

# Chapter 1

## Geographies of Schooling: An Introduction



Caroline Kramer and Holger Jahnke

Researchers across different disciplines have shown a growing interest in the spatial dimension of education and learning in its different forms. The number of publications on geography of education (Brock, 2016; Butler & Hamnett, 2007; Hanson Thiem, 2009; Symaco & Brock, 2016; Taylor, 2009), radical geographies of education (Mitchell, 2018), geography of education and learning (Holloway & Jöns, 2012), geographies of alternative education (Kraftl, 2013), as well as children's and young people's geographies (Holloway, Hubbard, Jöns, & Pimlott-Wilson, 2010) has risen considerably in human geography, especially in the Anglophone academia. Even researchers outside the discipline of geography have explored the spatial dimension of education and learning, for example those in educational sciences (Baroutsis, Comber, & Woods, 2017; Gulson & Symes, 2007; Nugel, 2016) and the sociology of education (Ares, Buendía, & Helfenbein, 2017; Löw & Geier, 2014).

In German geography, the geography of education or *Bildungsgeographie* as a subdiscipline of social geography has a more than 50-year research tradition in terms of geographical research in educational institutions. It ranges from preschool education to tertiary and posttertiary education (Freytag & Jahnke, 2015; Freytag, Jahnke, & Kramer, 2015; Geipel, 1965; Meusburger, 1980, 1998). In French and Belgian social geography, already existing and more scattered research in the field has only recently begun to form a more institutionalized *géographie de l'éducation* (Wayens, Marissal, & Delvaux, 2017), whereas in other countries such research is currently in the process of institutionalization.

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C. Kramer (✉)

Institute of Geography and Geoecology, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology,  
Karlsruhe, Germany  
e-mail: [caroline.kramer@kit.edu](mailto:caroline.kramer@kit.edu)

H. Jahnke

Department of Geography, Europa-University Flensburg, Flensburg, Germany  
e-mail: [holger.jahnke@uni-flensburg.de](mailto:holger.jahnke@uni-flensburg.de)

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The growing research in the field has led not only to an extension of the research topics, but also of the methodological approaches and the types of education and learning processes they study, ranging from formal to nonformal and informal education. In its broadest understanding, any kind of experience of the natural, social, or cultural world can be conceptualized as a learning experience. In that sense, the research field has become rather broad.

Researchers of the geography of education and learning seem to display three tendencies: (1) a preference for single case studies that exemplify broader social, political, and economic tendencies; (2) a preference for qualitative methods, which at the same time have been broadened in their variety; and (3) a growing interest in informal learning processes and informal education (Kraftl & Mills, 2014). At the same time, schooling and formal education in general have gained less attention in human geography.

For the present volume of the *Knowledge and Space* series, the editors have deliberately chosen the title “Geographies of Schooling” in order to gather contributions that focus around the school as the still dominant state primary or secondary education institution. This includes its various—social, political, pedagogical, and economic—dimensions on the one hand and its different spatialities on the other. Within the broad field of “Knowledge and Space,” the present book complements existing volumes that focus on different forms of knowledge, knowledge creation, knowledge production, and knowledge distribution. 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.

## Perspectives on Schools and Schooling

With this collection of articles, the book explores school and schooling in their educational and cultural, but also social and political dimensions. The articles’ authors do so on different levels—ranging from single institutions to the local, the regional, and the broader scales of national levels—by looking at national educational systems in regard to their social and political role in society. Schools and schooling are understood as institutions and practices that are currently undergoing fundamental changes, processes that seem to be profoundly embedded in the more general societal and economic transformations often labeled as neoliberalization. Throughout all chapters, a critical understanding of schooling and education becomes apparent, and thus the taken-for-granted positive connotation of education and *Bildung* is questioned.

This critical perspective becomes most apparent in the political dimension of schooling and national school systems, which several authors address. The examples of Hungary (see Chap. 6 by Gyuris), the Czech Republic (see Chap. 7 by Kučerová et al.), and France (see Chap. 5 by Giband) illustrate how state governments still implement ideas of society through national education and school policies. Education policies can shape not only the reproduction of ethnicity (see Chap. 9 by Basu),

colonial structures (see Chap. 8 by Schaeffli et al.), gender roles (see Chap. 17 by Schmude), and class stratification (see Chap. 14 by Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson), but also territorial development (see Chap. 2 by Jahnke) and school systems (see Chap. 11 by Kramer).

The recent restructuring of national education systems—a phenomenon that apparently does take place in most countries across the globe—seems to have weakened state control over schooling. However, schools themselves as public state institutions become an important part of the neoliberal reorganization of states (see Chap. 14 by Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson and Chap. 9 by Basu). The introduction of norms and mechanisms according to the rules of new public management combined with policies of decentralization and individualization (see Chap. 5 by Giband and Chap. 2 by Jahnke) slowly establishes an entrepreneurial idea of schools that also changes the tasks and role of head teachers and teachers. The role of the state gradually shifts from school planning—exemplified by former socialist countries—to different forms of educational governance (see Chap. 4 by Altrichter). Responsibilities are devolved from the state ministries to the individual schools, and thus from the centers to the peripheries. The apparent increase of economic school autonomy turns out to be ambiguous, as it brings about a growing dependency on local resources that in turn tend to be unevenly distributed. School autonomy creates new potentials for the development of new school profiles (see Chap. 12 by Raggl). It also, however, bears the risk that small schools in peripheral communities have to close (see Chap. 10 by Kvalsund and Chap. 11 by Kramer), especially when the introduction of free parental school choice fosters competition between small schools in contexts of demographic decline. This in turn creates pressure on the head teacher, who is pushed into an entrepreneurial rather than a pedagogical role.

In the social dimension, schools can also be regarded as social microsystems, in terms of an assemblage of actors and actions in a given material and institutional setting. The contributors to this book address the role of head teachers (see Chap. 13 by Hillyard and Bagley), teachers (see Chap. 12 by Raggl), parents and families (see Chap. 14 by Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson), and pupils (see Chap. 15 by Reutlinger, Chap. 12 by Raggl, and Chap. 16 by Sliwka and Klopsch), but also of other local actors such as politicians (see Chap. 2 by Jahnke and Chap. 11 by Kramer). In most of these studies, those involved have extended the idea of schooling beyond the institutional and spatial school boundaries into the local community, thus devolving parts of the responsibility for formal education and schooling to the community level. The complex set of formal, nonformal, and informal learning environments, sometimes metaphorically coined “educational landscapes” (see Chap. 3 by Coelen et al.), offers a more holistic view on schooling by placing the school institution in the center of a set of other available institutions.

Last but not least, researchers must take into account the educational or pedagogic dimension of school and schooling. From this perspective, teaching and learning practices in and around schools become the focus. Here, the question of school size becomes pivotal when it comes to school closure, especially in rural areas. Multigrade teaching, historically developed as a necessity due to the small number of children in rural schools, has recently seen a revival as a pedagogical tool in

urban and even metropolitan contexts (see Chap. 12 by Raggl). Some analysts stress the need for a critical review of existing practices of teaching (see Chap. 9 by Basu) as well as the content of teaching materials such as curricula and textbooks (see Chap. 8 by Schaeffli et al.); others underline the need to take students' perspectives and informal learning practices into consideration (see Chap. 15 by Reutlinger and Chap. 16 by Sliwka and Klopsch) in order to gain new insights into the pedagogical dimension of schooling and formal education.

## Spatial Dimensions of Schooling

When focusing on the territoriality of school systems and of everyday school life in regions, towns and schools, one can find that although school systems follow national and federal guidelines, laws, and standards, smaller-scale territories seem to be gaining influence. Their influence on education policy decisions and school structures is growing as is their responsibility for school system institutions. This process of territorialization of educational policies, however, often excludes the decision power on how financial resources are allocated (see Chap. 5 by Giband, Chap. 10 by Kvalsund, and Chap. 11 by Kramer). Political decision-makers often justify this decision on the basis of the subsidiarity principle, yet it must remain an empty shell if the power to allocate resources is not granted.

Another territoriality aspect impacting school systems is that the responsibility for school system elements are distributed on different territorial levels, an organizational structure which triggers complex processes of coordination. Often, teachers are recruited and paid for by national or state governments, student transportation is organized on county level—and the construction and maintenance of school buildings falls to the responsibility of local governments. Because the scope of duties and the financial allocation powers do not fall on the same spatial level, frictions are likely to occur with regard to questions of cost efficiency. For example, although merging school locations reduces personnel costs (national or federal level), they lead to higher spending for student transportation (middle regional level) and place a higher burden on students because they need to spend more time commuting to school.

Some federal governments are currently reorganizing territorial responsibilities. On the one hand, this presents opportunities for forming new territorial alliances; on the other, it carries the risk of some regions and locations being marginalized, thus creating new regional disparities and jeopardizing the principle of equal opportunity in the school system.

The urban-rural divide is the most commonly used juxtaposition to describe spatial structures in school systems. Typically, analysts use indicators such as settlement size or rank in the central local system to set urban and rural areas apart from one another. They evaluate key figures for the school system with these analytical categories, and support programs are implemented with the same. Scientific studies also tend to differentiate between schools in urban and in rural areas. Researchers

studying schools in urban areas are also interested in questions such as socially disadvantaged neighborhoods, the integration of children with immigration backgrounds, or social and spatial segregation. Researchers studying schools in rural areas often focus on questions such as school closures and long school commutes, mixed-graded teaching, or the situation of those acting as both head teacher and teacher in peripheral schools.

Nevertheless, one must keep in mind that urbanity and rurality are social constructs (see Chap. 10 by Kvalsund). Their exact meaning depends on the intentions of those making use of the contrasting pair, and thus the terms always must be deconstructed. Researchers quite often understand rurality synonymously with remoteness and isolation, which immediately reveals an urban-centric perspective. This perspective expresses a belief that in today's world urban life as well as globalized and mobile urban societies are the norm, whereas rural schools are believed to be part of the local, natural, and life-world context. Furthermore, rural schools are often associated with small schools in which mixed-graded teaching is a typical organizational form. What should not be overlooked here is that this rural idyll with a small village school and teachers living in the same village and doubling as "bearers of culture" is also a construction and is not always reflected in reality (see Chap. 12 by Raggl). The professions of teachers and head teachers are continuously being professionalized. On the one hand, this phenomenon does lead to the demystification of the rural idyll; on the other hand, it can also make teaching positions in small rural schools more attractive, especially for younger teaching staff.

How the school as an institution is embedded in its spatial and social surroundings is of importance not only for students' everyday school life, but also for the neighborhood in which the school is located. A number of contributors to this book address these interrelationships for both the rural and urban context (see Chap. 10 by Kvalsund, Chap. 12 by Raggl, and Chap. 11 by Kramer). When social spaces are also conceptualized as educational spaces or educational landscapes, close connections can be shown between educational policy and urban or regional development policies. Often, socially and economically marginalized neighborhoods are the starting point for concerted social, urban, and educational planning measures. The study of these neighborhoods makes the interconnectedness between children and adolescents' different social and physical spaces—along with their specific rules and practices—readily apparent. School buildings and the activities offered there carry meaning beyond being "just" a place of school lessons; they serve as places where the social lives of children and adolescents are interconnected and as places that are appropriated and occupied by those who use them (see Chap. 15 by Reutlinger). That the architecture of those buildings can either promote, enable, or limit appropriation processes also becomes evident. Thereof follows the recommendation to conceptualize school facilities in both rural and urban areas in a way that they not only serve for teaching purposes, but can simultaneously function as possibility spaces for young people and for people living in the same neighborhood.

Across Europe, rural regions—often already only sparsely populated—are subjected to demographic changes that will classify them as shrinking regions. Within a few years, an ageing population and the selective migration of young people will

lead to a steep decline in school-age children. However, the commute to and from school for young children cannot be prolonged at will. School-location planners often react to these demographic changes by closing schools and by spatially concentrating the school-location networks. Politicians may like to argue that large and central schools lead to an improved teaching quality, fewer cancelled hours, and more options to choose from, but school closures are primarily economically motivated. Maintaining small schools means higher costs for personnel per child and for school buildings, sports halls, and personnel for the maintenance and upkeep of the facilities in many different locations. A number of contributors in this book are concerned with the negative impacts of school closures in rural areas and present measures through which small schools can successfully be integrated into village life, and they show which opportunities can arise thereof (see Chap. 10 by Kvalsund and Chap. 11 by Kramer). Small schools are currently experiencing a renaissance and their typical features—namely mixed-graded teaching, project-oriented lessons, and individual support—are being newly appreciated in rural but also in urban regions. In fact, evidence suggests that students from urban areas commute to schools in the rural hinterlands, thus reversing the typical central-location divide. Urban-rural commutes occur especially when communities outside of cities offer special pedagogical concepts (see Chap. 12 by Raggl).

Researchers are in agreement that local schools have a positive influence on the social life in these locations, the local population's local and regional identification with the area, as well as the region's long-term overall development (see Chap. 10 by Kvalsund). The importance of a school as a socialization instance cannot be overestimated, because lessons and everyday lifeworlds are closely intertwined, and a school building's exact construction and use can further that role. Swedish and Austrian examples show that school buildings equipped to serve in multifunctional ways offer far more than merely class rooms and sports facilities. They instead have the potential to serve as a meeting point for local clubs, adolescents, families, and senior citizens and to offer space for local libraries, kindergartens, and shops providing for local supplies. Children's experience of their school life as part of community life, life in clubs, and other specific activities contributes to how they identify with the place and region in which they live. Successful students who identify with their region do not necessarily follow the pattern of "learning to leave" as Corbett (2007) described it for Canada; instead, these experiences can lead them to "learning to stay."

## **Methodological Approaches to "Geographies of Schooling"**

The contributors in this edition approach the topic of "Geographies of Schooling" in many different ways: Some take a theoretical approach and support their arguments with empirical material, others focus more on empirical material, such as regional statistics, surveys, and case studies. Researchers concerned with long-term

developments in school systems take a historical approach and ask about political upheavals and school reforms.

The authors in this edition use methods covering a wide range of empirical approaches. Quantitative analyses of official data allow statistical spatial analyses and cartographic representations that reveal school structures on a small scale and in time-spatial patterns (see e.g., Chap. 7 by Kučerová et al., Chap. 6 by Gyuris, and Chap. 17 by Schmude and Jackisch). Time series of school data reveal developments and spatial interrelationships of processes, which allow conclusions on the spatial spreading of a phenomenon to be drawn, for example waves of school closures in rural areas (see Chap. 11 by Kramer). Quantitative surveys of actors in the school system, such as head teachers and parents, reveal the consequences education policy measures have on those affected (see Chap. 14 by Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson). Qualitative interviews with experts, teachers, pupils, or parents augment and deepen those findings by giving insights into individual decision-making processes, motives for taking action, and assessing school-based actors (see Chap. 13 by Hillyard and Bagley and Chap. 12 by Raggl). Quotations from head teachers, teachers, parents and children convey their perspectives on their school, the community they live in, responsible actors, as well as the roles they play and this in turn allows deep insights into the connection between the institution school and its local and regional environment. One contributor in this edition employs mental maps as a particular form of visualization in order to reveal more about the subjective spatial constructions of individuals (see Chap. 15 by Reutlinger). Another contributor's focus is linked to written constructions of societies and spaces, utilizing document analysis to learn more about the curricula covered in school books (see Chap. 8 by Schaeffli et al.).

The diversity of theoretical and methodical approaches that have been brought together in this volume emphasize the variety of research in the new field of geographies of schooling, which in turn contributes to a better and wider understanding of spatial education systems and their actors. They enable readers not only to learn more about the characteristics of school systems on different levels of scale, but also to take the value systems, motives, and preferences of the responsible individuals into consideration.

The areas investigated in this volume include Canada, Norway, Great Britain, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Czechia, and Hungary. In many cases, the authors start with their home countries and make cross references to countries that show similar processes in their school systems, thus generating comparative cross-national studies. The analysis of the influence actors have on different spatial scales shows that their goals often do not coincide. Gathering evidence on how those spatial scales in school systems are intersected is one result of this volume and that this intersectionality is a prerequisite for making a goal-oriented and holistic structure and design of school systems possible.

## The Geographies of Schooling in This Volume

The contributors to Part I, “Governance of Schooling in a Spatial Perspective,” look at the interdependency of the political and the spatial dimension of school and education policies. They highlight the spatial effects educational reforms have had in different countries since the beginning of the twentieth century and more specifically in recent years. As the different case studies show, implementers of recent education reforms and school policies have introduced processes of territorial restructuring, which lead to the emergence of new spatial configurations of formal and nonformal educational institutions.

In the first article, Holger Jahnke considers the territorial dimension of educational policy in Northern Germany. In rural areas that suffer from population decline and shrinking pupil numbers, many small elementary schools with often very long traditions are threatened by school closure. On a conceptual level, Jahnke critically examines the interconnection between school governance policies on the one hand and territorial governance on the other. Both policies share the goal of population growth and are thus usually discussed in terms of a synergy—eventually leading to a stabilization or even enhancement of local development. Looking at concrete case studies, however, Jahnke points to the inherent ambiguities when local school development is done in the name of demographic stability and growth.

Thomas Coelen, Anna J. Heinrich, and Angela Million examine the interfaces and interlacing between education and urban development in the context of Germany. In recent years, the political concept of local educational landscapes was established to draw together local institutional actors from the formal and nonformal education sector. This tool was supposed to strengthen the quality of the educational offer on the one hand and the spatial development of certain urban areas on the other. Following this logic, some cities have started investing in schools in order to foster the revitalization of certain urban areas. Based on empirical case studies from different cities in Germany, the authors question the generally shared assumption among city planners that the development of educational institutions will automatically have a positive impact on urban development.

In a broader view, Herbert Altrichter explores school autonomy policies and the changing governance of schooling. Since the mid-1990s, the governments of German-speaking countries have passed a series of reforms in their school systems that have also had strong effects on the mechanisms of school governance. The author analyzes recent school reforms, focusing on the changing governance of schooling in Germany and Austria that eventually lead to more decision-making powers for the single institutions, thus allowing for more school autonomy. Using the specific example of “curricular profiles,” which allows schools in Austria to shape their individual school curriculum according to a specific profile, the author critically discusses the outcomes of such educational reforms in a multilevel governance system.

Similarly, David Giband looks at the territorial dimension of educational policies in the French context. He critically examines the transition from what he calls



“republican spaces of schooling” to educational territories (*territoire*) and the paradoxical outcomes of spatialized education policies. He provides a historical reconstruction of the emerging territorial paradigm in the governance of schooling and education as a republican ideal, as well as critically discussing partial decentralization processes within the education sector. In the light of a relational conception of space, the created territorial arrangements of education policies result in a “new educational order” with growing educational inequalities.

The contributors to Part II of this volume, “National School Systems in Transition,” focus to a greater extent on different spatialities within the education system in selected countries. With a focus on the national scale, they address two spatial dimensions in particular. The contributors of the first two studies examine historical changes in two Eastern European centralized education systems in a spatial analysis approach focusing on spatial disparities of school provision. Those of the other two critically evaluate the construction of national identities as well as the subalternity within nationally defined education systems and even beyond. All contributions in this section take particular note of the growing spatial and social inequalities and structural injustices that are produced through different nationally defined education systems.

In the first contribution to this topic, Ferenc Gyuris looks at the impact political ideologies had on national spatial planning and the school network in twentieth century Hungary. With a focus on the politics of small schools in the country’s rural areas, the author discusses different phases of rural school policy and how they reflect the dominant political ideology of the time. Whereas the nationalist conservative regime in the interwar period fostered large-scale school development projects in the entire territory, the Stalinist dictatorship after 1948 aimed at the demolition of small settlements, including their schools. The 1970s witnessed a decentralization of power to the regional level, which resulted in a regional school centralization policy and further closures of small schools in the respective regional peripheries.

In a similar approach, Silvie R. Kučerová, Kateřina Trnková, and Petr Meyer analyze the changing spatial structures of school provision that national reforms produce in the Czech education system. In light of structuration theory, the authors explore the connection between socioeconomic and political conditions on the one hand and education policy on the other in different periods of the transition from the communist government to a democratic society. Through the use of thematic maps, the authors highlight how educational reforms in this specific historical period resulted in different spatial patterns of elementary school provision across the national territory.

Laura Schaeffli, Anne Godlewska, and Christopher Lamb present a very different approach to the national dimension of education. In their contribution, they look critically at the representation of colonialism and Indigenous peoples in Canadian curricula and textbooks. Focusing on three provinces—Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, and British Columbia—they analyze strategies of inclusion and exclusion at play in state-approved curricula and textbooks and discuss their educational impact on students’ consciousness. Their findings reveal a representation of the disappearing indigenous peoples that minimizes colonial violence, and precludes

the imagination of self-determining Indigenous nations. The authors come to the conclusion that state-approved textbooks and curricula contribute to the perpetuation of colonial modes of thought and action among students.

In the next contribution, Ranu Basu considers the geopolitical framings of subalterity in state-funded public education. Presupposing that state-funded public education has transformative effects on the evolution of the public realm, she examines how current ideologies, policies, and practices shape various aspects of social justice. Looking at displaced migrants in urban areas across the globe, she advocates for an adequate representation and participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups in publicly funded education systems. These observations on the geopolitical framings of subalterity are related to broader transformation processes in neoliberal welfare states across the globe.

In Part III, “Small Schools Versus Large Schools in Their Local Context,” the contributors focus on the already mentioned dichotomy between large and small schools. At first glance, this dichotomy refers only to the size of the institutions, but upon closer inspection it becomes clear that many more (stereo)typical characteristics of schools come into play. Large schools are mostly urban schools in which the students are taught in single-age forms; small schools are mostly located in rural areas and pupils are often taught in mixed-age forms. This melange not only produces “typical” schools and stereotypes, but they are founded on constructions of the world that must be deconstructed. The spatial approach furthermore makes it possible to take the different scale levels and regional, social, historical, and institutional contexts of schools into consideration.

Rune Kvalsund takes on the job of deconstruction by taking schools in rural Norway as an example and asking the rather provocative question: “Bigger or Better?” With his question he targets the difficult issue of how to measure the “quality” of a school and, taking it a step further, asks who defines the criteria and goals by which success is measured. In light of the “quiet” reforms that have taken place especially in the rural Norwegian school system, Kvalsund analyzes these processes from a number of different perspectives. Through deconstructing places and rural schools, he for instance reveals how both the understanding of what constitutes learning and the quality norms of small schools have changed. He also takes national research funding, research designs and methods into consideration, and finally makes the case for valuing the cultural meaning of the inner life of schools and communities.

Caroline Kramer centers her attention on small schools and the role they play in school systems. Her study areas are the German federal state of Baden-Württemberg and the Austrian federal state of Vorarlberg, and her research spans more than 25 years of development there. In order to learn about the collective and individual actors that have influenced small schools, she utilizes a comprehensive multilevel view to analyze the process of “making of small schools.” Whether small schools are closed or kept open depends on national state interests, economic situations, as well as the educational policy and ideological affiliation of relevant actors. An important and maybe counterintuitive conclusion she draws from her findings is that the fate of small schools is dependent not so much on ever-present demographic

changes, but on whether the decision-makers are advocates or adversaries of small schools. Her empirical research includes both quantitative and qualitative methods, and she used both to identify a number of different factors that influence the “making of schools” on different spatial levels.

Andrea Raggl’s research area is also Vorarlberg in Austria, but her interest focuses on the potentials and challenges of specific teaching and learning situations in small rural schools. Her focus is on the characteristics and current situation of small rural primary schools in Austria, the working conditions for head teachers and teachers, as well as on student’s learning contexts. Her empirical approach is a mixed-methods one through which she can extract both the strengths and the weaknesses of small schools. Among the strengths are providing a caring ethos and individual support for the students, as well as school lives for teachers that are exciting and never boring. At the same time, however, it becomes evident that teachers in very small schools may grow lonely and have difficulties coping with being both the sole and the head teacher. Raggl’s contribution manages to uncover the most likely unexpected plurality of small schools and that small rural schools can be places of innovation, especially in cases in which they manage to attract children from urban centers by developing a special profile.

Samantha H. Hillyard and Carl Bagley’s contribution investigates the developments of two small schools in very different English villages and is rooted in tradition of ethnographic research. The villages differ in their cultural heritage and the individual leadership styles embedded in the locals. Hillyard and Bagley analyze the different developments of small rural schools in the light of Lefebvre’s theoretical works on spatial contexts and Bourdieu’s conceptions of field, habitus and capital. The authors come to the conclusion that even though small rural schools are shaped by their local contexts and social histories, their head teachers still enjoy a certain degree of relative autonomy.

In Part IV, the focus shifts to “Schools in and for Society” and the societal contexts of which schools and their relevant actors are part of as well as to the functions schools fulfill in a society. School is an early and important socialization environment for children and adolescents; it is an important place where their character is built, where they learn to integrate into forms, and last but not least it is the place where they acquire their cultural and economic capital for their personal development and their professional careers. The authors of this section hence address topics such as the influence of education policy measures, how the socialization instance of schools is intertwined with the primary socialization instance of family, as well as the role that neighborhood’s characteristics play. They also cover the question of how school as an institution must develop in order to become a space for collective learning, a space where young people can develop and further their identities and their talents. Important accompaniment is provided for through teachers and head teachers. Another focal point in Part IV is the role played by the social and regional origins of the teaching staff, how they fill their positions, how their line of work changes, and in which esteem society holds their work. This is especially true for the primary school sector, in which the teaching profession has undergone a process of feminization. The last contribution in this part is dedicated to that process.

Sarah L. Holloway and Helena Pimlott-Wilson place their focus on the connections between “schools, families, and social reproduction.” They have observed a process of restructuring of education in Great Britain through which the education system contributes to producing competent workers fit for the neoliberal age. Its members achieve this by offering extracurricular activities and all-day school child-care for working parents on the one hand and parenting classes through which the parents are meant to be more included in educational tasks on the other. The authors question how these education policy measures affect parents and children from different social classes and how they impact the respective neighborhoods. Through quantitative and semi-structured interviews, they reveal that these state interventions mainly work in favor of middle-class families and that they can contribute to the (re)production of socially unjust landscapes.

Christian Reutlinger takes on the perspective of children and adolescents and sets out to learn more about how they perceive and assess school as a central institution in their neighborhood. He views school as a social space in that he asks about the spatial appropriation processes, especially in the context of city neighborhood development. This concept of space consequently means that the relevant actors are constantly constructing their social spaces, including schools; consequently, the author asks to what extent schools are a reflection of the local neighborhood and whether they are a part of socio spatial problems or a solution for them. In finding an answer to that question, he had students from two different neighborhoods in St. Gallen, Switzerland, draw their social spaces into individual and subjective maps. The maps show that children and adolescents see them as spaces where they have the opportunity to participate in independent activities and in educational processes. In best case scenarios, schools provide not only educational spaces but also facilitate a wide variety of activities.

Anna Sliwka and Britta Klopsch examine how educational spaces for adolescents’ engagement could be designed and how schools could be redefined. They are convinced that learning should reach beyond merely acquiring knowledge and should instead include problem-solving skills and the power to act demanded by the manifold challenges encountered throughout life. What Sliwka and Klopsch call “learning engagement” could be formed through “deep learning” in authentic learning tasks and through curricula that foster solving real world problems. They introduce a number of projects geared in that direction, reaching from integrating the digital world into “learning worlds” in which young people plan and implement international projects themselves or in which extracurricular institutions and actors become part of school learning. The facilitators of such hybrid learning environments aim at linking traditional and non traditional, nonformal and informal learning environments and thus enhancing learning engagements.

Teaching staff and school management play important roles in everyday school life and their social and regional origins, their selection and assignments to schools through the education authorities are subject to many societal and education policy parameters. It is rather remarkable that this professional field underwent the process of feminization earlier than others. Jürgen Schmude and Sascha Jackisch have probed that topic in their empirical study on the developments in the German federal

state of Baden-Württemberg and concentrated on regional disparities as well as causal and correlative effects of women's participation in the teaching workforce. As a result, they are able to identify different feminization phases and types. When female teaching is seen as a process of innovation, urban-rural disparities in the process can be discerned that can be explained by particular geographical, social, economic, and legal conditions. If modern learning environments are to be developed, the teaching staff, the role they play, and their needs must be taken into consideration.

The contributors to this volume have revealed just how diverse "Geographies of Schooling" perspectives are. The book's reach, however, goes beyond taking a closer look at systems and structures. It also includes individual schools in their quarters, neighborhoods, and villages, as well as looking into the schools themselves. If schools are to be hybrid learning spaces, places in which children and adolescents are prepared to become individuals responsible for themselves and for their social and regional environment, a context-based perspective on school life is indispensable. The authors of "Geographies of Schooling" aim to contribute to this goal.

## Questions and Outlook

In sum, the authors of this book seek to offer new insights into current transformations of schools and schooling across different local, regional, and national settings in the international arena. A look at the various case studies reveals some general trends in the global transformation of education, with all their ambiguities and contradictions. One central theme in the text is the tension between homogenizing processes on the one hand and individualizing and localizing processes on the other.

Most education systems discussed in this book show a tendency towards a more homogeneous globalized education, directed by output orientation, market mechanisms, and competition. Apparently, the model of the highly standardized state school, which has been developed during the rise of the modern nation state, is challenged by a policy in support of a place-based, more localized school. The latter offers more space for the recognition and development of local cultures, norms, languages, and traditions. From this point of view, the multiplicity and diversity of cultures and traditions might finally mirror in the multiplicity of school cultures, curricula, contents, and schooling practices. But as the cases of Canada and Norway illustrate, marginalized groups and regions still struggle to find full recognition and visibility in the education systems of the respective majority.

However, the growing autonomy of schools and the shifting responsibilities to the local communities also bring new challenges in terms of equal opportunities and participation in society. In the past, responsibility fell on the public administration, usually represented by the ministry of education, not only to assure but also to enforce accessibility to formal education and the minimum standard quality of education in each school. However, the new place-based school policy founded on

norms and principles of new public management leaves this position of responsibility in an unclear vacuum. The slow withdrawal of state support from more localized schools creates dependency on municipal resources—financial, social, material, and cultural—that are unevenly distributed in space. The fishing village in Norway, the marginalized quarter in the banlieue, the local ethnic minority in Toronto, and the rural village in Northern Germany not only share the potential for development but also the threat of school closure and school deprivation due to the lack of local resources. Decentralization in the education system in these cases might enhance existing inequalities and lead to even more unjust landscapes of education.

The place-based school will probably be better embedded locally and will strengthen local cultures and traditions, eventually preparing children for their future lives in the community much better. Whereas in the past the standardized and homogenized national language, culture, and curricula would put young children at risk of alienation from the communities they were born into, a diversified place-based schooling might lead to isolation and deprive children of the opportunity of pursuing a career and a life elsewhere. The traditional critique of the modern school system, famously labeled “learning to leave,” (Corbett, 2007) might be turned into its opposite: “learning to stay.”

Schools and schooling are increasingly conceptualized in a more holistic approach, with the entire social system of education and learning in the community—children, teachers, head teachers, administrators, mayors, and families—taken into consideration. At this point, what impacts the opening of schooling will have on broader social developments—in the schools themselves, the families, the local communities, but also society at large—is still unclear.

But what will happen to education as a universal right if states continue to withdraw from the obligation to provide a functioning public education infrastructure across the entire territory? The resulting lack of financial and educational resources in many peripheral and disadvantaged communities will have to be substituted somehow. There is the danger that the pedagogical work in these schools will have to be done by volunteers, often women and mothers, so that eventually new (or old) gender inequalities might arise. Although voluntary community engagement in its different forms means a mobilization of local resources, it also appears to replace the growing absence of the centralized welfare state. Unconsciously, the high number of volunteers can pave the road for the complete withdrawal of the state from education. The burden of education is then shifted from the society to the community, the family, or the parents. For the disadvantaged—poor families, single parents, peripheral communities, and marginalized city quarters, just to name a few—that means the loss of the responsible party from whom to claim their children’s right to a qualitative formal education.

Last but not least, if the responsibility for education is increasingly shifted to the local level, who will be responsible for guaranteeing the quality standards of the schooling offered? If school closures leave parents feeling deprived of their child’s right to formal education, to whom can they address their claims—the head teacher? The mayor? The community council? The regional board of education? The central

government? If a local curriculum becomes too traditional, too “localist” in the view of single actors, where can they make their claims for a different curriculum that prepares their children for the world outside the community? Will they have to move their children into the private education sector? Is this accessible only for the advantaged?

From a global perspective, research on the geography of schooling is only just beginning. The authors of the present volume show that not only schools and schooling, but also the spatiality of schooling are embedded in constant processes of transformation.

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