Conference Agenda

Session

01-SES 22: SWG 4_1: School Funding and the Rise of the State

Time: Monday, 21/June/2021: 2:00pm - 3:30pm
Location: ZOOM 1

Session Chair: Clémence Cardon-Quint, Bordeaux University
Session Chair: Johannes Westberg, Örebro University
Session Chair: Damiano Matasci, University of Geneva
Session Languages: English
SWG 4 Panel

https://zoom.us/j/91729398109?pwd=ceE1YU0JqTEkrOWl0ZzFYZU5xZGhtQT09

Presentations

For The Benefit Of The Church And The State: Designing A Public School In Ancien Regime Switzerland

Gabriela Wuetrich
University of Zurich, Switzerland

In the context of enlightenment debates, elementary education became a major concern in some parts of Switzerland in the second half of the 18th century. In this context, the Zurich church authorities carried out a survey among the parsons of their dominion to evaluate „the state of education“. One of the most persistent complaints were the small salaries of the teachers on the countryside, inhibiting them from extending both their skills and the duration of the school year. That is why already in 1771/2, some of the parsons not only demanded more financial support from the central authorities but also a centrally organised teacher training seminar. Probably as a consequence of the survey, which definitively revealed these inequalities, the central church authorities mandated a new school ordinance for the rural schools in their dominion recommending in the combination of the teacher’s with lay church offices like cantors or sacristans to improve the teachers’ salaries, on the one hand. On the other, they established a central school fund to support poorer rural schools both in their own political dominion as well as in the collective dominion of Thurgau where they were in control of the protestant church organisation. Only some 30 years later, in the short-lived Helvetian Republic, the minister of education Philipp Albert Stapfer carried out another survey among the teachers. Comparing their self-reported salaries with the numbers given by the parsons in 1771/2, first results show a divergent development between Zurich and Thurgau: While the Zurich authorities had the means to improve the teacher’s salaries with extending the contributions not only from the central school fund, but also from other central and/or district-level funds, the parishes and villages in Thurgau started to establish communal funds. The latter were partly initiated by the very parsons who filled in the 1771/72 survey, and specifically entrusted for the school to guarantee free education. Thus, in Zurich a tendency towards centralized public financing can be observed already in the Ancien Regime, while in Thurgau, the local communes started to finance public education. This divergence may be grounded in the differing political and judicial organisations of the two areas, the former being a centrally organised city state, while the latter was called a “museum of the Middle Ages” with a complicated mixture of lay and clerical political authorities on different judicial levels, indirectly enabling a larger communal autonomy at the time.

Thomas Piketty "Capital Et Idéologie" : A Reading For Historians Of Education ?

Clémence Cardon-Quint
Bordeaux University, France

The publication of Capital et Idéologie by the economist Thomas Piketty in 2019 follows the publication in 2013 of Capital au XXle siècle. In this book, he analyses the evolution of income and wealth inequalities between countries and within countries while extending the reflection to the political-ideological developments that have accompanied these transformations. This paper proposes a "situated" reading of this work, by a historian working on school funding.

This paper will first recall the characteristics of the historical narrative written by Thomas Piketty. It is an economic history based on a vast corpus of longitudinal data - the result of a collective work. This narrative is neither deterministic nor teleological, since the author constantly insists on the plurality of possible trajectories based on the same socio-economic situations. Finally, it is a committed history: the last chapter of the book takes a resolutely normative turn by proposing a new conception of social justice, and in particular of educational justice.

The second part of the paper will specifically focus on the analyses dedicated to education inequalities, especially for the contemporary period, from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries. Thomas Piketty underlines the historical link between the expansion of national education systems and the increase in state resources, made possible by the development of progressive and redistributive taxation. He also questions the incompleteness of the managerial changes brought about by New Public Management? In this book, Thomas Piketty sketches out another path: that of social inequalities in trajectories and learning, which would be driven by economic and financial factors. We will show how these reflections - which are in line with the contributions of the political economy of education - can open up new avenues of research for historians working on school funding.


Esther Cyna
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School funding is inevitably linked to questions of access, fairness, and equity in educational opportunities. In the United States, school finance systems vary from state to state, and even from school district to school district. Because school funding is partially based on property tax, districts with high property wealth have more resources than school districts in poor neighborhoods. In Halifax County, North Carolina, a single street separates the wealthier, whiter school district of Roanoke Rapids from the impoverished, rural, and majority Black school district of the wealthier, whiter school district of Roanoke Rapids from the impoverished, rural, and majority Black school district of
Halifax County Schools. This paper tackles the question of inequitable school funding not from the standpoint of law and policy alone, but seeks to historicize the many processes of resource allocation for schoolchildren in the state of North Carolina.

North Carolina has the kind geographic diversity that is crucial for understanding school finance inequality. My paper will present examples from four case studies, including two rural and two urban and suburban counties: Halifax, Robeson, Durham and Charlotte. I analyze local, county and state decisions about resource distribution, and show that public officials maintained inequitable funding mechanisms that discriminated against communities of color, for example by choosing to allocate funds in proportion to property wealth rather than student population. I also ask how historical actors have addressed educational inequalities over time, and how local governments, courts and legislatures responded to these challenges.

The stories of these North Carolina counties allow us to see that school finance is not just inequitable because it is based on property tax, although many have recognized that this foundational structure entrenches inequalities between districts, and that district line manipulation often makes it a weapon to deepen these inequalities over time. It is also a political process, and one that has been interconnected with racial segregation—in Durham, for example, county commissioners crafted special white enclaves called “city-out areas” that fell within the geographical limits of the urban school district, but belonged to the suburban district. These isolated pockets, with the fiscal consequence of contributing tax money to the suburban district while benefiting from city services in sanitation, sewage, etc., only existed for schools, and persisted until 1992. The four districts highlight the racist dimension of school finance systems that local and state actors have devised over time.

In an effort to propose a social history of school finance reform efforts, a topic that has been mostly dominated by legal scholars, this paper will emphasize the importance of county governance in the allocation of school funds, as well as grassroots movements that have sought to challenge inequitable school funding through different strategies in the second half of the 20th century. Focusing on historical actors allows me to expose different layers of decision-making and discrimination in the distribution of resources.
Conference Agenda

Session

01-SES 23: SWG 4_2: Strategies to Tackle the Scarcity of Resources and Their Effects on Education Provision

Time:  Monday, 21/June/2021; 4:00pm - 5:30pm
Location: ZOOM 1

Session Chair: Clémence Cardon-Quint, Bordeaux University
Session Chair: Damiano Matasci, University of Geneva
Session Chair: Johannes Westberg, Örebro University
Session Languages: English
SWG 4 Panel

https://zoom.us/j/96938078718?pwd=cjUybUowZ2RKQURIV0J5MXozSHRGUT09

Presentations

Danish Teachers’ Allotted Farms: Educational Politics, Pedagogical Tools and the Funding of Mass Schooling, 1780–1900

Christian Larsen

The Danish National Archives, Denmark

This paper considers the educational and pedagogical history of the allocation of farms to Danish schoolteachers during the transitional stage of the 1814 School Acts, underlining the importance of educational funding for mass schooling in Denmark.

Teachers have been central to Danish educational history, but the focus has been on the educational dimension, reflecting our present understanding of teachers as having only one occupation (in the classroom), with their salary in cash being their sole income. However, 19th century teachers in rural areas of Denmark were farmers too. In Denmark, the reform period 1780–1820 brought reforms and changes to rural primary schools. The reforms created a financial foundation for rural schooling as well for teachers in the form of a nationwide payroll system based on a combination of free housing and a piece of land (school farm) together with payment in kind and monetary remuneration. This form of salary with payment in kind lowered schooling costs, thereby enabling the parish school boards who paid for schooling to adjust their expenditure according to the local conditions and economy. Thus, amongst other things, school farms played an important role during the transitional stage of implementing mass schooling in rural Denmark.

The farm and plot tied rural teachers closely to rural communities and influenced their living conditions throughout the 19th century, effectively turning them into smallholders. However, clear expectations were set by the government and educationalists, whereby teachers were envisaged as being pedagogical pioneers in the agricultural area, bridging the gap between government reforms and peasants. Teachers were expected to use their educational funding as a pedagogical tool to transform peasants (traditionalist farmers with cultural roots in feudal times) into farmers – modern, capital-producing and entrepreneurial farmers. In other words, teachers were “teachers of the people” (“Volkslehrer”) doubling as ideal farmers, and schools represented ideal farms.

The paper will, using school farms as an example, examine the relationship between state and local school districts from the reform era of the 1780s until the sale of school farms following the 1899 School Act. The first main research questions concern the political and pedagogical debate on the intended role of this educational funding and teachers as role models and exemplary farmers (Topic 3: School finance between state and local districts). The second main question deals with how teachers translated these expectations into everyday practice on their school farms. Thus, the paper underlines, firstly, the importance of this form of educational funding for the emergence of mass schooling in rural districts, and secondly, gives us new perspectives on the history of educational funding and our interpretation of the 19th century teaching profession (Topic 4: New perspectives on the history of educational funding (open section)).

Reforming Education with Limited Means: The Case of School Journeys in Portugal, 1894-1960

Inês Félix

Umeå university, Sweden

The proliferation of progressive education ideas and movements aiming to produce emancipated and productive people and the nation-states’ agenda of national modernization through education prompted school reforms across the globe at the turn of the 20th century. This was also the case of Portugal who promulgated an extensive reform of secondary schooling in 1894 requiring new modes of teaching and learning to develop the child as a whole and calling for the use of active and scientific methods, such as school journeys. However, the enactment of the reform, according to which these activities were to occur, required substantial financial means that the country lacked. Indeed, despite the perceived importance of school journeys for the social regeneration of the Nation, given that they were considered “one of the most powerful and effective means for physical, intellectual and moral culture the school has” (Faria de Vasconcelos 1923, 87), their implementation faced considerable financial limitations.

One the one hand, the aim of this paper is to show the ways in which school journeys were financed amid constant financial constraints. Particularly, the inventiveness of the Portuguese secondary schools to comply with the State’s demand to carry out those activities notwithstanding failing to provide the financial means to do so; the State’s appropriation of the created strategies as to avoid increasing the overall budget for secondary education; and their persistence after the Ministry of Education’s directive to have school journeys financed by the Portuguese Youth’s budget from 1936 onwards. On the other hand, it also aims to generate a discussion on education history methods through the particular example of school journeys’ funding in secondary schooling, Portugal.

Considering the premise that “little is known about actual developments at the ‘chalk-face’", Depaepe argued that education historians have been mainly focusing on discourses concerned with education policy, theories and curriculum which has resulted in “blind spots towards pedagogical reality at the micro-level” (Depaepe 2000, 9). This “reality”, however, is less about knowing what happened and more to bring together reported practices with those discourses, i.e. to regard the ‘organisational and structural framework of pedagogical practice rather than simply the cultural legacy and social function of education” in education history (Depaepe 2000, 11).

Indeed, by bringing together the regulatory and practice levels through the intertwined analysis of education legislation, education press and secondary school principals’ annual reports, this paper not only contributes to the understanding of those two levels’ interplay concerning the implementation of school journeys in the grammar of the Portuguese secondary schools as it also sheds light into how structural education reforms were executed with limited means by focusing on the schools’ responses and strategies engendered to overcome immense financial limitations.
The Educational Economics of the Right to Education by UNESCO in the Immediate Post-War Period: An Archival Exploration

Stefanie Kestelooot
University of Luxembourg, Belgium

The end of the Second World War marked the start of a new era, with worldwide support for a Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in December 1948. By signing the Universal Declaration, the Member States of the United Nations pledged to promote a series of universal values. As part of the UN, UNESCO made a major effort to disseminate the Declaration and its content globally, at a national, regional and local level. The idea of “building peace in the minds of men and women” and encouraging equal rights was central to UNESCO’s mission. An archival exploration of the correspondence material of UNESCO’s secretariat, available at the UNESCO archives, offers an insight into the continuous struggle faced by the staff for the creation and implementation of educational initiatives on human rights.

One focus of UNESCO’s work was the area of fundamental education. Early general correspondence found related to this topic reveals the continuous flow of communication between the different UNESCO departments, especially the office of the Director-General and the Departments of Mass Communication and Education. The discussions were mainly centred on the development of centres for fundamental education. The location to choose, the content and methodology to use, and the appropriate strategy to raise the funds needed for the continued implementation of regional centres of fundamental education, were just some of the issues addressed.

The initial financial and ideological support from the Member States seems to have been slowly replaced by budgetary constraints and political opposition. A network of international experts on fundamental education helped promote UNESCO’s initiatives to possible funders with a view to creating twelve fundamental education centres all over the world. Their contribution was seen as vital for the implementation of the project. Despite the hard work and lobbying activities, only two of the initially planned twelve centres were established.

Through this focus on fundamental education, I will argue that, despite the worldwide support for this philosophical and humanistic ideal, political and economic interests soon came to dominate the transition of this initial project to local communities, creating imbalances in relations within and between nations. Consequently, the dissemination and promotion of the UDHR was subject to a wide range of individual translations by UNESCO’s Member States. This only enlarged the difficult task for the intergovernmental organisation to mediate the development of peace in the minds of men and women.