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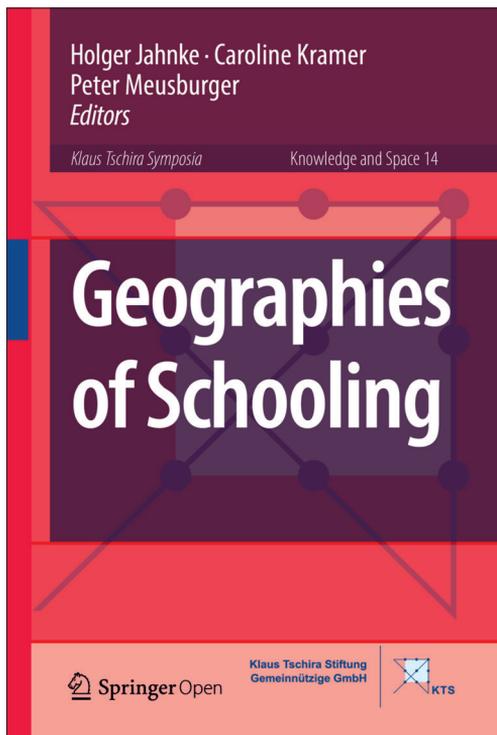
The goals and roles of education are changing in time and space. Education can be seen as a tool responsible for the acquirement of social norms, labour market skills, local and/or national identities, just to mention a few. Spatial patterns of this system constitute the main focus of geography of education, a field that has witnessed a number of shifts in terms of theories, research questions and methodologies. During the decades following its institutionalisation in the 1960s, geography of education was applied for regional educational planning, but with time critical approaches were introduced by a number of scholars, which resulted in the appearance of a wide range of new research questions (MEUSBURGER, P. 2015). The directions of the changes in geography of education are similar to those in other domains of human geography, as research in this field was stimulated by the political economy approach, the 'cultural' and 'relational' turns. With the 'spatial turn' that occurred in other social sciences, geography of education is of interest for a number of disciplines such as educational science, sociology and anthropology (HOLLOWAY, S. *et al.* 2010; HOLLOWAY, S. and JÖNS, H. 2012).

The current volume represents this variety due to the approaches taken and the collaboration between scholars with different disciplinary backgrounds. As part of the Knowledge and Space book series, "Geographies of Schooling" is an outcome of the "14th Symposium on Knowledge and Space", held in Heidelberg in 2016. Although the series has already covered similar questions, "the geography of schooling has not yet been directly addressed in the series with a clear focus on the spatiality of schools, teaching, and formal learning processes in its different forms" (p. 2.). The volume is dedicated to Peter MEUSBURGER, who was one of the editors of the book and he was the main initiator and organiser of the symposia as well, until he passed away in 2017.

In the introductory Chapter 1, Holger JAHNKE and Caroline KRAMER provide a thorough overview of the volume. After placing the book in the academic context of geographies of education and learning, they turn to the analysis of each chapter, which makes the reading and interpretation of the volume more efficient. As they highlight, the book presents different perspectives on school systems. One among them considers schools as tools used by politics to transform or oppress certain groups of society. Another perspective apparent in a number of chapters focuses on the neoliberal restructuring of school systems which results in an entrepreneurial idea of schools and growing disparities according to the availability of local resources. Schools are also investigated as social micro-systems, where a number of key actors are of interest for the authors. A pedagogic or educational aspect is also present in the volume, where "teaching and learning practices in and around schools become the focus" (p. 3).

JAHNKE and KRAMER summarise the ways spatiality is analysed in the book. They highlight four key spatial dimensions: (1) the question of geographical scale and rescaling from the point of view of responsibilities and allocation of financial resources; (2) the urban-rural divide; (3) the spatial and social embeddedness of schools in their specific locations; (4) the closure of small rural schools which results in the spatial centralisation of the school system and the intensification of pupils' commuting. After the summary of the approaches and research methods, Chapter 1 also provides brief descriptions of the individual chapters. To avoid repetition, I only give here short insights into the research questions covered throughout the 17 chapters and 4 parts of the book.

Part I includes studies on the consequences of educational policy reforms and rescaling responsibilities on institutional and regional/urban restructurings. JAHNKE critically examines the impacts of educational reforms initiated by the German federal government



in the second part of the 2000s. As he presents, although the original goal was to strengthen the role of primary education in social mobility, rural areas characterised by population decline and weak supply of local resources find themselves disadvantaged – and so do the pupils who live there – compared to their better-off and urban counterparts. He illustrates these processes through two case studies from Schleswig-Holstein, based on expert interviews and statistical data. Thomas COELEN and his associates present initial findings of a research project concerning the connections between educational and urban development policies in Germany. Besides providing an extensive overview on the existing academic work and policy strategies within the topic of educational landscapes, they summarise the most important results of their empirical research. Based on expert interviews and policy document analysis they claim that schools and education are not only being seen as important tools to foster social integration, but they tend to become the only targets of urban development plans.

In his contribution, Herbert ALTRICHTER applies the conceptual framework of governance in the analysis of school system reforms in German-speaking countries. He scrutinises in detail the transformation of the school system in Austria, and points to the emergence of a new hierarchy among schools in the last decades. David GIBAND analyses in Chapter 5 the changing approaches to educational planning in France from the 1980s up until nowadays. He focuses on the rescaling of responsibilities connected to the coordination and operation of the educational system. GIBAND points to the dependence of local educational institutions on the state and the regional level, which is changing in nature but still is important. He doubts that the processes outlined can be seen as neoliberalisation and decentralisation, despite they are considered to be so quite often.

Part II consists of chapters focusing on how certain national school systems affect, and are used to influence, either the improvement or oppression of particular social groups and parts of the urban network. Ferenc GYURIS studies in detail the interconnectedness of political/ideological transitions and the transformation of school provision and schooling in Hungary from the early 20th century until the last decades of state socialism. With a special focus on rural areas, he shows how the changing educational and regional development policies affected schools both in quantitative and qualitative terms. Silvie Rita KUČEROVÁ and her associates provide a complex analysis of the alteration of the education system in the territory of the current Czechia in the second half of the 20th century. After some theoretical considerations on the role of education in society, they analyse the changing spatial distribution of elementary schools using quantitative data and give an explanation on the major processes and mechanisms that drove the restructuring of the educational system.

Laura SCHAEFLI, Anne GODLEWSKA, and Christopher LAMB study in Chapter 8 the representation and imagination of indigenous people and colonialism in contemporary Canadian textbooks. They also look at the role of these texts in affecting students' perceptions about these questions based on a large-scale survey. In the last chapter of Part II, Ranu BASU considers schools as places of social interaction where various state policies can be observed in practice. In particular, she investigates how officially propagated formal geopolitical and welfare policies turn out to be violently oppressive and neoliberal. She applies postcolonial and feminist theoretical frameworks to critically analyse two case studies, one from Toronto, Canada, and another one from Guantánamo, Cuba.

Studies in Part III emphasise the importance of the local context in how small rural schools transform due to policy reforms implemented on other scales. Rune KVALSUND analyses in Chapter 10 the transformation of the school system in Norway with a focus on the changing interpretation of the school as an institution. He underpins his argument with several social theories through which he sheds light on a changing policy attitude which has led to the current state of affairs. As he observes, small rural schools are expected to become similar to large urban schools in the most important aspects. However, it is claimed that rural communities generally do not benefit from this way of transformation. Caroline KRAMER applies a multiscale analytical framework in order to reveal the main mechanisms behind the formation of small rural schools in different settings. She puts her research in an international context first and then analyses the changing situation of rural schools from the early 1990s until 2015 in Baden-Württemberg, Germany and Vorarlberg, Austria.

In Chapter 12, Andrea RAGGL focuses on small rural schools in Vorarlberg, similarly to KRAMER, but her contribution is more concerned with the viewpoint of teachers and pupils regarding teaching and learning conditions. Her investigation is based upon 20 qualitative case studies. Samantha HILLYARD and Carl BAGLEY analyse the role of the head teacher in local communities through two case studies from rural England. They build upon the theories of LEFEBVRE, HALFACREE and BOURDIEU in interpreting the empirical evidence of their ethnographic research.

Authors of Part IV approach geographies of schooling from the point of view of the changing role and embeddedness of schools in society and how these institutions constitute a social sub-system. As the chapters of this part put the actors of the school system (such as pupils, teachers, parents, and organisers of informal education) in the focal point of their investigation, the role of different social axes (for example age, class, gender) are highlighted. Chapter 14 focuses on the changing educational policies of contemporary England and the way they are affecting class

and gender relations. Sarah L. HOLLOWAY and Helena PIMLOTT-WILSON claim that the ‘roll-out neoliberal state’ made clearly observable steps towards influencing parents’ way of childcare activities (through for example: expanding before and after school childcare; guidance for parents for home learning; growing role in extracurricular activities). They argue that the state aims to control social reproduction by implementing these reforms. Christian REUTLINGER examines pupils’ spatial practices and imaginations of their school and its neighbourhood. His contribution is based on the analysis of imaginative maps and essays drawn and wrote by children from two different locations in St. Gallen, Switzerland.

Anne SLIWKA and Britta KLOPSCH argue in Chapter 16 for expanding the spaces of learning beyond secondary schools through involvement of numerous actors from both inside (teachers, students) and outside of schools (for example parents, employees of public institutions, companies etc.) in order to make education more interesting and useful. Their work provides general theoretical considerations but also includes real-life illustrations from different parts of the (‘First’) world. They promote further development and a more widespread application of this model in secondary education. In the final chapter of the volume, Jürgen SCHMUDE and Sascha JACKISCH investigate the reasons for, and consequences of, quantitative (the number and share of women) and qualitative (the way society evaluates teaching) feminisation of the teaching profession from the 19th century up until nowadays in Baden-Württemberg, Germany. The authors scrutinise the processes in the wider society (such as class relations, legislative changes, labour market transformations) as the drivers of these changes.

As can be seen, the volume brings together studies from authors with different national and disciplinary background. In my view this diversity is an important source of the academic value of the book, as it fosters interdisciplinary and international academic communication. Some kind of cross-fertilisation is apparent throughout the volume as some of the theories and approaches were applied by more authors from different disciplines, and some chapters were written jointly by authors from different fields. However, further potentials still remained unexploited. On the one hand, even if we can find some attempts to make reference on studies outside of the authors’ field, it is not a typical strategy. On the other hand, the ties of international collaboration could have been made stronger by initiating multiple international authorship.

In my impression, from an East Central European perspective, this open access volume has the potential to encourage new ways of dealing with the geographies of schools and schooling, even by adopting and applying theories primarily elaborated in western contexts. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, the

countries of the region have undergone remarkable social and economic restructuring and are currently exposed to processes of neoliberalisation. This way of transformation is also visible in the evolution of the schooling systems, which makes the policies noticeably consonant, and the processes comparable in western and post-socialist settings.

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