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In the German speaking educational research, the concept of “Educational Governance” gains more and more importance. The concept has its origins in the field of sociology and political sciences. Over the past few years, a growing number of research projects use the Governance concept for analyses in educational contexts. Educational Governance research analyses how performance and social order (“soziale Ordnung”) are maintained, built and transformed in educational settings. In their book “Educational Governance als Forschungsperspektive. Strategien. Methoden. Ansätze”, Katharina Maag Merki, Roman Langer and Herbert Altrichter assemble a variety of different perspectives on Educational Governance research in the field of Educational Sciences. The 14 contributions are centred on methodological aspects as well as research strategies and approaches.

The first section of the book focuses on Educational governance and (school) effectiveness research. The two articles in this section cover two different perspectives: The first article written by Helmut Fend takes a theoretical, methodological point of view on how the concept of Educational Governance could be combined with school effectiveness research. He explores how ‘new’ ways of governance (“Neue Steuerung”) could be evaluated for their effects. In his conclusion, Fend argues that case studies and reconstructive research methods (“interpretative Verfahren”) offer a rich source for the analysis. However, these should be combined with quantitative research methods in order to generalize research results. In the second contribution, Katharina Maag Merki discusses the benefits and drawbacks of working with a quasi-experimental research design in the field of school effectiveness research. Taking her own research project on the introduction of central school leaving exams (“zentrale Abitur”) in two German Bundesländer (Hesse, Bremen) as an example, she discusses in how far a quasi-experimental design is suitable for educational governance research. She concludes that

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this combination is only partially fruitful and suggests that careful attention should be given to the integration of other methods and a quasi-experimental research design.

The second section of this volume focuses on how Educational Governance research could be used in different fields of analysis, e.g. in the field of further education, professionalization or political science. The first article by Julia von Blumenthal addresses the field of political science. After having highlighted core elements of governance in the field, Blumenthal critically reflects strengths and weaknesses of the concept. In her conclusion, Blumenthal outlines what these findings might mean for research in the field of education. Michael Schemman shows the potential of an Education Governance perspective in the field of further education. By taking a historical perspective (which also includes more recent developments), he outlines the governing structure of this field. He suggests that governance regimes could be analysed by using the so-called "Governance Equalizer" (Schimank, 2007). He demonstrates this by looking at two research projects which work with the "Governance Equalizer". He then draws conclusions for further research projects in the field of further education. In the last article of this section, Uwe Schimank argues that research in educational governance should include a sociological perspective of professionalization. Schimank takes a closer look at how New Public Management works on professionals in the field of education. Drawing on these considerations, Schimank develops an analytical perspective for empirical educational governance research in the field of professionalization.

The third section focuses on specific research methods, at the centre is the question in how far the chosen method is suitable for educational governance research. Based on empirical research projects, the authors provide concrete examples of how the chosen method is applied. As this section is very comprehensive, I will mainly focus on the research methods.

Inka Bormann uses discourse analysis ("Wissenssoziologische Diskursanalyse") in order to find out more about the symbolic dimensions of the "action coordination". One of her conclusions is that the use of discourse analysis in Educational Governance research helps to broaden the understanding of action coordination. Barbara Asbrand employs the documentary method ("dokumentarische Methode"). She uses group discussions with teachers in order to reconstruct governance processes at school level. Asbrand argues that the documentary method carries potential for Educational Governance research, e.g. as the method helps to analyse talk and action. Fabian Dietrich works with objective hermeneutics ("Objektive Hermeneutik") and highlights the potential and drawbacks of a reconstructive governance research. He takes a closer look at the latent meaning structures ("latente Sinnstrukturen") of the action coordination with regards to school inspection. Anne Bosche and Lukas Lehmann examine how changes in the Swiss governance of schools (Zurich) can be analysed by using the concept of educational governance. They focus on action coordination and examine a variety of documents from the 1960s and 1970s, for example statutes and laws in order to gain insight into formal contributions. Sebastian Niedlich, Markus Lindner and Thomas Brüsemeister use the

“contribution analysis” approach in order to examine cause-and-effect relationships of local educational management. The authors illustrate the challenges of developing a “Theory of Change” for 40 local authorities. They suggest starting at the level of the single local authorities and gradually develop a “Theory of Change”. Julia Warwas examines how subjective role definitions and organisational conditions are influential on governing strategies of head teachers. In her research project, she uses a specific quantitative approach (“iterative- partitionierende Clusterzentrenanalyse”). This approach allows her to differentiate between various governing types. Kathrin Dederling uses case studies in order to explore the potential of external consulting for school development processes. Dederling suggests that case studies carry high potential for reconstructing consulting processes, in particular if a variety of methods is used.

The last section of the compilation deals with the question how specific heuristics could be applied to educational governance research. At the example of their research project “Bedingungen für die erfolgreiche Institutionalisierung eines Qualitätsmanagementverfahrens an Schulen“, Doris Kunz Heim and Simone Rindlisbacher discuss the potential of the actor-centred institutionalism as a heuristics (“akteurzentrierter Institutionalismus als Heuristik”) for Educational Governance research. They also show ways of integrating this analytical approach into the methodological design of the study.

All in all, the compilation offers a very good insight into the broad field of Educational Governance research. It is one the first books in the German speaking research community which assembles a great variety of methodological aspects in the field of Educational Governance. Its strength lies in its well-structured overview of a complex and still developing field of research. It reflects an openness towards different discourses and research perspectives which does justice to the connectivity the concept of Educational Governance carries in itself. All in all, the compilation is a very useful resource for scholars in sociology or education who are interested in the field of Educational Governance research.