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Divided world versus one world: A comparative analysis of non-continuous text elements in school geography textbooks of international selection

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Abstract

Otherness is embodied in geography in regionalization. Regions with similar respectively different ecological, economical, social, and cultural features have been traditionally clustered on global scale in "worlds". While political and economical factors played an important role in distinguishing between the First, Second, and Third World during the Cold War, clustering developed and developing regions considers also additional aspects such as resources, education, or technology. Stressing more the aspects of convergence rather than the ones of divergence, contemporary discourses build on the idea of (education for) sustainable development in an undivided "one world". Textbooks for school geography contain along with the continuous text also a multitude of non-continuous text elements that carry an expressive and very contrastive iconography of the "own" and the "other". This paper deals with the question, how otherness is expressed through non-continuous text (e.g. maps, diagrams, cartoons, pictures etc.). We argue that otherness is often expressed through self-inclusion respectively self-exclusion of the own country on a global level. For that, the paper compares a sample of secondary school geography texts from Germany (Western context), Romania (post-socialist context), and Mexico (post-colonial context). Qualitative content analysis of the meta-text elements (Pingel 2010) was carried out. The results show that non-continuous text divides worlds by classifying and clustering on several scales, while cross-curricular coordinates contribute to a converging one world. The results also show

that a new regionalization based on concept of sustainable development seems to be emerging.

Key words: otherness, regionalization, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), geography

Introduction

Diversity often wears the label of otherness. It is part of the features of the landscape, of the characteristics of relief, of the anatomy or physiology of a city. Geography is a subject dealing with diversity in its most different forms often combining elements of the physical environment with those of society. When doing this perspective constantly switches from local to regional, national, continental, and/or global. Yet all countries strive to integrate themselves into a global context. Comparison, classification, clustering, inclusion, and exclusion are some of the steps marking the way to the positioning of the self. Still, finding the own place in the web of global interconnectedness may result as a challenge. Are we getting closer to each other or are we drifting further apart? Is there a converging or diverging view of the "one world" we all share? School subjects and their educational resources often offer simple yet powerful expressions of a nation's view on geopolitics and self-inclusion/self-exclusion. This paper has the ambition to explore how otherness is expressed through non-continuous text elements (e.g. maps, cartoons, pictures) in geography textbooks for the lower secondary education. It further seeks to contextualize otherness within subject-specific and cross-curricular (specifically Education for Sustainable Development) educational purposes.

Coordinates of otherness in geographical education

Space and place constitute the core of school geography. Patterns of spaces and places, such as aspects of nature and society, structure and process, connection and disconnection are introduced at different scales reaching from local to global. As a consequence, students learn about the features of the tropical rain forest in South America, Africa, and Asia, nomadism in Northern Africa, and agribusiness in the United States. They also learn that certain phenomena manifest themselves on several scales. Climate change affecting the planet also manifests itself on a continental, national, regional, and local scale. Thus, scaling is one central coordinate in school geography that introduces and presents unity and diversity.

The second central coordinate of school geography regarding diversity is regionalization. While scaling sets a spatial zoom, regionalization is a specific way to compare, categorize, and cluster space- and place-related diversity. Early regionalizations built on a specific kind of interaction between physical environment and society. The Pays-approach (Vidal de la Blache 1918) of the French school produced for example unique regions of people and place at different scales. During the 1960s physical features of the environment nurtured regionalization (Grigg 1967). Still, the most commonly known are single feature regions (Haggett 2001), a result of regionalization according to one feature of the physical or human environment.

Single feature regions are Western Europe, the Rust Belt, the touristic region of the Alps or the metropolitan region of Île de France.

The widely known division of the world according to cultural features is the post-Cold War world order of Huntington (1993, 1996) also reminds of single feature regions. In his work *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* the author divided the world into ten major civilizations: Western, Orthodox, Islamic, African, Latin American, Sinic, Hindu, Buddhist, Japanese, and Lone countries and non-major civilizations. In spite of its roots in political sciences, Huntington's world order sets a global framework of inclusion and exclusion that is expressed highly geographically. A similar regionalization emerged during the 1960s in the German geography. Inspired by the work of Hettner, Kolb (1962) divided the world into ten Kulturerdteile (Cultural Regions): Anglo-Saxon American, Latin America, Europe (the Occident), Russia, the Orient, Black Africa, Eastern Asia, Southern Asia, Southeastern Asia, and Australia. According to Kolb (1962) Kulturerdteile are subcontinental spaces shaped by unique features of their cultural development and the singular connection between their nature and culture. Kulturerdteile consider in addition the historical development of their respective spaces. In contrast to Huntington's post-Cold War world order, Kulturerdteile continue to shape German school geography. As a consequence, this framework of (self-)exclusion and inclusion constitutes a third major coordinate of otherness in geographical education.

Regionalization may result as an useful tool in categorizing, clustering, describing, understanding the world, and finding our place in it. However, contemporary societies seem to drift closer due to preceding globalization. More a convergent development, the European Union or the Andean Community of Nations stand for common interests, goals, but also challenges. The events of the last decades placed the North-South dialogue into new light. Since as early as the Earth Summit, Development Education (DE) entered different subjects, among others school geography (Tilbury 1997). However, disparities in development, global justice, intra- and inter-generational justice are just a few aspects of an interconnected planet. Sustainability and sustainable development combines aspects of ecological, economical, and social-cultural order when dealing with global issues on various scales from the local to the global. As a consequence, sustainability entered formal, non-formal, and informal education as Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (McKeown & Hopkins 2007). In contrast to the ecologically shaped Environmental Education (EE), ESD combines nature and people, physical and social environment, resources and production, generations and regions. Joining nature and society, geography is the school subject with highest affinity to topics and competences of ESD. The implementation of ESD into school geography has therefore been stressed since 1992 in several charters (Haubrich 1994) and declarations (Reinfried et al 2007) of the Commission on Geographical Education of the International Geographical Union. Thus, ESD is the fourth main coordinate of otherness in geographical education.

Sample and methods

This paper aims to map the way otherness is expressed in geography textbooks. Two subject-related (scaling, regionalization) and additional two cross-curricular (Cultural Regions, DE and ESD) coordinates served as a framework for mapping otherness.

The sample consisted of a total of ten (c.f. Textbook References) selected geography textbooks for lower secondary education (grades 5-9, students aged 10-15) from the German Land of Bavaria (five texts), Romania (four texts), and Mexico (one text). Geography is a compulsory subject in all three countries occupying 1-5 weekly hours in the graduation requirements. Two arguments support this sampling. First, the three countries stand for three different traditions of geographical education and scholarship, teacher training, and curriculum development. Second, (self-)exclusion and (self-)inclusion in the three countries reflects specific cultural features of developed (Bavaria), post-socialist (Romania), and post-colonial (Mexico) societies.

Given the nature of the subject, geography textbooks feature considerable amount of non-continuous text that complements the continuous text. Drawing upon the methodological guidelines for international comparative textbook research in geography education (Pingel 2010), content analysis was carried out for three forms of non-continuous text (maps, pictures, cartoons).

Otherness in Bavarian texts

Geography is part of the graduation requirements in Bavarian schools. When going to the Realschule (a type of secondary school with mainly vocational training) students are required to attend two geography classes each week in grades five to nine. School geography offers insights into selected topics of Physical and Human Geography, and exemplifies current development on different scales reaching from regional (Bavaria) through national (Germany) and continental to global.
Bavarian texts divide the world into Kulturerdteile. In spite of a traditional toponymy — Black Africa, Orient — all texts point out regions in transition between neighbouring Kulturerdteile reflecting hybrid structures and processes. However, Kulturerdteile only provide a general framework for global regionalization. In addition, there is a strong emphasis on the interconnectedness of cultures and a globally convergent development. A good example is migration. When introducing migration, one map (Kronfeldner et al 2012: 65) operates on supracontinental scale but the regionalization stops at national level (individual countries). The proportion of immigrants in individual countries draws certain lines of demographical growth and decline. Additionally, arrows indicate the main routes that connect the main emigration and immigration zones. The emerging pattern is a divided world and reflects a static picture of spatial distribution of development. Still, the dynamics of migration additionally explains how our world is changing. Flows induce changes in pattern, which both explains the way regionalization works, and why it is necessary.

In addition to the global scale, Bavarian texts also deal with otherness on continental, sub-continental, and regional scale. When introducing Europe, texts generally divide the continent according to the cardinal points into Northern, Western, Middle, Southern, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe (e.g. Kronfeldner et al 2009: 8, 9). Constructed from countries, the regions carry the fingerprints of a political division. Still, regionalizing Europe according to cardinal points is a neutral way of dividing the continent. Unfortunately there are few non-continuous text elements contrasting this regionalization on continental level. However, there is a series of maps (i.e. Kronfeldner et al 2009: 126, 127) depicting sub-national regions or cross-border cooperation between European regions. Diversity, disparity, divergence, and convergence appears in economical or cultural relations within Middle Europe or

cross-border cooperation between federal units (Bavaria, Saxony, Thuringia) and neighbouring countries (Czech Republic or Austria).

Subject-related coordinates polarize most of the maps in Bavarian geography texts. Still, there is a number of maps that complement scaling and regionalization and indirectly foster ESD and DE. These maps depict geographical structure and process on regional scale but rarely emphasize global interconnectedness or the three elements of sustainability and sustainable development in the same time.

Pictures introduce otherness and diversity on various scales. On the global scale one textbook (Kronfeldner et al 2012: 67) contrast two families. One picture from Japan and another one from Mali compare the life, assets, priorities, and wishes of these families from around the globe. A brief text explains what the families consider to be their most valuable possessions, symbols of success, and which ways they believe their children's feature can be secured. Diversity around the globe exemplifies heterogeneity of lifestyle, needs, and future.

Otherness and diversity also emerge within the Kulturerdteile. Pictures of Omani and Indian businesswomen representing a globally converging lifestyle draw a parallel to the traditional world and gender role in the Orient exemplified by a Pakistani woman wearing a black veil (Kronfeldner et al 2010: 68, 69; Kronfeldner et al 2011: 74, 75). Students are invited to discuss about parallel worlds emerging on different scales.

Several pictures of Turkish immigrants and their descendants introduce a converging world and challenges of interation (Kronfeldner et al 2010: 84, 85). A school class with immigrants from several countries from Ingolstadt, Bavaria (Kronfeldner et al 2009: 20, 21), reflects how a converging world reaches the immediate surroundings and everyday experiences of the students. It is the individual histories we live, experience, or merely observe that shape our culture, worlds, and its limits.

In contrast to the maps, pictures enable a stronger integration of subject-specific and cross-curricular coordinates. When dealing with production and consumption in China, the pictures not only stand for concurring lifestyles (cheap workforce on the edge of survival, urban population with higher income) within one country, but also for global convergence and divergence. The urban dwellers enjoy the globalization-induced economic growth in China. Contemporary industrial slavery is a cost of globalizing China pushing and keeping cheap workforce in poverty (Kronfeldner et al 2011: 98, 99). The pictures combine scaling with DE. It points out regional disparities of economic and social order, but it also sensibilizes for intra-generational and global responsibility.

Intra-generational global equity is just one aspect of DE and scaling. The conflict of the last decades in the Orient explains political, economical, and cultural ties on global scales, and highlights some consequences for several regions of the globe. However, some pictures complement the intra-generational global equity by intergenerational equity. A historical drawing reminds of slave trade (Kronfeldner et al 2010: 53), while a black and white picture remins of the apartheid (Kronfeldner et al 2010: 48). Both stand for dynamics in time and expresse how history shapes the global through the local and the ties between individual locals.

The globalizing world progressively faces conflicts between ecological, economical, social, and cultural priorities. Some textbooks also focus on ways to deal with a globally equitable sustainable future, and introduce examples of international cooperation. Logos stand for fairly traded food (FairTrade, Kronfeldner et al 2011: 55) or carpets manufactured without child labor (Rugmark, Kronfeldner et al 2011: 79). The cross-curricular coordinates of geographical education (DE and ESD) state an alternative way of understanding otherness and diversity, and dealing with them differently.

Cartoons are the third non-continuous text element shaping otherness and diversity in geography textbooks. In contrast to the maps, cartoons support almost exclusively the cross-curricular aspects of geographical education. Development issues, global justice, and inter- and intra-generational equity work with juxtapositions of concepts such as First World vs. Third World (Kronfeldner et al 2012: 79) or ozone depletions vs. hunger (Kronfeldner et al 2012: 78). In doing so they foster critical thinking, and the development of ESD skills (i.e. Gestaltungskompetenz c.f. de Haan 2008). Cartoons are among the most expressive and synthetical ways of expressing otherness and its consequences.

Otherness in Romanian texts

Lower secondary education in Romanian schools stipulates in its graduation requirements 1-2 weekly hours for geography for the grades 5-8 (students aged 10-14). Geography for lower secondary education encompasses general Physical and Human Geography, geography of Europe and of the extra-European continents, and the geography of Romania. Textbooks are generally rich in maps, feature a certain number of pictures, but do not include any cartoons.

As a consequence of transition from command economy to free market economy and the respective social and cultural changes described as transformation (Pickles and Smith 1998), Romania has been on the search of its place in the world. Shaped by a materialistic philosophy, school geography favoured physical aspects of the nature. Therefore, even twenty year after the fall of communism, Romanian geography textbooks hardly introduce any regionalization based on social, economical or cultural aspects. An exception is a map depicting the spatial dimensions of the North and South (Anastasiu et al 2000: 187). While Australasia is part of the North, newly industrializing countries still belong to the global South. In addition to this political and ideological division (partly following some borders of Huntington's world order), the map features a second regionalization based on economical indicators of development (six levels of development). In this classification, the former Second World (now part of the global North) shares a development category with Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Libya or Saudi Arabia. The map is a first attempt to reason and prove why Romania is part of the developed world. Even if the map merges several theories and concepts of global regionalization, the authors draw upon economic data to make their point.

Similar to the Bavarian example, maps in the Romanian textbooks often express (self-)inclusion and (self-)exclusion. Regionalizing on sub-continental scale — in this case dividing Europe — is a good indicator of otherness. While the Bavarian sample divided Europe according to the cardinal points into Northern, Western, Middle,

Southern, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe (Büttner et al 2007: 11), the Romanian text works with the same algorithm of regionalization but only distinguishes between five regions: Northern, Atlantic, Central, Mediterranean, and Eastern Europe (Anastasiu et al 2000: 65). Romania and Moldavia are the easternmost members of Central Europe. This regionalization expresses Romania's self-inclusion into developed Europe, and its self-exclusion from Southeastern Europe, a region often associated with the Balkans and underdevelopment (Todorova 1997). In contrast to the above example, there is no additional regionalization based on economic indicators to support this division of Europe. As a reminiscence of the materialistic worldview during socialism, cardinal points still stand for the „safe" and „neutral" regionalization without the necessity of providing additional hard evidence. Cardinal points indeed serve as the main criterion of regionalization on continental and sub-continental level of extra-European continents, as it is the case of Africa (Mândruț 2008a: 78), Asia (Mândruț 2008a: 27) or the USA (Mândruț 2008a: 124).

Romania's search for its place in the (developed) world becomes evident from scaling and regionalization within the subject dealing with national geography (Geography of Romania, eighth grade). Not only cardinal points, but also geographical coordinates enable a „safe" and „objective" proof of Romania's centrality. A set of maps explain that Romania is located at the intersection of 25°E longitude and 45°N latitude. Regarding longitude, Romania is in the middle of Europe, and in the middle of the Northern hemisphere regarding latitude. In their attempt to prove that Romania is part of the developed Europe, the textbook authors focus on the self and exclude others. Materialistic-Marxist philosophy along with mathematical and cartographical evidence, serve as grounds when proving inclusion.

The textbook dealing with Romania's geography introduces a whole range of thematic maps reaching from main relief units, precipitation, protected areas, settlement system to air transportation. All maps are on the same scale (national) and of the same size. In spite of the national focus of the course, Romanian school geography seems to still be following Hettner's chorology of the early 20th century. There are many aspects of physical or social order featured in the chapters, but rarely there is a relation between these explaining cause-effect of human-nature interaction so central to geography. As a consequence, the maps in Romanian geography textbooks not only stand for a dual perspective of the world (Romania and the rest), they fail to foster cross-curricular coordinates of geographical education. Romanian school geography is apparently not yet ready to break with the positivistic-materialistic safety of nature science and open towards cultural and social aspects rooted in social sciences.

Pictures generally visualize and illustrate selected features of geographical structures and processes. They contribute to the construction of discrete parallel worlds mainly on national scale (countries) that rarely connect. The role of the pictures is limited to pointing out specific and unique features of a specific geographical aspect that helps students to easily and correctly identify a country. Some examples are tulips for the Netherlands, fjords for Norway or watches for Switzerland. The same algorithm supports the contrastive illustration of the classification of humans by race (Ionașcu & Dumitru 2011: 115). Some pictures show the effects of pollution trying to make the first step to implement EE, rarely ESD.

Otherness in Mexican texts

Geography in Mexican lower secondary schools (escuela secundaria) is taught in five hours weekly only during the first year (seventh grade, students aged 13-14). „Geography of Mexico and the World" is a compact course that summarizes the geography of six years of primary education, and offers a synthesizing overview of the national geography (Mexico) and the world. Therefore, the textbook dedicates its main attention to the national and global scale. Additionally, case studies sometimes operate on sub-national regional or even on local scale. Similar to the Romanian textbooks, Mexican texts are rich in maps, feature a certain number of pictures, but do not include any cartoons.

The analyzed textbook explains the core topics of Mexican and world geography using a fairly high number of maps. Generally there is a set of two thematic maps — at global and national scale — illustrating selected structures and processes. Otherness and diversity appears first as political division according to national state borders (Álvarez et al 2006: 258). (Self-)inclusion and exclusion is constructed on economical proof (HDI - Human Development Index) on continental scale (Álvarez et al 2006: 222). Mexico is considered to be part of North America along with the USA and Canada. Additionally, a map of Mexico points out disparities of development based on HDI values on regional scale (Álvarez et al 2006: 227). Another example of Mexican inclusion into the developed world is a map explaining the degree of industrialization around the globe. The map compares countries (national scale) and distinguishes between four types of countries: weakly or not industrialized, semi-industrialized, recently industrialized, and highly industrialized ones (Álvarez et al 2006: 202). While some European countries (Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France) and Australia are highly industrialized countries, Mexico positions itself in the category of recently industrialized countries along with Canada, USA, Russia, and the majority of former communist Europe. Additionally, the map indicates the main industrial areas of the world. Along with the American Rust Belt, Central Europe, the metropolitan areas of Santiago de Chile, São Paulo-Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires-Montevideo, the Mexican industrial region of Mexico City-Guadalajara also becomes part of the industrial center of the globe.

Even if the authors stress the economical power of Mexico, there is a clear tendency to dissociate the self from the world. A map explaining the spatial distribution of the main races and ethnical groups around the world classifies the Mexican population as mestizo. This is an example of inclusion into Latin America in contrast to the USA, Canada or Argentina depicted as being having Caucasian population. An additional map at sub-national scale explains the segregation of population according to indigenous groups on the Yucatan and in the Northern parts of Central America. The Mexican regionalization and scaling is a mosaic of (self-)inclusion and (self-)exclusion not unconditionally motivated by the urge to belong to the developed world. It is an inclusion maintaining the diversity and otherness.

Pictures illustrate geographical structures and processes but often contrast them on a regional, national, sometimes even sub-national scale. Similar to the Bavarian textbook, in several cases there is a juxtaposition of the traditional and the modern. Changes in the lifestyle, patterns of consumption or communication emerge from forces of globalization and are a direct effect of Mexican economical development

and strength. These pictures (Álvarez et al 2006: 248, 250) testify for a converging world undergoing globalization. On the other hand, there are the traditional Mexico, the indigenous peoples (Álvarez et al 2006: 250), the regionalization on global scale according to race and ethnicity. The pictures in the textbooks show a country fighting to preserve indigenous diversity through inclusion of all population groups into a Mexican nation. Thus, the pictures strongly support a justification of past and present, of development that does not want to (officially) overwrite history and exclude „less developed" regions or groups of population.

Both maps and pictures polarize along the coordinates of regionalization and scaling. Similar to the Romanian sample, isolated elements of a growing EE are carried both by maps and pictures. In contrast to the other textbooks, the Mexican perspective does not feature any elements of DE, a consequence of the specific post-colonial condition. Dependency seems to be progressively replaced by a desire of active self-positioning in the global context without any need of affiliation and belonging.

Divided World vs. One World?

The central aim of the paper was to explore how otherness is expressed through meta-text elements (e.g. maps, cartoons, pictures) in geography textbooks for the lower secondary education. Four coordinates of geographical education, two of subject-related and other two of cross-curricular nature, served as a framework when mapping representations of otherness.

Scaling and regionalization polarize most representations of otherness in the selected texts. Diversity is coded on different scales reaching from the local to the global. While some texts work consequently on two main scales (national and global in Mexico), others mainly exemplify by introducing otherness in myriad ways and on several scales (Bavaria). In addition, texts from the three selected countries reflect unique strategies of (self-)inclusion and (self-)exclusion, depicting of the self and of the other. Bavarian texts stress global interconnectedness and point out that there are many possibilities to regionalize and deal with diversity. An ideological division of the world is not always part of the non-continuous text. Romanian texts (still) construct on a materialistic-marxist philosophy the country's belonging to the developed world. Physical features (still) serve as hard evidence in contrast to social, economical, or cultural aspects. The Mexican text reflects no urge to prove belonging to a specific „world", its non-continuous text reorganizes the world according to its own perspective. In doing so, Mexico becomes part of certain global patterns through inclusion (i.e. recently industrialized states) or exclusion (e.g. mestizo population). Cross-curricular coordinates (DE, ESD) of geographical education hardly polarize otherness. Non-continuous text seems to focus on subject-related aspects, with the exception of cartoons that support global inter- and intra-generational equity. Maps are the most common non-continuous text elements expressing diversity and otherness. Pictures often exemplify diversity but rarely contrast otherness. Cartoons mainly support DE and ESD.

Non-continuous text in geography textbooks from Bavaria, Romania, and Mexico divides worlds by classifying and clustering on several scales. Still, several elements stress converging development on global scale. Specifically cross-curricular

coordinates contribute to a converging one world. Further research on continuous text could offer a clearer image of dividing or unifying worlds in school geography.

The results also show that a new regionalization – one of the most powerful tools of constructing otherness in geography – is emerging. Culture, one of the traditional criteria of constructing otherness (Johnson and Coleman 2012) is complemented by economical, ecological and social aspects in an inter- and/or intra-generational framework. Geographical Education for Sustainable Development, as the Lucerne Declaration (Reinfried et al 2007) requires it, seems to have initiated the reshaping of school geography.

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