

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

zoom inks will appear 15 minutes before the start of the session

Session Chair: Damiano Matasci, University of Geneva

Session Chair: Johannes Westberg, Örebro University

Session Languages: English

SWG 4 Panel

<https://zoom.us/j/91729398109?pwd=cE1YU0JqTEkrOWI0ZzFYZU5xZGhtQT09>

Presentations

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

Gabriela Wuethrich 

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 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 Helvetic 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 XX^e 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 transformation of the partisan divide and the role played by diplomas in the evolution of the political field in Europe and the United States. Finally, he shows how inequalities in education, which persist in liberal democracies, reflect and, at the same time, fuel the new rise in inequalities which started in the 1980s.

Finally, the paper will comment on the shifts this narrative operates, away from the current canons and topics of history of education. In the French context, the work published in 1968 by Antoine Prost constructed, for generations of historians, the reading grid from which to decipher the evolution of the school system from the nineteenth century to the mid-1960s, from the juxtaposition of socially compartmentalized streams to a "meritocratic" organization, in successive degrees. Adversely, the history of the relationship between school and social structure since the 1970s offers singular difficulties. How should we interpret the persistence and even growth of social inequalities at schools, at odds with the politically consensual credo of equal opportunity? Is it the mere confirmation of the 'reproduction' mechanisms described by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron in 1970? Shall we accuse the rigidity of a system where anything can be reformed save pedagogy? Or point out 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.

A Social History of School Finance Reform: Movements for Educational Equity in North Carolina, 1968-1997

Esther Cyna^{1,2} 

¹Teachers College, Columbia University; ²Université Sorbonne-Nouvelle, Paris III

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

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 benefitting 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.

The Educational Economics of the Right to Education by UNESCO in the Immediate Post-War Period: An Archival Exploration

Stefanie Kesteloot 

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.