



EDITORIAL

Notes from the editorial team

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The open issue of 2020 has many dimensions that demonstrate the wide scope of the field of educational history. The four articles published in this issue cover different time frames—from the eighteenth century to the 1990s—as well as different aspects of education—from school governance to private education and free thought.

The first article, by Johan Prytz, deals with the governance of Swedish school mathematics in the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, and how this way of conceptualising mathematics in school influenced the results in international tests. Given that the changes in test results on a national level differed between arithmetic and algebra, Prytz is interested in how the syllabus design for these topics also differed. The author shows that strong framing may be associated with better results.

In the second article, Christian Larsen investigates the educational journeys of Danish schoolteachers at the beginning of the twentieth century. These journeys are analysed as examples of educational borrowing. Larsen concludes that the other Nordic countries and Germany were of special interest to Danish teachers, and that they were interested in new concepts as inspiration for their daily work, rather than major reform ideas. Nevertheless, these kinds of journeys also contributed to the border crossing of educational discourse, and the construction of an international way of conceptualising schooling.

In the third article, Hanna Östholm turns our attention to private schooling in the early eighteenth century. Her study maps private education in Stockholm through a thorough inventory that was made between 1734 and 1736 and shows that the private teachers were mainly students from Uppsala University—young, single men—although some widows and wives also worked as private teachers. The students were the same age as students in state schools, although a larger proportion of girls were in private schooling. Östholm also touches upon the reasons for making such a large inventory and concludes that it was mainly for religious reasons—to monitor the religious virtues of the teachers.

In the fourth and last article of this open issue, Petter Tistedt writes about the educational efforts of the Swedish Cooperative Union (KF) in the 1930s. The article deals specifically with the conundrum that the KF faced regarding propaganda and commercial advertising. While the KF was a prolific and innovative advertiser, it also had strong democratic ideals. Tistedt shows, through the study of books and journals published by the KF, that its members were instructed to develop a critical acceptance of advertising and propaganda, balancing between democratic ideals and the legitimate role of propaganda in a market economy.