



## Book Reviews

Carla Aubry Kradolfer  
*Billig und (ge)recht? Winterthurs  
Schulen zwischen Politik und  
Ökonomie (1789-1869)*  
Universität Zürich (PhD diss)  
2014, 312 pp.

In November 1789, the people of Winterthur in the canton of Zürich gathered in the town church to celebrate the recent changes in the town's schools. The town council had decided on a number of reforms, amounting to a veritable revolution in local schooling. Among these changes were a broadening of the curriculum, increases in teacher salaries and the abolition of school fees in both grammar schools and girls' schools. Reforms such as these depended on local political leaders having both the will and ability to allocate the resources necessary.

These local reforms in the late eighteenth century constitute the starting point for Carla Aubry Kradolfer's study, ending in 1869, with the state's abolition of school fees in elementary schools throughout the canton. With the aim of reconstructing the road to free public schooling, Aubry Kradolfer examines the local evolution of schooling in Winterthur and its political, economic and social conditions.

The first part "Changing old order" covers the period from 1789 to 1830. In Winterthur, local political power belonged to an elite among the town burghers. The primary economic basis was the yields from public lands, woods, etc., owned jointly by the limited group of burghers. In comparison to other towns and parishes, Winterthur was quite well endowed, which allowed the town leaders to make the significant investments in schooling around 1790.

The early nineteenth century brought increasing challenges to this inherited social and political system. Centralising tendencies during the Helvetic Republic (1798-1803) and occasional famines had significant, but rather temporary, impact on the schools of

Winterthur. A more lasting pressure arose from the growing influx of settlers who, in an attempt to limit competition and the access to public property, were denied the rights of burghers. To cater for this group, a separate "settler school" comparable to rural schools was established, where pupils, unlike the burghers' children, were required to pay a tuition fee. Towards the end of the period, growing expenses and decreasing incomes from public lands spurred the search for supplementary funding, notably a school fund that provided a source of income secured from the competition of other public needs.

The second part, "Liberal beginning brings changes", describes the school system's shifting political and economic conditions. At the cantonal level, suffrage was extended through a new constitution, followed by increasing state initiatives to promote cheap, public schooling. Winterthur and its burghers fought to protect their schooling from state intervention by, for example, not accepting state grants. Although democratic participation also increased at local level among burghers, settlers were still denied political participation and the free schooling enjoyed by burgher children. Given that burgher lands paid for schooling, the principle that "he who pays, decides" served both to discriminate settlers and to resist state interference.

However, in the long run, the potential for keeping local schooling free from state intervention diminished. When central economic stimulus failed, the state turned to politics. New state legislation meant that resources for elementary schooling were to be separated from the general public funds, which were previously controlled by the burghers. Instead, in 1859, the school funds were placed under the control of newly founded local school districts including all (male) residents, regardless of status. In 1865, secondary schooling underwent similar changes, its funds and political control being transferred from burghers to a new municipality. Extending political partici-

pation on canton, town and school district levels altered the conditions for school funding. While this change increased the political will to invest in schooling, it also paved the way for new modes of funding. On both canton (1830s) and school district level (1860s), new taxes on income and/or property were introduced to meet the growing expenditure.

During the studied period, schooling seems to have occupied a unique position in local politics and economy. Though there were exceptions and backlashes, the leading elite/burghers/town dwellers generally displayed a remarkable readiness to invest in schooling by, for example, founding new types of schools or raising teachers' salaries. Even in times of cutbacks, schooling was usually spared. Aubry Kradolfer's study reveals variations in local priorities assigned to different needs, as well as different schools. Resources were primarily directed towards the burghers' grammar school, while spending on girls' and settler schools was more modest and usually made later than the corresponding investment in grammar schools.

The motives for this continuous and generous spending on schooling are fascinating. Schools were, already during this period of time, understood as a form of investment that would result in future economic gains. It was also expected that educated men would be better equipped to represent the interests of the town against or within the state. Upon reading this work, additional motives also emerges: schooling as a symbol of that already achieved, rather than a question of potential future gains. The element of manifestation seems especially apparent in the early reforms, celebrated by public ceremonies and completed by the renovation of the facade of the schoolhouse.

Aubry Kradolfer traces the evolution of local schooling through a web of political, economic and social conditions that dictates what is necessary, desirable or possible in educational matters. Needless to say, the study and presentation contain far greater detail and complexity than can be conveyed here. Her study belongs to a tradition in historical research that focuses on the local histories of schooling that preceded the establishment of national systems. In this context, the works of Peter Lindert and Nancy Beadie are also very important, as

they serve as inspiration. Moreover, their findings, as noted in the concluding chapter, have parallels in those of the present study. Aubry Kradolfer's study aims at, and succeeds in, delivering a contribution to our understanding of the complex local beginnings of public schooling that is well worth reading.

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Nancy Beadie  
*Education and the Creation of  
Capital in the Early American  
Republic*

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press  
2010, 368 pp.

**B**eadie's work is a valuable and, in many ways, a unique case study of schooling from the late eighteenth century until about 1840 in Lima, a small rural town in the Genesee River region of Upstate New York. The author offers a detailed description of the foundation of the Genesee Wesleyan Seminary in which she integrates educational history with political, religious, local, institutional and social history. Through this approach, Beadie succeeds in highlighting general questions about the role of education in society, while revealing problems associated with the established image of so-called state (public) schools.

Beadie demonstrates that, in Lima—a town with around 1,500 inhabitants—major joint efforts were made to provide children with educational opportunities. This was done, for example, by fund raising, student fees and through subscriptions. Beadie also shows that such voluntary efforts increased the demand for education in rural areas throughout this period. Beadie attributes special significance to religious networks that, according to her, contributed to economic development through the construction of new schools and improving educational opportunities at the local level.

Beadie works her way through this comprehensive and detailed history of schooling, placing it in the context of the early years of the republic and the transition to capitalism. Her analysis shows how the vol-