## EDUCATION GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL THEORY: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO RESEARCH.

Andrew Wilkins & Antonio Olmedo (Eds.) Bloomsbury Academic. 2019, ISBN: 978-1-3500-4006-9 (pp. 258, hardback, £90)

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*Education Governance and Social Theory: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Research* focuses on the study of education governance, more specifically on its expansion as an area of research in the twenty-first century concerned with the fluid organization of education systems, relations and processes, against the background of wider political and economic developments unfolding at both national and global levels. The *Introduction,* by Wilkins and Olmedo, sets the scene for this co-edited collection by delving into the term 'education governance' in terms of its polyvalence, struggles over meaning, the governance turn, freedom through control, and similar accountability discourses. The book chapters are presented in four different sections according to data regimes; evaluation regimes; knowledge regimes; and institutional regimes. I will outline the main issues presented in each chapter.

In Chapter One, *Digitizing Education Governance*, Williamson focuses on the digitization of techniques of education governance, with such digital technologies gaining significance as non-human actors. 'Digital-first' companies, such as Pearson, are seeking to influence the direction of educational policy and practice via the setting up of a 'global digital learning platform'. These practices exemplify how new sources and forms of data politics and non-human algorithmic power are attempting to play a major role in education governance as Pearson seeks control over educational data production and its empirical narration. Thompson, on the other hand, in Chapter Two, *Learning Personalization*, problematizes the widely held belief in the education technology industry that digital personalization of learning is the next 'revolution', further critiquing the notion of technology as a problem. The author argues for attention on the effects of temporal politics, particularly for adaptive technologies that aim to personalize learning, while simultaneously paying attention to how subjectivity operates with the specifics of each technical assemblage. Chapter Three, *Dispositions and Situations of Education Governance*, by Sellar and Gulson, examines the role played in education governance by 'data infrastructures' that facilitate the generation, management, analysis and use of data. The authors offer two stories about 'making markets' and 'moralizing markets', an approach presenting multiple situated narratives about governing dispositions.

In Chapter Four, *Exploring the Role of School Inspectors in Implementing and Shaping Policy*, Baxter adopts a narrative approach to explore the role of the school inspector in England via a case study involving documentary evidence and qualitative interviews. Inspectors as policy implementers are constrained by actual rules and discourses of inspection that impinge on their everyday work. Inspectors

do not feel powerful as policy shapers, with a perception of being able to make change at a local rather than national level. In Chapter Five, *How Can Transnational Connection Hold?*, Piattoeva adopts an actor network theory approach to explore the materiality of transnational education governance, thus exposing a transnationally networked structure that forges on allies and connections to spread particular policy messages. There is a relational co-evolution and co-production of global education governance and numerical assessments, which in turn produce particular hierarchical power relations.

In Chapter Six, *Revealing Market Hegemony through a Critical Logics Approach*, Papanastasiou demonstrates how the hegemonic power of the market is expressed in the policy practices and governance dynamics of education. This is done via an analysis of the interpretation of the academy school's policy in the English context by local authority and school actors, which are shaped by hegemonic market discourses. In Chapter Seven, *Test-Based Accountability and the Rise of Regulatory Governance in Education*, Verger and Parcerisa reflect on test-based accountability as a key component of the increase of regulatory governance in education. A wide range of diverse drivers (economic, technological, political, and discursive) have contributed to the intense dissemination of test-based accountability solutions at the global level, notwithstanding the considerable divergences in relation to goals and instruments with test-based accountability as a core policy principle. Chapter Eight, *Making Education News in Chile*, is based in Chile. Santa Cruz and Cabalin explore the news-making process as a means of showing the role and impact of mediatization in education governance. An examination of the production of education news provides an understanding of how the journalistic field shapes the educational field. Media is implicated as a tool in education governance, with education journalists as key agents in the construction of policy education discourse in the education arena which is itself mediated by power relations.

In Chapter Nine, *Preschool Teacher Agency and Professionalism*, Kascak and Pupala write about the pre-school teaching profession in Slovakia, more specifically the evolution of and potential for teacher participation in education governance in the wake of the debate on pre-school education reform in Slovakia. Professional preschool teacher identity can be depicted from many perspectives – in conjunction with education governance, professionality, teacher agency, as well as economic and cultural fractions. Chapter Ten, *Ever Greater Scrutiny*, explores the relevance of the colonization thesis for education governance, with a specific focus on accountability-driven reform agendas. Murphy adopts the social theory of Habermas, while looking into ways in which the colonization thesis could benefit from a more down-to-earth approach to bureaucratic governance. Furthermore, the author propagates intellectual creativity via hybrid approaches to the theory-method relationship as being at the core of social theory. In the final chapter, *Transformation and Control*, Stevenson problematizes the pervading dominant discourse of school autonomy and the agency of school leaders in the English state school system for the past three decades. While questioning who governs education, the author sets out how the role of school leaders has evolved over an extended period of system reform and how school leaders are becoming managerial functionaries, thus re-engineering state schooling in England along marketized and privatized lines.

This book is a must-read for academics interested in 'education governance' as an area of research and an object of critical inquiry. Various issues are critically examined through a range of diverse theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches, simultaneously serving as examples of case studies bridging social theory and methodology, thus provoking a dialogue for reflective action.