentischen Gemeinschaft* (Göttingen, 2021); Hilary Perraton, *International Students, 1860-2010. Policy and Practice Round the World* (Cham, 2020).

13 See J. A. Taylor, *History of Dentistry. A Practical Treatise for the Use of Dental Students and Practitioners* (London, 1922), part. 157-166.

14 Adolf Petermann, *Zahnärztlicher Almanach. Ein alphabetisch geordnetes Namensverzeichnis der im Deutschen Reiche und in Österreich-Ungarn practicierenden Zahnärzte* (Frankfurt am Main, 1880); see George Bion Denton, Die Beziehungen zwischen der deutschen und der amerikanischen Zahnärzteschaft von 1800 bis 1914, *Deutsche zahnärztliche Zeitschrift* 14 (1959): 1196-1207, here 1199; also Bruno Zimmermann, *Der amerikanische Einfluss auf die deutsche Zahnheilkunde im ausgehenden 19. Jahrhundert* (Ph.D. diss. Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Bonn, 1969), 46.

15 Linda Marion Krebs, *Amerikanische Zahnärzte in Deutschland und der große „Diplomschwindel" (1880-1920)*, (Ph.D. diss., LMU Munich, 1974).

16 For a general account, see A.J. Angulo, Diploma Mills: How for-profit Colleges Stiffed Students, Taxpayers and the American Dream (Baltimore, 2016), particularly chapter 1; in detail GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 76 Kultusministerium, Va Sekt. 1 Tit. VI Nr. 14 Bd. 2: Paul Steinberg, *Der Doctortitel Deutsch-amerikanischer Schwindelinstitute* (Nürnberg, 1902).

social mobility for dentists as well as dental artists, who did not have the opportunity to obtain the coveted credentials at home. Hence, the detour of educational mobility abroad can be understood as an investment to achieve the professional success and higher social status attached to the doctorate at lower cost and in less time.[17] Once retroactive regulations governing the use of foreign titles in the German Empire were issued, which required obligatory nostrification – the official process of getting a foreign university degree recognized – from 1897 onwards, this gradually diminished the transatlantic status enhancement practices before the introduction of the "Dr. med. dent." title in Germany in 1919 finally put an end to these practices.

By examining the history of foreign doctoral degrees in the German Empire, this article aims to contribute to research on inequalities in higher education in two ways. First, it addresses an understudied source of inequality. The rich German historiographical research on social stratification has focused on the uneven distribution of "privileges such as power, wealth, and prestige" – usually in that order.[18] As the social historians Friedrich Lenger and Dietmar Süß pointed out, however, the significance of "prestige distribution" has been examined less frequently than the accumulation of wealth or the role of personal influence and networking.[19] With a specific focus on foreign doctoral degrees, this article centers on prestige as a prerequisite for upward social mobility.

In a second line of argument, this article considers how crossing borders affects inequalities. Up to now, inequality research has been strongly tied to the nation state. If cross-border dynamics involved in its production have come into view, they have usually focused on the devaluation of credentials and the sharpening of inequalities along national and ethnic origins.[20] The concentration on "imported" degrees, instead, makes it possible to highlight how crossing borders helped individuals to overcome inequalities manifested within the nation state and within an academic field. Since the degrees were available in much greater numbers and far more easily abroad than at home, they undermined the domestic

17 Not unlike in its outcome to what Robert L. Hampel has labelled as shortcuts in higher education within the United States, *Fast and Curious. A History of Shortcuts in American Education* (Lanham, 2017), 153.

18 Hans-Ulrich Wehler, "Vorüberlegungen zur historischen Analyse sozialer Ungleichheit," in id., *Klassen in der europäischen Sozialgeschichte* (Göttingen, 1979), 9-32, here 10.

19 Friedrich Lenger and Dietmar Süß, Soziale Ungleichheit in der Geschichte moderner Industriegesellschaften, *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 14 (2014): 3-24, here 11.

20 See Michael Bayer, Gabriele Mordt, Sylvia Terpe and Martin Winter, eds., *Transnationale Ungleichheitsforschung. Eine neue Herausforderung für die Soziologie* (Frankfurt am Main, 2008); also Petrus Han, *Soziologie der Migration* (Stuttgart, 2010), 17.

distribution system of scarce goods that conventionally underlie inequalities in each society.

A look at the contemporary literature shows just how important the topic of foreign or imported doctoral degrees was at the time: Numerous publications dealt with the validity of foreign doctoral degrees, particularly in dentistry.[21] Specific attention was paid to title fraud[22] and the closely related quackery which acutely afflicted German healing practices.[23] Since the 1970s American doctorates in particular have been addressed in a number of Ph.D. theses in dentistry and in studies charting the discipline's professionalization.[24] However, the topic has not been related to the broader issue of validating foreign qualifications. Despite a growing interest in assessment cultures in educational science, doctoral degree practices have not yet attracted attention.[25] While a study on conferment in Germany is available,[26] doctorates are only now being studied in a comparative perspective.[27] Despite the intertwined history of German-American higher education[28] as well as a growing interest in student mobilities, what is missing in these studies is the aspect of transatlantic validation.[29]

To deliver this perspective the article draws on the rich collections of the Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin as well as university archives in Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago as the centers of (German) dentistry in the U.S.[30] Sources include not only letters to the Ministry of Education by those who requested

21 Johann Anton Zehnter, *Die Führung zahnärztlicher Titel, sowie des Doktortitels durch im Inland nicht approbierte Personen. Ein Beitrag zur Klärung dieser Frage* (Karlsruhe, 1893).

22 Biermann 1914; Dominik Groß, "Titel ohne Wert? Zur Debatte um den Stellenwert des ‚Doctor medicinae dentariae' von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart," in *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Ethik der Zahnheilkunde* (Würzburg, 2006), 77-96.

23 Wilhelm Ebstein, *Charlatanerie und Kurpfuscher im Deutschen Reich* (Stuttgart, 1905); Walter Lustig, *Die Bekämpfung des Kurpfuschertums* (Berlin, 1927).

24 Krebs 1974; Zimmermann 1969; Dominik Groß, *Die Geschichte des Zahnarztberufs in Deutschland* (Berlin, 2019).

25 Schwinges 2007; Cristina Alarcón López and Martin Lawn, eds., *Assessment Cultures. Historical Perspectives* (Frankfurt am Main, 2018).

26 Siegfried Wollgast, *Zur Geschichte des Promotionswesens in Deutschland* (Bergisch Gladbach, 2001).

27 Hansson et al. (forthcoming); Ku-ming (Kevin) Chang and Alan Rocke, *A Global History of Research Education. Disciplines, Institutions, and Nations, 1840-1950* (Oxford, 2021), here 3.

28 Jürgen Overhoff, New Perspectives on German-American Educational History: An Introduction, in Jürgen Overhoff and Anne Overbeck, eds., *New Perspectives on German-American Educational History: Topics, Trends, Fields of Research* (Bad Heilbrunn, 2017), 9-23.

29 Anja Werner, *The Transatlantic World of Higher Education. Americans at German Universities, 1776-1914* (New York/Oxford, 2013).

30 The author is grateful that her archival research in the U.S. was made possible by a Horner Library Fellowship from the German Historical Institute in Washington and a fellowship from the Botstiber Institute for Austrian-American Studies.

permission to use their foreign doctorates in the German Empire, but also the U.S. educational institutions' student records and correspondence as well as numerous periodicals and pamphlets.

To provide an insight into the use and abuse of foreign titles as detours to promotion, my article first describes the development of dentistry as a profession in Prussia and the German Empire and the social status issues this entailed. Second, I present the possibilities of dental studies on the Atlantic's American side. Third, I analyze what measures were put into place to assess the "actual" qualifications of the "American dentists" who had studied abroad to determine their social position. Fourth, I look at the contested introduction of the "Dr. med. dent." title in the Weimar Republic, which put dentists on a par with physicians and ended the debate on the dental doctoral title as well as the lively career of "American dentists" in Germany.

I. Dental Education in Prussia and the German Empire

German dentistry was not much developed in the mid-nineteenth century. Admittedly, the professional journal *Der Zahnarzt* had been published since 1846 and a local association, *Verein der Zahnärzte in Berlin*, had been established a year later.[31] Yet, when the national *Central-Verein Deutscher Zahnärzte*, the Central Association of German Dentists, was created in 1859, only 250 dentists were practicing in the 39 states that made up the German Confederation.[32] Twenty years later this number had almost doubled, and Adolf Petermann's recently founded *Zahnärztlicher Almanach*, a dental almanac listing all registered dentists in the German Empire as well as in Austria-Hungary, included "489 dentists (amongst which 10 ladies)."[33] However, many cities – for example, Bochum in the Ruhr area with 27,000 inhabitants – did not have a resident dentist at all.[34]

The small number of dentists can be explained by the fact that dental treatment at the time was mostly limited to the extraction of damaged or painful teeth, which was often carried out by people in related professions such as barbers.[35] Only slowly did

31 *Der Zahnarzt. Das Neueste und Wissenswürdigste des In- und Auslandes über Zahnheilkunde* 1 (1846), no. 1.

32 Julius Parreidt, *Geschichte des Central-Vereins Deutscher Zahnärzte, 1859-1909* (Berlin, 1909), 6.

33 Petermann 1880, 87: Statistische Übersicht.

34 Petermann 1880, 91: Verzeichnis einiger Städte im Deutschen Reich, die einen Zahnarzt nicht besitzen.

35 Groß 2019.

healthy, well-cared-for teeth come to be seen as a desirable physical characteristic of a modern person. While the popular women's magazine *Der Bazar* published a series on dental care already in 1869,[36] general pamphlets and educational books on the issue only became commonplace at the end of the century.[37]

Despite the growing interest in dental care, dentists continued to be disregarded by the rest of the medical profession and the authorities. In 1836, the Berlin court dentist August Blume had been denied the official designation of privy councilor [*Geheimrat*] on the grounds that "dentists, together with midwives, occupy the lowest rank among the healers in the state, which can only be attributed to their modest knowledge and work."[38] In the 1830s, the professional reputation of dentists was still so low that Moritz Heider, who later became Doctor of Medicine and Professor of Dentistry at the University of Vienna as well as a key representative of the *Central-Verein*, repeatedly turned down the offer to become assistant to eminent Viennese dentist Georg Carabelli and, thereupon, take on the city's most important practice, stating: "An honest person who has learned something cannot become a dentist."[39]

One reason for this low regard was that dental studies were not much regulated. Prussia introduced its first set of directives in 1825.[40] However, prior education played a minor role; one could practice with only a *Tertia* degree from a German *Gymnasium*, that is, after completing ninth grade, and some demonstrable knowledge of anatomy and pharmacology.[41] So minimal were the requirements that even a few women practiced dentistry, as Hamburg dentist Eduard Kranner pointed out.[42] In 1869, new regulations came into effect across the Prussian-dominated North German Confederation, which defined the examination requirements for dentists in more detail. The requirements now included completion of the *Prima*, the penultimate grade of the *Gymnasium*, and two years of study and practical training.[43] Yet it was not until 1909 that the obligatory course of study was extended to seven semesters and that the *Abitur*, the university entrance exam, became a requirement.[44] However, even after 1909 the "*immaturi*" without *Abitur* who had trained according to the old regulations were allowed

36 Ludwig Heinrich Hollaender, "Lose Gedanken über Zahnheilkunde und Pflege der Zähne und des Mundes," *Der Bazar. Illustrirte Damen-Zeitung* 15 (1869) no. 4: 35.

37 Adolf Petermann, Zahnärztliche Belehrungen für Laien (Frankfurt am Main, 4th ed., 1887); Julius Parreidt, *Die Zähne und ihre Pflege* (Leipzig, 1913).

38 Dominik Groß, 150 Jahre „Deutsche Gesellschaft für Zahn-, Mund- und Kieferheilkunde". Eine zahnärztliche Organisation schreibt Geschichte, https://www.zm-online.de/artikel/2009/das-verborgene-wort/eine-zahnaerztliche-organisation-schreibt-geschichte, 2009.

39 Parreidt 1909, 30.

40 Groß 2019, 11.

41 Hans-Heinz Eulner, Die akademische Frühzeit der Zahnheilkunde in Deutschland, *Medizinhistorisches Journal* 1 (1966) no. 1, 3-15, here 4.

42 Parreidt 1909, 7.

43 Eulner 1966, here 6.

44 Otto Schröder, *Das Studium der Zahnheilkunde und die gesetzlichen Vorschriften für die Prüfung der Zahnärzte im Deutschen Reich* (Halle, 1910), 17.

to continue practicing dentistry, prompting the dental historian Hans-Heinz Eulner to describe them as "a burden on the social status of dentists."[45]

Yet it was precisely the lower admission requirements, compared to those for medical studies, that opened an entry path for groups that did not traditionally have access to the liberal professions. In nineteenth-century Prussia and later the German Empire, intergenerational professional self-recruitment was incredibly prevalent. Although the *Gymnasium* was also attended by members of the urban middle classes, the majority of students dropped out after reaching the lower grades, such as the *Tertia*. The small percentage who went on to earn the *Abitur*, which qualified them for university studies, mostly came from well-educated and well-connected backgrounds.[46] By contrast, for those who lacked the *Abitur* and were therefore unable to enroll in a medical degree program, studying dentistry for a comparatively short period of two years must have appeared advantageous from a cost-benefit perspective as it still offered the opportunity to have one's own practice. A look at the biographies of some of the first German dentists shows that they often came from merchant families, including those of Jewish origin, who possibly hoped to improve their social status in this way.[47]

Yet, a doctorate as a publicly recognized degree marking the completion of specialized medical training did not exist in dentistry. To address this shortcoming, many dentists endeavored to acquire an additional doctorate in general medicine. As the doctorate in medicine could only be obtained after eight semesters and the obligatory state examination, however, the degree was only attainable for those who could finance it.[48] Most of those who chose this route practiced as dentists for a few years to save up the necessary funds before studying for the medical doctorate.[49] Others tried to earn a doctoral degree from a philosophy faculty, which took at least three or four semesters and was complicated by the fact that the subjects were entirely unrelated to dentistry.[50]

By far the largest group, however, ventured out to the United States to pursue their title aspirations, most frequently aiming for a

45 Eulner 1966, here 6.

46 Karl Jeismann, *Das preußische Gymnasium in Staat und Gesellschaft. Vol. 2: Höhere Bildung zwischen Reform und Reaktion 1817-1859* (Stuttgart, 1996), 391; see also Rainer Bölling, Kleine Geschichte des Abiturs (Paderborn, 2010), 17.

47 See the biography of Ludwig Heinrich Hollaender, founder of the Universitätszahnklinik at Halle University, Anne Schauer, *„Die Schärfe meiner Ausdrucksweise entspricht der Größe meines Unwillens." Ludwig Heinrich Hollaender (1833-1897). Leben und Werk* (Ph.D. diss., Universität Halle, 2015), here 14.

48 Parreidt 1909, 159.

49 See for example the biography of practical dentist Adolph Witzel in Jena in Parreidt 1909, 159.

50 GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 76 Kultusministerium, Va Sekt. 1 Tit. VI, No. 1 G, Supp. 1 Vol. 1, "Führung irreleitender Titel durch Zahntechniker," *Berliner Neueste Nachrichten*, February 20, 1914.

"Doctor of Dental Surgery" or a "Doctor of Dental Medicine" or other such titles. By 1880, of 629 dentists in the German Empire and Austria-Hungary there were "70 Drs. of Dental Surgery, 44 Drs. med. and chir. (amongst which 1 hon. causa), 34 Drs. med. (amongst which 1 hon. causa), 14 Drs. philos., 4 Drs. chir., 2 Drs. of Dental Medicine and 1 Dr. chem."[51] This means that more than a third of all dentists in German-speaking countries believed it necessary to hold a Dr. to practice and presumably realize their social aspirations even though this degree did not even exist in their discipline.

In practice, however, the situation regarding dental diplomas in the German Empire was even more complex. In addition to trained dentists, there were an even greater number of so-called dental artists or dental technicians.[52] Since the 1869 Prussian Law on the Freedom of Occupation had been extended to the German Empire in 1872, medicine had been placed on the same legal level as the trades, meaning everyone could now set up a dental practice and carry out treatments.[53] This led to a rapid increase in the number of people performing treatments without providing evidence of training at an institution of higher education. While this had proven to be disadvantageous for general practitioners of medicine, it affected the young, barely consolidated professional group of dentists even more since they were less equipped to deal with unlicensed competition.[54]

The unlicensed practitioners were often people who had previously worked in a variety of related professions or crafts, including barbers, woodturners or goldsmiths, but who had some experience in extracting damaged teeth or had acquired technical expertise in the manufacture of dentures.[55] Their services were significantly cheaper; dental historian Dominik Groß assumes that they charged about half the regular price.[56] Thus, their skills were increasingly used by a population that was rapidly becoming more conscious of healthy teeth and beautiful smiles. As extensive employment opportunities opened up in this boom phase of dental treatment, dental artists or technicians also developed a strong desire to professionalize. As early as 1880, they had organized in the *Verein*

51 Petermann 1880, 87: Statistische Übersicht.

52 See Dominik Groß, "Vom 'Gebißarbeiter' zum 'staatlich geprüften Dentisten'. Der Berufsbildungsprozess der nichtapprobierten Zahnbehandler (1869-1952)," in id. 2006, 99-125.

53 Karl Weber, *Gewerbeordnung für das Deutsche Reich vom 21.6.1869 mit Anmerkungen* (Erlangen, 1872), § 29, 23; Lustig 1927, 64.

54 Groß 2019, 24.

55 Zimmermann 1969, 78.

56 Groß 2019, 33.

deutscher Zahnkünstler [Association of German Dental Artists], which published its own monthly magazine.[57] The first dental technology training institute was founded in Berlin in 1900 and quickly published its own textbook, which showed that the services they offered comfortably fell within the remit of a trained dentist, as they comprised not only the "extraction of a tooth or root," but also "gold fillings."[58]

For dental technicians or artists there were even fewer opportunities to obtain a professional title. Due to their lower education level, they were eligible for neither a Dr. med. nor a Dr. phil. degree but were particularly keen on titles to gain legitimacy – and used them liberally. In 1896, a pamphlet by a dental association complained that many dental artists utilized "dentist-like designations intended to mislead, such as dentist, American dentist, dental studio, Americ. dent.-atelier, dental artist or dental art, pr. dent., dental specialist, institute for dental patients, dental clinic, clinic for dental patients, and the like."[59] Sounding very similar to the actual doctorate, these titles were intended to evoke false associations among potential clients as the general population did not know how to distinguish between approved and unapproved practitioners.[60] Only the university-conferred title "Doctor" used by physicians as well as the "*zahnärztliche Approbation*", the state-issued, permanent license to practice dentistry, were protected designations while many other titles were not, much to the chagrin of dentists.[61] Therefore, several dentists complained, "dental technicians, who are recruited from all walks of life . . . and who mostly lack any scientific training, are allowed to perform the same activities as licensed dentists, possibly under grandiose titles."[62] As growing competition developed between dentists and dental artists, both groups used foreign doctorates from the United States to convey their status to potential patients.

II. Dental Training and Title Conferment in the United States

In comparison to the slow development of dentistry in the German Empire, the United States was far ahead. Here, too, there had been a long history of rudimentary dental treatment, mainly involving

57 See *Monatsschrift des Vereins deutscher Zahnkünstler* 1. 1880; also Groß 2019, 26.

58 "Vorwort," in Prof. Dr. Benninghoven, *Der deutsche Zahnkünstler* (Berlin, 1903), 3 and 434 f. The fact that the author, who worked at a non-university institution, signed the book only with a professorial title of unclear origin rather than his full name once again demonstrates the casual way in which dental technicians used all kinds of titles.

59 Denkschrift der Allgemeinen Versammlung der in Deutschland approbirten Zahnärzte Berlins, *Die Gestaltung des zahnärztlichen Standes in der Zukunft, zugleich eine Beantwortung der Broschüre der Zahntechniker: „Was sind und was wollen die Deutschen Zahnkünstler"*, December 9, 1896, 17.

60 Ebstein 1905, 53.

61 Weber 1872, § 29, 23.

62 Denkschrift 1896, 16.

the extraction of damaged teeth. Dentistry was, in fact, learned during an apprenticeship or simply undertaken without training and therefore held in low regard.[63] But this changed in 1839, the "birth year of organized dentistry," with three important steps toward professionalization.[64] The first dental journal, the *American Journal of Dental Science*, was founded.[65] That same year, the American Society of Dental Surgeons was established as the first national organization for dentists with the purpose to "elevate the profession."[66] Most importantly, the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery was also founded in 1839.[67] This first dental school not only intended to replace on-the-job training with academic learning, but also pioneered the award of a degree in dentistry – analogous to an M.D. – and soon began to attract foreign students seeking formal degrees.

Its founders, four medical doctors, had tried in vain to launch the school at various medical faculties.[68] As a consequence, they decided to establish the first independent dental school to promote dentistry as a separate discipline. The school promptly began to instruct a handful of students, graduating two as Doctors of Dental Surgery (D.D.S) as early as 1841.[69] It is worth taking a closer look at this degree and the criteria for its conferral. An excellent source is William Gies's pioneering 1926 report on dental education in the United States and Canada. Funded by the Carnegie Foundation, the co-founder of the School of Dentistry at Columbia intended to do for dentistry what Abraham Flexner had done for the standardization of medical education 16 years earlier and also provided a concise analysis of the title conferment practices.[70] According to Gies, the title "Doctor of Dental Surgery" (D.D.S) had been created by the Society of Surgeon Dentists of the City and State of New York after its foundation in 1834.[71] The aforementioned American Society of Dental Surgeons, founded in 1839, subsequently adopted the title and awarded all its members the degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S), including two of the Baltimore school founders.[72] In the charter, they not only specified that there "should be at least one annual term of instruction not less than four months in length" but also authorized the faculty to confer the degree "upon

63 William J. Gies, *Dental Education in the United States and Canada. A Report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*, Bulletin No. 19 (New York, 1926), 31.

64 James Wynbrandt, *The Excruciating History of Dentistry. Toothsome Tales and Oral Oddities from Babylon to Braces* (London, 1998), 126.

65 Malvin E. Ring, "Founders of a Profession. The Original Subscribers to the First Dental Journal in the World," *The Journal of the American College of Dentists* 72 (2005), no. 2: 20–25.

66 Gies 1926, 43.

67 Taylor 1922, 157; see on the Baltimore College also Walter Hoffmann-Axthelm, *Die Geschichte der Zahnheilkunde* (Berlin, 1973), 390.

68 Gies 1926, 8.

69 Gies 1926, 8.

70 See also Abraham Flexner, Medical Education in the United States and Canada. A Report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Bulletin No. 4, 1910.

71 Gies 1926, 34.

72 Gies 1926, 72.

the graduates and also upon practitioners after examination or as an honor."[73] Hence, the D.D.S was both a professional degree as well as an honorary title awarded without the requirement of a written dissertation or oral examination. In order to earn this degree and use the title, no prior academic knowledge was required for admission, and training took less than a year.

Considering the initial difficulty in finding an institutional home for the dental school, the title was an attempt to create a degree comparable to the M.D. to give dentists better professional standing vis-à-vis physicians. The expanding dental profession took this up immediately, and institutions in New York and Philadelphia adopted the title instantly. Yet the practice of conferring the title on "practitioners worthy of the distinction" meant that the regulations remained vague.[74] No wonder then that these modern American institutions where a "professional doctorate" could be earned rather easily and quickly began to attract foreign students.[75] In fact, between 1840 and 1885 many of the newly founded and scarcely regulated dental schools had no formal academic requirements for admission as long as prior dental practice was proven, with all requirements being interpreted very generously by the individual institutions despite the formation of the American Dental Association in 1859.[76]

Before long, American dental colleges had such a liberal reputation that, in 1868, Henriette Hirschfeld, a young woman who later became an eminent Berlin dentist, applied to study dentistry in Philadelphia. Despite the fact that at the time it was just as impossible in the U.S. as it was in Germany to study dentistry as a woman, she traveled to Philadelphia convinced that she would have no trouble obtaining a dental education in "free America".[77] After initially being turned down by the Board, she actually managed to persuade Dean Dr. T. L. Buckingham of the Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery to enroll her.[78]

A few years later, the newly founded Dental Department of the University of Pennsylvania began to set certain admission criteria. According to its first Annual Announcement 1878/79, it only

73 Gies 1926, 40.

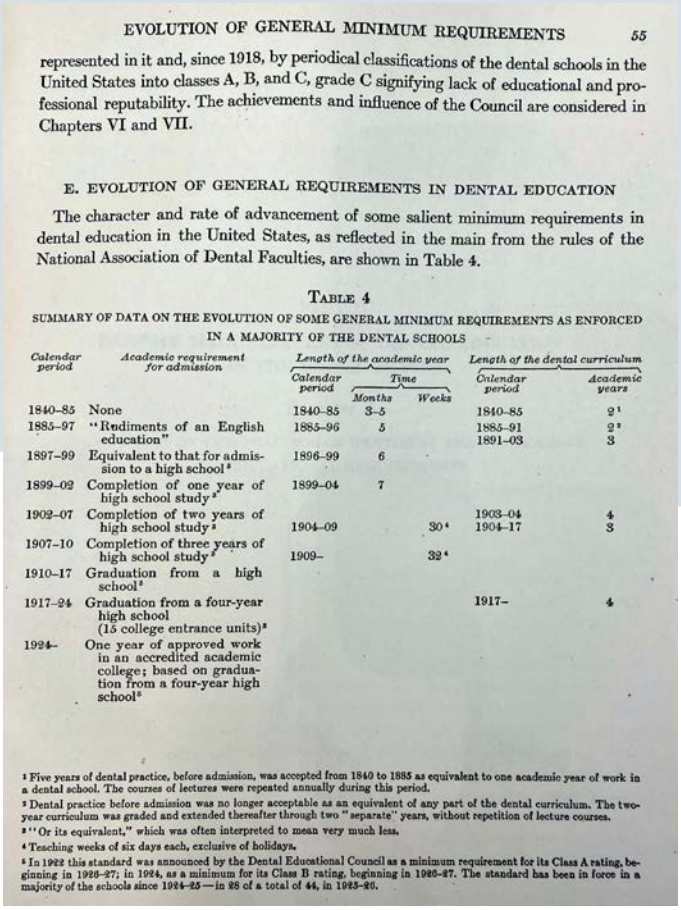
74 Gies 1926, 72.

75 Zehnter 1893, 15.

76 Gies 1926, 55.

77 James Truman, The Entrance of Women into Dentistry, in: Second Annual Report of the Woman's Dental Association and Minutes of the National Meeting held in Chicago, August 18, 1893, here 41. See also Cécile Mack, Henriette Hirschfeld-Tiburtius. Das Leben der ersten selbständigen Zahnärztin Deutschlands (Frankfurt, 1999).

78 Ibid.



EVOLUTION OF GENERAL MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS 55

represented in it and, since 1918, by periodical classifications of the dental schools in the United States into classes A, B, and C, grade C signifying lack of educational and professional reputability. The achievements and influence of the Council are considered in Chapters VI and VII.

E. EVOLUTION OF GENERAL REQUIREMENTS IN DENTAL EDUCATION

The character and rate of advancement of some salient minimum requirements in dental education in the United States, as reflected in the main from the rules of the National Association of Dental Faculties, are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4

SUMMARY OF DATA ON THE EVOLUTION OF SOME GENERAL MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS AS ENFORCED IN A MAJORITY OF THE DENTAL SCHOOLS

Calendar period	Academic requirement for admission	Length of the academic year: Calendar period	Time: Months	Time: Weeks	Length of the dental curriculum: Calendar period	Academic years
1840–85	None	1840–85	3–5		1840–85	2[1]
1885–97	"Rudiments of an English education"	1885–96	5		1885–91	2[2]
					1891–03	3
1897–99	Equivalent to that for admission to a high school[3]	1896–99	6			
1899–02	Completion of one year of high school study[3]	1899–04	7			
1902–07	Completion of two years of high school study[3]				1903–04	4
		1904–09		30[4]	1904–17	3
1907–10	Completion of three years of high school study[3]					
		1909–		32[4]		
1910–17	Graduation from a high school[3]					
1917–24	Graduation from a four-year high school (15 college entrance units)[3]				1917–	4
1924–	One year of approved work in an accredited academic college; based on graduation from a four-year high school[5]					

[1] Five years of dental practice, before admission, was accepted from 1840 to 1885 as equivalent to one academic year of work in a dental school. The courses of lectures were repeated annually during this period.

[2] Dental practice before admission was no longer acceptable as an equivalent of any part of the dental curriculum. The two-year curriculum was graded and extended thereafter through two "separate" years, without repetition of lecture courses.

[3] "Or its equivalent," which was often interpreted to mean very much less.

[4] Teaching weeks of six days each, exclusive of holidays.

[5] In 1922 this standard was announced by the Dental Educational Council as a minimum requirement for its Class A rating, beginning in 1926–27; in 1924, as a minimum for its Class B rating, beginning in 1926–27. The standard has been in force in a majority of the schools since 1924–25—in 28 of a total of 44, in 1925–26.

Figure 1. Evolution of General Minimum Requirements, in William J. Gies, *Dental Education in the United States and Canada. A Report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*, Bulletin Number Nineteen (New York, 1926), 55.

accepted students who were over 21 years of age, had been studying "under a private preceptor for at least two years", and had the means to pay not only the one-off enrollment fee of 5 dollars, but also 100 dollars per course taken and a further 30 dollars for graduation.[79] Nevertheless, a glance at the University of Pennsylvania's extensive collection of enrollment forms reveals that students had a wide variety of prior qualifications: while some were already practicing as dentists, others worked as chemists or even accountants – but were still admitted.[80] The forms also show that the students came not only from the rest of the English-speaking world, but also from Germany, Russia, and South America. In order to regulate the growing influx of international students, from 1885 on most dental colleges introduced the requirement of "rudiments of an English education" as a criterion for admission.[81] However, until the Immigration Act of 1924, there were no state-imposed restrictions on entry for students – and despite clamping down on other

79 University of Pennsylvania Archive, 4.6. School of Dental Medicine, General Records, Box 1: First Annual Announcement of the Dental Department of the University of Pennsylvania, 1878-79, 7.

80 University of Pennsylvania Archive, 4.6. School of Dental Medicine, Student Records, Box 74: Matriculation Forms, 1897-1907.

81 Gies 1926, 55.

forms of immigration even this tight new regulation exempted "bona fide students [. . .] at accredited schools" from any quotas.[82]

The fact that D.D.S. degrees were awarded so generously, and outside universities, had become an issue already when the first dental school was established within the medical faculty at Harvard University in 1867.[83] While there had been no admission requirements for dentistry there either, now the question arose what degree should be awarded to the first graduates. Since most faculty members were M.D.s at this point, they would have preferred the graduates to receive that title, while others suggested *Scientiae Dentium Doctoris*, which was rejected on the grounds that dentistry was not considered a science.[84] Finally, Harvard introduced the *Dentariae Medicinae Doctoris* (D.M.D.), for which a three-year course of study was compulsory. Most other institutions, however, stuck with the D.D.S. This degree had become the standard despite its vague criteria. Nevertheless, in Germany the belief persisted that degrees even from Harvard were easily and, above all, quickly obtained. As late as 1894, Amandus Bröckling, a prospective student from Jena, bluntly asked Dean Thomas H. Chandler to provide him with information about "what shortest time may be necessary to obtain the diploma."[85]

In view of the problems arising from the liberal title practices, there were initial attempts to regulate dental institutions in the United States. New York was among the first states to specify requirements in 1868 and to institute a board to examine applicants who had received a diploma from dental schools before issuing a certificate of license.[86] The National Association of Dental Examiners was founded in 1883, but it took until 1900 for statutes to come into effect in all states and for graduation from a dental school to become a requirement for the dental license examination across the United States.[87] Additionally, the newly founded National Association of Dental Faculties voted to require all candidates for the D.D.S. to attend two full regular terms of not less than five months each, in separate years, beginning with the academic year 1885/86, thus ending the recognition of practice as an equivalent of a portion of the work required for the degree and, most importantly, its honorary conferment.[88]

82 The Immigration Act of 1924 (the Johnson-Reed Act), see the full text at San Diego State University Source Collection, https://loveman.sdsu.edu/docs/1924ImmigrationAct.pdf

83 Gies 1926, 41.

84 Gies 1926, 72.

85 Countway Library of Medicine, Harvard School of Dental Medicine, Box 1, Folder Dean Chandler Correspondence 1894, Letter Amandus Bröckling to Dean Thomas H. Chandler, August 5, 1894. Original in English and underlined.

86 Gies 1926, 35, also 44.

87 Gies 1926, 35.

88 John E. Gurley, The Evolution of Dental Education, American College of Dentists (St. Louis, 1960), 71.

However, even thirty years later, in 1926, the Carnegie Report regarded the vague conferment criteria of the D.D.S. as the biggest problem. On the one hand, Gies criticized that a doctorate – in name at least – was used to indicate completion of undergraduate courses in dentistry.[89] On the other hand – and this was possibly even more serious – the indiscriminate awarding of honorary D.D.S. titles to a large number of – presumably often mediocre – practitioners had done more harm than good to the profession.[90] In hindsight, it was clear that precisely this loose conferment practice had given rise to the problem that "dental schools multiplied excessively during the period from 1881-1900."[91] In Illinois alone, then a state with particularly lax state laws and lacking regulatory oversight, 28 dental schools had been founded. Many of these were working as diploma mills for purely commercial reasons and "freely sold the degree of doctor of dental surgery at home and abroad."[92]

It was this variance in doctorate title practice on the two sides of the Atlantic that led not only reputable German dentists, but also dental artists to acquire titles abroad in order to establish a practice back home. In doing so, they severely disrupted the existing status hierarchy of medical titles in the German Empire and posed a major challenge for Prussian institutions.

III. Gaining Status: "American Dentists" Back Home

Having set off with the goal of obtaining a title in the United States, almost all the different kinds of "American dentists" immediately returned to Prussia to devote themselves to their new dental practice. Due to the good reputation of American dentistry and its modern treatments, "American dentist" quickly became a household name in Europe.[93] Not only practices, but also laboratories advertised their "American" training, services, and connections.[94]

Yet doubts about the legitimacy of American titles emerged quickly within the dental profession. As early as 1876, Halle dentist Ludwig Heinrich Hollaender pointed out the glaring discrepancy between the increasing state regulation of domestic diplomas and the lack

89 Gies 1926, 202.

90 Gies 1926, 45.

91 Gies 1926, 47-48.

92 Gies 1926, 48-49.

93 Zimmermann 1969, 46. For the quintessential "American dentist" in Europe see the biographical novel on celebrity-dentist turned diplomat Thomas W. Evans, Gerald Carson, *The Dentist and the Empress. The Adventures of Dr. Tom Evans in Gas-lit Paris* (Boston, 1983).

94 See for example the ad American Dental Co. in Richard Barnett, *Mut zur Lücke. Kunst und Geschichte der Zahnheilkunde* (Cologne, 2018), 186 as well as the ad of the S.S. White Dental Manufacturing Co., "An die Herren Zahnkünstler in Europa," *Monatsschrift des Vereins Deutscher Zahnkünstler* 6 (1886), no. 1, V.



Figure 2. Advertisement for the American Dental Co., c. 1900. Richard Barnett, *Mut zur Lücke. Kunst und Geschichte der Zahnheilkunde* (Cologne, 2018), 186.

of awareness of foreign certificates in the association's journal, particularly criticizing the degradation of the entire discipline "by the countless army of bunglers who, adorned with a diploma from Philadelphia, suddenly appear everywhere."[95] He complained about the lack of government involvement in validating foreign titles, which meant that "today any useless barber's assistant or hairdresser's apprentice, every goldsmith, every bankrupt merchant or failed stockbroker, adorned with an American pseudo-doctorate, can put the life and health of every single German at risk."[96]

Determined not to dismiss the American institutions altogether, the Würzburg general practitioner and dentist Dr. V. Schneider also published an article on the topic in the same issue.[97] While emphasizing the legitimacy of the Pennsylvania College of Dental Surgery based on his own study experience in 1873/74, he also reported numerous cases of "so-called diplomas" issued by other Philadelphia institutions.[98] This was a reference to the professional fraudster "Dr." John Buchanan, who had turned the German "craze for titles" into a business and gained fame "with his worthless doctorate degrees" since the early 1870s.[99] Although he was exposed after a few years and eventually forced to give up his suspect "American University of Philadelphia" and later his "Livingstone University of America," renowned Leipzig dentist Julius Parreidt estimated that "doctoral degrees [issued by him] were sold to Germany for another two decades."[100] Despite his more nuanced stance, Schneider also demanded "that the authorities finally take serious

95 Ludwig Heinrich Hollaender, "Die gegenwärtige Zahnheilkunde," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Zahnheilkunde* 16 (1876), 1-5, here 4.

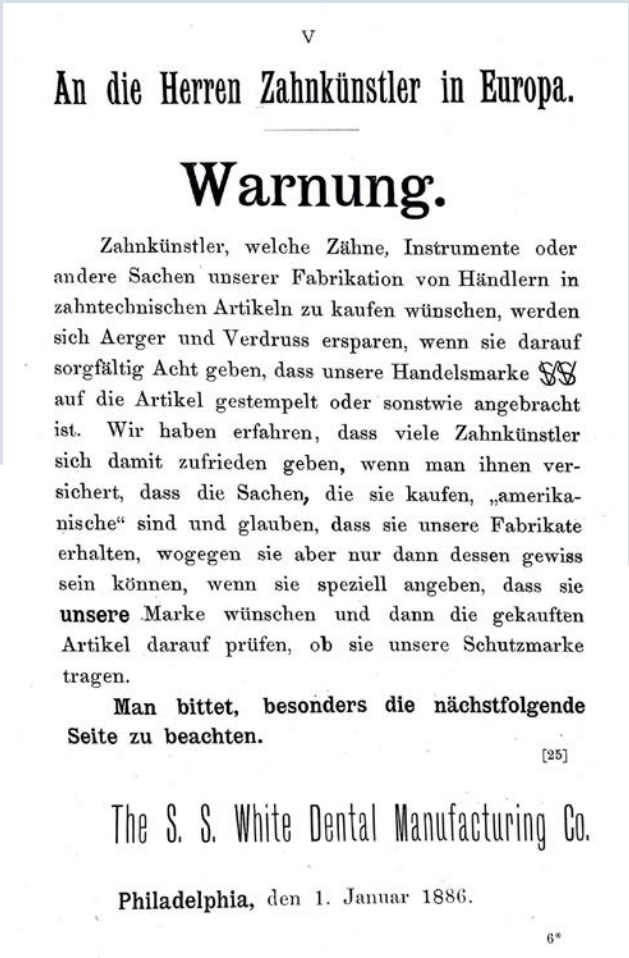
96 Hollaender 1876, 4-5.

97 See Schneider, "Philadelphia und die amerikanischen Doktordiplome," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Zahnheilkunde* 16. 1876, 335-338.

98 Schneider 1876, 336.

99 See Zehnter 1893, 17-18; also Krebs 1974, 21 f. Now also David Alan Johnson, *Diploma Mill: The Rise and Fall of Dr. John Buchanan and the Eclectic Medical College of Pennsylvania* (Kent, 2018).

100 Parreidt 1909, 68.



V

An die Herren Zahnkünstler in Europa.

Warnung.

Zahnkünstler, welche Zähne, Instrumente oder andere Sachen unserer Fabrikation von Händlern in zahntechnischen Artikeln zu kaufen wünschen, werden sich Aerger und Verdruss ersparen, wenn sie darauf sorgfältig Acht geben, dass unsere Handelsmarke SS auf die Artikel gestempelt oder sonstwie angebracht ist. Wir haben erfahren, dass viele Zahnkünstler sich damit zufrieden geben, wenn man ihnen versichert, dass die Sachen, die sie kaufen, „amerikanische" sind und glauben, dass sie unsere Fabrikate erhalten, wogegen sie aber nur dann dessen gewiss sein können, wenn sie speziell angeben, dass sie **unsere** Marke wünschen und dann die gekauften Artikel darauf prüfen, ob sie unsere Schutzmarke tragen.

Man bittet, besonders die nächstfolgende Seite zu beachten.

[25]

The S. S. White Dental Manufacturing Co.

Philadelphia, den 1. Januar 1886.

6*

Figure 3. S.S. White Dental Manufacturing Co., "An die Herren Zahnkünstler in Europa," *Monatsschrift des Vereins Deutscher Zahnkünstler* 6 (1886), no. 1, V.

action against this nonsense," because "Why . . . study, take exams, and pay such high tuition fees when you can get it so easily and certainly more cheaply this way?"[101]

After the Buchanan scandal, dental professionals took it upon themselves to separate illegitimate from legitimate titles. Published since 1877, Adolf Petermann's *Zahnärztlicher Almanach* aimed not only to provide a dentists' directory but also intended "to be welcomed with joy by all those who have become dentists in the proper manner and who need not be ashamed of their 'Doctor' title. To others, it will be a thorn in their side, as it will knock the spurious doctor's hat off their heads."[102] He publicly denounced individual dentists, as for example "the Gentlemen Heuckeroth, Güntert and von Keszycki," whose titles' origins were uncertain and demanded that "they clear their names of any involvement with acts of fraud."[103] At the annual meeting of the Central Association of German Dentists in 1878 Adolph Witzel, a practicing dentist

101 Schneider 1876, 336.

102 Adolf Petermann, *Zahnärztlicher Almanach 1877. Ein alphabetisch geordnetes Namensverzeichnis der im deutschen Reiche practicierenden Zahnärzte* (Frankfurt am Main, 1877), Foreword, unpaginated.

103 Petermann 1877, 105.

and associate professor at the University of Jena, appealed to all his colleagues to voluntarily relinquish dubious diplomas.[104] Likewise, other publications, such as the *Zahnärztliches Wochenblatt*, for example, a journal for dentistry, stated as one of its primary goals "the ruthless pursuit of all abuses (title fraud – purchased doctorates)."[105]

In view of these problems, the Prussian state aimed to regulate the use of foreign titles and particularly dubious American doctorates. In 1897, the government issued a decree obliging all those who had gained a foreign title to obtain the approval of the Minister of Ecclesiastical, Educational and Medical Affairs to use it in Prussia.[106] The wealth of individual letters to the ministry requesting permission to use their titles at home reveals the many ways in which "American doctorates" were used to reduce status inequalities in the German Empire.

Friedrich Schuckmann, a dentist from Hamelin who had studied in the United States, applied to the ministry for permission to use the title "*Dentariae Medicinae Doctoris*" after his return home in the autumn of 1899. He stated that he had earned his degree at the "University of Cambridge near Boston in New England."[107] Harvard was, as he explained to the authorities, "a renowned and respectable university that can claim a better reputation than many German universities"; in addition, its School of Dentistry applied some of the strictest criteria for awarding the D.M.D. after three years of study, meaning that he had conducted serious studies abroad. His letter, which closed with the urgent plea, "My entire life's success depends on my title question,"[108] illustrates that recognition was an existential matter for him.

Others were rather shameless in exploiting the authorities' lack of knowledge about foreign institutions and titles to their advantage.

One case that ended up in court was that of Paul Splittgerber from Stettin, who claimed to have earned the degree *Doctor chirurgiae dentariae* from the Academia Medicinae Dentariae Germanico-Americana in Chicago in March 1899.[109] A sign he had mounted next to the entrance to his practice identified him as "Dr. chir. dent.

104 Parreidt 1909, 78.

105 Advertisement for *Zahnärztliches Wochenblatt*, 10 (1896/97), *Dr. Richter's Zahnärztliches Adressbuch*, 9 (Berlin, 1897), unpaginated.

106 "Verordnung vom 7. April 1897 betreffend die Führung der mit akademischen Graden verbundenen Titel," *Gesetz-Sammlung für die Königlichen Preußischen Staaten* 1897, 99; Biermann 1914, 87.

107 GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 76 Kultusministerium, Va Sekt. 1 Tit. VI No. 14, Vol. 2: Letter Friedrich Schuckmann, Hamelin, 17.10.1899.

108 Ibid.

109 GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 76 Kultusministerium, Va Sekt. 1 Tit. VI Nr. 14 Bd. 2, Abschrift Urteil, August 3, 1900; see also *Deutsche Zeitung*, July 4, 1900.

Splittgerber. American Dentist. State-approved in America." After his application for permission to use the title was rejected and following several appeals, including one to the Higher Administrative Court, he was ordered to remove the sign and to pay 500 Marks in legal costs. While the ruling focused on the ministry's refusal to recognize his title, the nature of the institution that had granted him the degree played no part in the decision. However, soon after Splittgerber's trial, the "German-American Dental College" – with its ever-changing name, in some cases Latinized as above – was exposed as a bogus institution in 1902.[110] Under the leadership of Chicago-based Fritz Huxmann, it awarded a large number of Doctor of Dental Surgery diplomas not only to dentists but also to dental technicians from Germany.[111] The only requirements were payment of a fee of 50 dollars and the attendance of a course of study lasting officially six weeks, but in some cases as little as two weeks.

A few years later, a government report noted that the regulation of nostrification "to prevent damage to German doctors, dentists, etc. caused by competition from less qualified foreign doctors" had proven extremely beneficial – and, in using this wording, failed to take into account that the majority of those who returned with a foreign degree were, in fact, Germans.[112] Against this backdrop and in view of the still increasing numbers of imported titles, the authorities tightened regulations further. Now the government prohibited the use of academic titles acquired abroad that were not also offered by German universities. In particular, the new regulations specified that "foreign dental and veterinary doctorates are generally excluded, even if they may have been awarded in individual cases based on serious requirements."[113]

However, those who had obtained their diplomas abroad were not prepared to give up their degree and status. In 1901, German dentists who had graduated in the United States formed a lobby group named Centralverein in Amerika graduirter Doctoren der Zahnheilkunde (Central Association of Doctors of Dentistry who Graduated in America) to defend their titles. They took the position that while it had become desirable for Germans to study at the advanced American Dental Schools in the 1880s, private insti-

110 GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 76 Kultusministerium, Va Sekt. 1 Tit. VI Nr. 14 Bd. 2: Paul Steinberg, *Der Doctortitel Deutsch-amerikanischer Schwindelinstitute* (Nürnberg, 1902).

111 Paul Steinberg, Facts about the Disgraceful Issuing of Degrees and Licenses in the State of Illinois, *Items of Interest* 1899, 484-497, here 488.

112 GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 76 Kultusministerium, Va Sekt. 1 Tit. VI, No. 1 E, Vol. 3, Dreißigster Petitionsbericht der Unterrichtskommission, 20. Legislaturperiode 1904/05, 4.

113 Ibid.

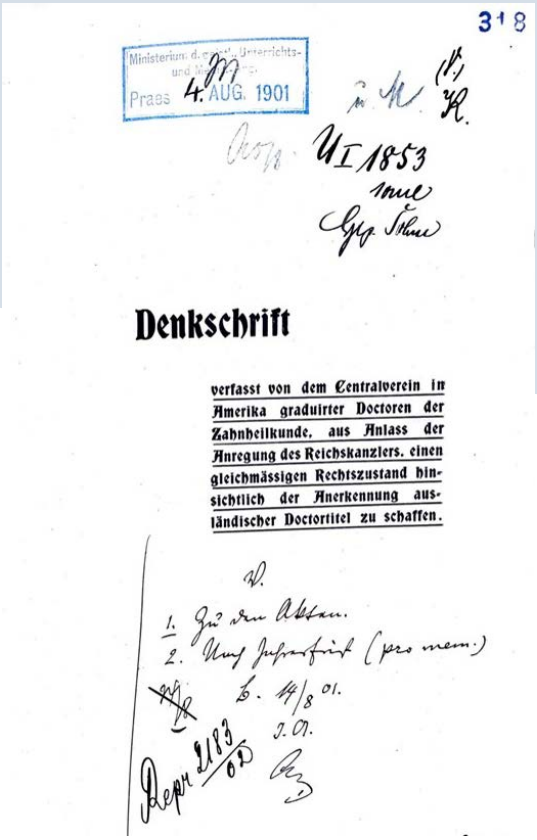


Figure 4. *Denkschrift verfasst von dem Centralverein in Amerika graduirter Doctoren der Zahnheilkunde*, Hamburg, July 1901.

tutions had "awarded doctoral degrees to foreigners hungry for decorations" at the same time.[114] Therefore, they aimed to prevent "our honestly acquired titles from being confused with such bogus titles."[115]

Notwithstanding scandals and political interventions, there still were many fraudulent titles in circulation. In 1902 the journal *Zahnärztliche Rundschau* warned its readers about "criminal and non-criminal titles of dental technicians," stating for example that the extravagant title "Medicus dentium" but also "American dentist in conjunction with the title of Doctor" were illegitimate.[116] Disputes involving titles acquired abroad by dental technicians now increasingly ended up in court, as the extensive collection of rulings compiled by Ernst Imming, director of the German Association of Dental Technicians, illustrates.[117] In 1912 a higher administrative court ruled that it was inadmissible for a dental technician to use the title "Dr. of dent. surg.," for example, since "these diplomas are far from having the same significance as the titles awarded by German universities, as graduation often takes place after only six months of attendance at the institute, which can be described as inferior."[118]

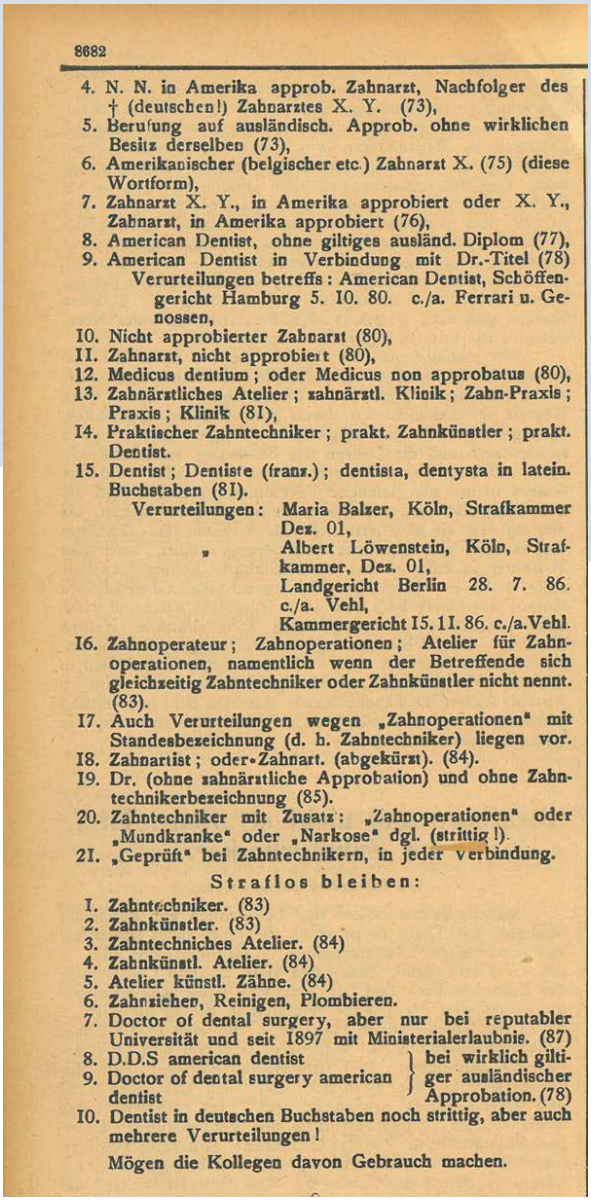
114 GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 76 Kultusministerium, Va Sekt. 1 Tit. VI No. 14. Vol. 2: Denkschrift verfasst von dem Centralverein in Amerika graduirter Doctoren der Zahnheilkunde, Hamburg, July 1901, 1.

115 Ibid.

116 Zahnarzt Eckstein, Fulda, "Strafbare und nichtstrafbare Titel der Zahntechniker," *Zahnärztliche Rundschau*, March 1, 1902.

117 Ernst Imming, *Der Dentist im Gesetz und vor Gericht* (Berlin, 1913).

118 Imming 1913, 146. Also this title stemmed from the German-American Dental College in Chicago.



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4. N. N. in Amerika approb. Zahnarzt, Nachfolger des † (deutschen!) Zahnarztes X. Y. (73),
5. Berufung auf ausländisch. Approb. ohne wirklichen Besitz derselben (73),
6. Amerikanischer (belgischer etc.) Zahnarzt X. (75) (diese Wortform),
7. Zahnarzt X. Y., in Amerika approbiert oder X. Y., Zahnarzt, in Amerika approbiert (76),
8. American Dentist, ohne giltiges ausländ. Diplom (77),
9. American Dentist in Verbindung mit Dr.-Titel (78)
   Verurteilungen betreffs: American Dentist, Schöffengericht Hamburg 5. 10. 80. c./a. Ferrari u. Genossen,
10. Nicht approbierter Zahnarzt (80),
11. Zahnarzt, nicht approbiert (80),
12. Medicus dentium; oder Medicus non approbatus (80),
13. Zahnärztliches Atelier; zahnärztl. Klinik; Zahn-Praxis; Praxis; Klinik (81),
14. Praktischer Zahntechniker; prakt. Zahnkünstler; prakt. Dentist.
15. Dentist; Dentiste (franz.); dentista, dentysta in latein. Buchstaben (81).
    Verurteilungen: Maria Balzer, Köln, Strafkammer Dez. 01,
    „ Albert Löwenstein, Köln, Strafkammer, Dez. 01,
    Landgericht Berlin 28. 7. 86. c./a. Vehl,
    Kammergericht 15. 11. 86. c./a. Vehl.
16. Zahnoperateur; Zahnoperationen; Atelier für Zahnoperationen, namentlich wenn der Betreffende sich gleichzeitig Zahntechniker oder Zahnkünstler nicht nennt. (83).
17. Auch Verurteilungen wegen „Zahnoperationen" mit Standesbezeichnung (d. h. Zahntechniker) liegen vor.
18. Zahnartist; oder Zahnart. (abgekürzt). (84).
19. Dr. (ohne zahnärztliche Approbation) und ohne Zahntechnikerbezeichnung (85).
20. Zahntechniker mit Zusatz: „Zahnoperationen" oder „Mundkranke" oder „Narkose" dgl. (strittig!).
21. „Geprüft" bei Zahntechnikern, in jeder Verbindung.

Straflos bleiben:

1. Zahntechniker. (83)
2. Zahnkünstler. (83)
3. Zahntechniches Atelier. (84)
4. Zahnkünstl. Atelier. (84)
5. Atelier künstl. Zähne. (84)
6. Zahnziehen, Reinigen, Plombieren.
7. Doctor of dental surgery, aber nur bei reputabler Universität und seit 1897 mit Ministerialerlaubnis. (87)
8. D.D.S american dentist } bei wirklich giltiger ausländischer Approbation. (78)
9. Doctor of dental surgery american dentist }
10. Dentist in deutschen Buchstaben noch strittig, aber auch mehrere Verurteilungen!

Mögen die Kollegen davon Gebrauch machen.

Figure 5. Zahnarzt Eckstein, Fulda, Strafbare und nichtstrafbare Titel der Zahntechniker, *Zahnärztliche Rundschau*, March 1, 1902.

Whereas in the 1860s Minister of Education Adalbert Falk had assured Henriette Hirschfeld that she could practice in Germany on the sole basis of her American degree, these days were clearly over by the first decade of the twentieth century.[119] Yet American dental degrees had not entirely lost their validity or significance. Lacking their own doctoral qualifications, the first dental institutes to be established at German universities often required an American doctorate as a prerequisite for joining the faculty. This was the case for Julius Parreidt, a well-respected dentist as well as chronicler of the Association of German Dentists, who had been offered the

119 Truman, 1893, here 7.



Figure 6. Advertisement, *Zahnärztliche Rundschau*, February 3, 1901.

chair of the new dental institute to be established at the University of Leipzig in 1884. Yet, as his son, who also became a dentist, later recalled, "the condition was that he had to go to America first to obtain the D.D.S. title, at his own expense, of course."[120] Despite all the doubts that had arisen about training in the United States, even established German dentists had to provide proof of an American degree in order to be eligible for certain positions, risking professional disadvantages if they did not.

Fundamentally, this shows how difficult it remained to deal with doctoral degrees earned in the United States whose professional value was so hard to assess, and which therefore made it challenging to assign their holders a specific social status. Conversely, however, this very fact made it all the easier to level the carefully drawn distinctions in status that existed in the German Empire by using foreign titles.

IV. Re-Establishing Hierarchies: Dr. med. dent.

The lengthy deliberations about the value of foreign dental doctorates only became a serious discussion when the introduction of a German dental doctorate was suggested in 1913. While there had been earlier attempts to introduce such a degree in Germany, they were quickly abandoned due to the stern opposition from general practitioners and medical faculties. A 1903 survey conducted by the Ministry of Education among the medical faculties of the major Prussian universities showed that most were against this "in order to prevent the devaluation of the doctoral title," as one opinion from Breslau stated.[121] However, when the "Dr. med. vet." was introduced after a long – and largely parallel – debate about Swiss veterinarians in 1910, the push for the dentistry degree gained momentum. Based on this precedent, those advocating for a doctorate degree in dentistry believed that they could no longer be denied this after it had been granted to the veterinarians.[122]

More important, though, was another issue of professional and social standing. Due to the severe shortage of dental care, particularly in small towns and rural communities, the new German

120 Reinhold Parreidt, "Erinnerungen," *Zahnärztliche Mitteilungen* 17. 1955, 624-627, here 624.

121 GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 76 Kultusministerium, Va Sekt. 1,Tit. VI, No. 1 E, Vol. 1, "Äußerungen zu der Frage der Schaffung besonderer Grade eines Doctor medicinae veterinariae/Doctor chirurgiae dentariae," November 10, 1903.

122 GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 76 Kultusministerium, Va Sekt. 1 Tit. VI, No. 1 G, Supp. 1, Vol. 1: "Preußen gegen die Verleihung des zahnärztlichen Doktortitels," 12.12.1913. See Olga Sparschuh, Going Abroad to Gain a Title. Doctorate Strategies of "American Dentists" and "Swiss Veterinarians", 1860-1919, in Hansson et al. (forthcoming).

Empire Insurance Ordinance [*Reichsversicherungsordnung*] of 1911 stipulated that, as of January 1, 1914, "so-called dentists or practical dentists or dental technicians, whose limited training and education is generally known" would be allowed to call themselves "state-approved" and be authorized to treat patients covered by health insurance.[123] When this news spread, dental students went on strike in Leipzig in the autumn of 1913, followed by students in Berlin and Würzburg, to demand the right to "admission to doctoral studies."[124] What motivated them, Berlin dentist K. L. Koneffke argued in the daily *Berliner Tageblatt*, was that "the general public would no longer be able to tell the difference between dentists and dental technicians, and he demanded that the title 'Dr. med. dent.' be used to draw a clear distinction."[125] He found it necessary to point out that the profession was not demanding the creation of a German dentistry degree merely "for motives of vanity, but purely for economic reasons, to be recognizable from the outside and to have an equivalent."

Before any serious reform attempt could be made, however, the First World War broke out and the plans were shelved. It was only in 1919 that the degree "Dr. med. dent." was introduced in the Weimar Republic, requiring a dissertation and an oral examination and making the "American doctorates" obsolete virtually overnight. With their own doctoral degrees, dental surgeons now stood almost on the same level as medical doctors. This marked a significant upgrade in the status of dentistry in both science and practice, and, as a result, the number of students and practitioners rose rapidly.[126] Dental artists or technicians, on the other hand, were deprived of the opportunity to earn a doctorate abroad and evolved into a more technical profession, producing custom-made dental restorations (such as crowns, bridges, and dentures) as well as orthodontic appliances, but working less directly with patients.[127]

Still, the titles acquired in the United States enjoyed a considerable afterlife and continued to shape the field. In 1929, more than thirty years after the beginnings of the nostrification practice in Prussia and ten years after the introduction of the "Dr. med. dent." title in the Weimar Republic, another pamphlet was published

123 GStA PK, I. HA Rep. 76 Kultusministerium, Va Sekt. 1 Tit. VI No. 1 G, Supp. 1, Vol. 1: Zahnärztliche Doktortitel, Zeitungsartikel, 1912-1914: "Der Kampf um den Doktortitel," *Berliner Tageblatt*, December 13, 1913; "Die Zahnarzneistudenten geben nach," *Berliner Morgenpost*, December 18, 1913. See also Reichsversicherungsordnung vom 19. Juli 1911 nebst d. Einführungsgesetz, § 123, Münchner DigitalisierungsZentrum, https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/view/bsb11124329?page=154,155.

124 Ibid., "Der Streik der Studierenden der Zahnheilkunde," *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, December 11, 1913.

125 Ibid., Zahnarzt K. L. Koneffke, Berlin, "Der Kampf um den Doktortitel," *Berliner Tageblatt*, December 13, 1913.

126 Groß 2009, online.

127 Groß 2006.

that fundamentally questioned the value of foreign doctoral and professorial titles. The author, Maximilian Camillo Neuburger, a general practitioner, explained their continued existence as follows: "the public attaches great importance to the title used by someone offering medical treatment, yet would not question the legitimacy of the degrees themselves."[128] Once again, this underlines the general inability of the public to classify the (foreign) titles. Despite all the discussion surrounding their validity, without doubt many Dr. titles acquired abroad remained a mark of social distinction across the Weimar Republic, too.

128 Maximilian Camillo Neuburger, *Welchen Wert haben die amerikanischen Dr.- und Prof.-Titel?* (Zittau, 1929), here 9.

Conclusion

The doctorate increasingly became a key mark of social standing in the German Empire and was particularly sought after. While general practitioners were protective of their "Dr. med." title vis-à-vis the professionalizing discipline of dentistry, aspiring dentists venturing to the United States were able to overcome these status differences, at least for a certain period, by obtaining abroad the degrees that they were denied at home. However, the lack of clarity regarding foreign institutions and diplomas from which the dentists initially benefited also served less thoroughly trained dental technicians, who obtained a title despite lower qualifications or who simply purchased the coveted degree. Ultimately, it was not only initiatives by dental professionals but also state regulation that led to the introduction of an officially regulated German dental doctorate, which placed dentists on a par with medical doctors and distinguished them from less qualified dental workers. Regulation at the national level therefore ended the temporary possibility of rising in Germany's social hierarchy through foreign doctoral titles.

Several aspects of transnational educational mobility were crucial for the rise and fall of the "American dentists": First, there were fundamental differences in access to higher education in the German Empire and in the United States. As neither dentists nor dental technicians had the possibility of obtaining a doctorate, either because they lacked the *Abitur* or simply because no doctorate of

dentistry existed in the German Empire at all, they took advantage of the United States' higher education system. There, they found a rather unregulated practice of dental (as well as medical) education at numerous quickly established institutions that required little or no academic credentials for admission. By contrast, in the German Empire, fierce competition between the established medical profession and emerging dentistry became apparent early on, and the doctorate was vehemently defended as a privilege by the groups that had traditionally been able to obtain it. Thus, transatlantic differences in the organization of higher education were a vital element for transcending social inequalities determined by diplomas. After returning to Germany, the foreign doctorates made it possible to blur the strong dividing lines between the different status groups, at least for a while.

129 Rasche, 2007.

Second, this practice was only possible due to the lack of reliable knowledge about foreign qualifications. Owing to the national organization of education systems, the Prussian authorities were inadequately prepared to evaluate foreign degrees - a task which was even more difficult because of the incongruity of titles awarded in the German Empire and the United States. While the "Doctor of Dental Surgery" sounded quite similar to a German medical doctorate, the content of the diploma was very different. The D.D.S. was awarded by colleges unaffiliated with universities as a professional title upon graduation and, for a long time, also as an honorary title. Even if the actual criteria for obtaining a doctorate still differed widely, in Germany as well as in Europe from the nineteenth century onwards the doctorate was awarded as an academic title at a university after completion of the dissertation with the attendant oral defense.[129] Since the D.D.S. was similar in name but not in content, one could argue that the history of "American doctorates" in Germany that spanned the period between the 1870s and the 1920s was essentially based on the (smartly used) ambiguity of the term in translation.

Finally, mass educational mobility led to a harmonization of the degrees. From the 1880s onwards, there were attempts in the United States to regulate many institutions' hitherto very liberal

diploma practices. More importantly, in the German Empire the nostrification practice made the justification of degrees obtained abroad necessary. However, after shifting from an enthusiasm for everything new and American to a fundamental lack of trust in degrees from the United States, particularly in the field of dentistry, eventually these diplomas were no longer recognized, and only the introduction of the "Dr. med. dent." brought certainty. Thus, domesticating the degree ended the possibility of using foreign diplomas to transcend the social inequalities determined by titles back home and re-established a status hierarchy. While the title meant advancement for trained dentists and placed them on a par with general practitioners, it relegated dental technicians to a lower level of the national education system.

The history of the "American dentists" shows that when researching inequalities in higher education, it is crucial to also consider the aspect of social prestige. In a world of nationally organized education systems, transnational student mobility and the diplomas obtained abroad diminished the unequal status of different groups practicing in the medico-dental field. At least temporarily, all those who went abroad succeeded in overcoming the differences manifested by the doctoral degree in the German Empire and expanded their possibilities, before national regulations made the attainment and use of doctoral degrees controllable again. In this regard, student mobility does not only appear as a way for students and scholars "to broaden their educational and cultural horizons," as is frequently held in educational research.[130] It can also be considered a detour to promotion that proved very successful for different kinds of German dental workers for a while.

130 Rajika Bhandari and Peggy Blumenthal, "Global Student Mobility and the Twenty-First Century Silk Road: National Trends and New Directions," in id., eds., International Students and Global Mobility in Higher Education. National Trends and New Directions (New York, 2011), 1-23, here 1.

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