

## EDITORIAL

# Insights into Spanish Geography Education

**Péter Bagoly-Simó** ✉

*Zeitschrift für Geographiedidaktik* | *Journal of Geography Education* (ZGD) continues to serve as the flagship journal of Geography Education in Germany. Therefore, its content may be considered a seismograph of debates in the discipline. Over time, the journal's profile remained sensitive to the discipline's theoretical, methodological, and applied challenges.

In a longitudinal study, BAGOLY-SIMÓ and HEMMER (2017, 2018) found that the empirical turn affected the journal's profile to the detriment of theoretical and conceptual contributions. Also, the share of international authors introducing ZGD's readership to alternative perspectives on Geography Education decreased dramatically.

ZGD's present issue premieres a series of special issues aiming to address the challenges uncovered in the longitudinal study (BAGOLY-SIMÓ & HEMMER 2017, 2018) with the finality to diversify the journal's scope and profile.

The current issue explores trends in Spanish Geography Education. Three decades ago, ZGD published two contributions acquainting the German readership with facets of Geography in Spanish formal education.

HERNANDO (1988) painted a picture of school Geography's status and challenges in the Spanish society after the democratic transition from the Francoist dictatorship to an open society. One of the key pillars of the overall opening of Spanish society was, according to HERNANDO (1988), the introduction of a liberal model in formal education based on educational objectives. However, the modest reform encountered traditional ecologies in the institutions of formal education. Teachers, textbooks, and teacher training continued in a conservative tradition showing only limited openness to change and novel pedagogical formats.

Against the background of the same historical, societal, and pedagogical background, GÓMEZ and GUIJARRO (1988) dissect the impact of objective-based pedagogical concepts on Geography. The authors argued that geographers neglect curriculum theory and maintain a geographical education serving a sentiment of belonging to the homeland (*sentimiento de patria*) and a pedagogy of the environment. In doing so, however, the focus remains on equipping students with as much academic geographical knowledge as possible instead of reflecting on the type of knowledge future citizens need to deal with the challenges of daily life.

The articles included in the present special issue enable readers to glimpse at some of the challenges Spanish Geography Education encounters three decades later. In a certain way, both the papers published in 1988 and those accepted in 2020 tackle the educational contribution of Geography in uncertain times and in light of the environmentalist tradition.

SEBASTIÁ and TONDA (2020) contextualize Zygmunt Bauman's concept of liquid society or modernity within Geography and Geography Education. Following a Popperian approach, the authors contrast theoretical reflections with spatial experien-

ces to establish a set of possible points of reference for Geography teachers in ever-changing and uncertain times. In a grand scheme of things, the authors address the matters approached by GÓMEZ and GUIJARRO (1988) concerning the educational value of our discipline in times of societal upheaval.

In contrast, FERNÁNDEZ ÁLVAREZ (2020) looks into Spanish Geography's environmental tradition by analyzing the curricular representation of landscapes. Resting on the German and, subsequently, the French schools on geographical scholarship dedicated to landscapes, the concept continues to shape Spanish Geography both in academia and as a school subject. Along these lines, the author reflects on

the metamorphosis of landscape-related content experienced in both primary and compulsory secondary education between contextualizing scaffold and essential content.

Publishing scholarly work rooted in rich linguistic traditions in a foreign language inevitably leads to a (considerable) loss in translation. Aware of the challenges such endeavors bear, the editors still encourage authors to enrich the ZGD's scope and profile by adding their theoretical, conceptual, and methodological perspectives to the German-dominated discourse. It is the international dialogue and the multiplicity of perspectives that allows us to grow as a discipline in our national contexts and beyond.

## References

- BAGOLY-SIMÓ, P., & HEMMER, I. (2017). Geographiedidaktische Forschungen im Spiegel von ZGD 1973–2016. *Zeitschrift für Geographiedidaktik | Journal of Geography Education (ZGD)*, 45, pp. 19–42.
- BAGOLY-SIMÓ, P., & HEMMER, I. (2018). Kontinuität und Diskontinuitäten. 25 Jahre geographiedidaktische Forschung in GuiD/ZGD. In M. DICHEL, L. KESSLER, F. PETTIG & F. REINHARDT (eds.), *Grenzen markieren und überschreiten – Positionsbestimmungen im weiten Feld der Geographiedidaktik. Tagungsbeiträge zum HGD-Symposium 2017 in Jena. Geographiedidaktische Forschungen (Band 69)* (pp. 38–46). Münster: Selbstverlag HGD.
- FERNÁNDEZ ÁLVAREZ, R. (2020). Landscape in Geography Education. An Analysis of the Curriculum Contents of Spanish Primary and Compulsory Secondary Education. *Zeitschrift für Geographiedidaktik | Journal of Geography Education (ZGD)*, 48, pp. 139–157.
- GÓMEZ, A. L., & GUIJARRO, A. (1988). Curriculare Revolution, Wissenschaft und Didaktik. *Geographie und ihre Didaktik*, 16, pp. 182–187.
- HERNANDO, A. (1988). Merkmale und Bestrebungen der geographischen Bildung in Spanien. *Geographie und ihre Didaktik*, 16, S. 23–32.
- SEBASTIÁ ALCARAZ, R., & TONDA MONLLOR, E. M. (2020). Geography Education in the Liquid Society. *Zeitschrift für Geographiedidaktik | Journal of Geography Education (ZGD)*, 48, S. 123–138.