

ikke lige så direkte kildeoplysninger som de traditionelle notereferencer. – Selve teksten virker meget vel skrevet, og der findes næsten ingen trykfejl. Udførlige registre over personer, steder, emner og billeder gør bindet til et uundværligt værktøj for enhver, som interesser sig for dansk skolehistorie i brydningstiden efter enevældens afskaffelse.

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Monographs

Johannes Westberg

Att bygga ett skolväsende: Folkskolan förutsättningar och framväxt 1840–1900

Lund: Nordic Academic Press
 2014, 445 pp.

Sundsvall is a county in the northern part of Sweden, where peasants over many generations have lived from the land and from fishing, and where industrialism took hold during the second part of the 19th Century with sawmills and iron mines. The demand for construction material exploded in the European cities, and by the turn of the century Sundsvall was most likely the biggest sawmill area in the world.

Entangled with the history of industrialisation was the rise of a public school system. As an entry into how this actually happened the educational economist and historian Johannes Westberg focuses on the construction of the school buildings. The far majority of these were built in the years after the passing of the 1842 national school law, with its demand of at least one permanent school per parish. The demographic development lead to a rising number of schools and by the turn of the century the 12 parishes were served by more than 66 schools.

Demography was not alone in explaining this development, and in his study Westberg demonstrates, how demography was intertwined with a series of other explanations, ranging from the local political and religious interests, access to industrialised building material, changes within the taxation and loaning system – and existence of skilled and unskilled labourers.

Westberg's study is more than an empirical analysis, it is also meant as a critique of existing research into the development of school systems. In his opinion these studies have been too occupied with demonstrating that schools were a national project, closely linked to the concepts of modernisation and industrialisation and constructed to discipline the labouring poor. Seen from a local historical – and primary agrarian – perspective this is far from true; peasants and pastors, who made up the ruling class in the local agrarian parishes, were occupied by more mundane and pragmatic issues like renovation or enlargement of school buildings, their locations or keeping up with the neighboring parish. The constructing processes were also influenced by conflicts, corruption and badly made decisions. To the degree the labouring poor were addressed it was as cheap labour – and not as someone who should be disciplined by the school. Seen from this perspective the 1842 law was just one among many factors, which lead to the consolidation of the school system.

Readers should start with the final chapter, where Westberg summarises his conclusions and draws up his methodological reflections. The text will be very useful for students and scholars with an interest in the history of education – and a good outset for discussions. Could a broader focus than on the school construction process and the building committees not have brought forward more arguments about the more general role of education? And is he not overstating his conclusions in his eagerness to hunt down Marxists and modernists?

More than 30 different archives have been consulted – and Westberg has gone to great length to document the cost and the financing of the school system. This task is often not considered among scholars of the history of education, and I can only lift my hat. It might only be nerds, who will find it interesting, that the school at Sättna demanded 690 beams of a length of 6,5 meter, when it was built in 1880, or that it took 33 days and 254 labour days and 59 days using horses to create the foundation of the school at Indal the same year. It clearly gives the reader an understanding of the scale of these construction projects. Since this kind of information most likely would be difficult to find elsewhere, an index of names and places could have been very useful.

The primary quantitative approach generates new and interesting information, like the average length of the construction process – 4.5 years – the change of the financing from cash and pay in kind to bank loans – and the role of the local industries in equipping the schools with everything from furnaces to beams and bricks. The majority of the new schools were designed by local capacities – ranging from a pastor, a peasant to master builders; architects were mostly hired in cities. All these people were part of a long list of “new heroes”, which also included local industrialists and the national school inspectors.

Westberg also includes references and comparison to development in Russia, France, the US, Britain and even Italy – but not from the other Nordic countries, which seems surprising. Where Westberg is very careful to document his empirical conclusions, the choice of these countries is not discussed at all.

Why Westberg have left out the other Nordic countries with their cultural and social closeness to Sweden, therefore remains to be explained. Similar studies – with the same understanding of the rise of the elementary school system as a result of many entangled local processes – can be found at least from my own country Denmark. References to the studies of the educational historian Erik Nørr of the role of the pastors within the administration of the Danish school system seem highly relevant. So even though Westberg repeatedly claims he is the first to challenge modernist or revisionist and Marxist understandings, a broader literature survey would definitely prove him wrong. Like Nørr, Westberg rightly stresses the effectivity of the organisations at parish level – and he also reminds of the fact, that construction of school building did not necessarily have anything to do with children. It could so to say have its own logic rooted in a mixture of traditions, local interests, demography and finances.

Despite my critique, his work pays respect and can be read both by experts in the history of the Sundsvall region but also for its methodological reflections. It's not an easy read, too many figures and un-pedagogical tables clouds the interesting conclusions. But as the author states in the introduction: complex, entangled and multiple explanations demands patience from the

historian – and I would add also from the reader. But it is definitely worth it in the end.

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Karen Vallgård
Imperial Childhoods and Christian Mission: Education and Emotions in South India and Denmark

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The development of a new, simultaneously scientific and sentimentalised conception of the universal child in the decades around 1900 is a well-known and often visited theme in educational history. *Imperial Childhoods and Christian Mission* is a study of how imperial relations between South India and Denmark both influenced and were affected by that understanding of childhood.

At the centre of Vallgård's study stands the Danish Missionary Society (DMS), an organisation that between the mid-1860s until the end of WWI sent some 100 missionaries to South India. The men and women of the DMS started and ran schools and orphanages in which Indian children were enrolled – sometimes with, but often without, their parents' consent. Through close analysis of published missionary material, magazines, pamphlets, books and songbooks intended for a Danish audience, Vallgård sets out to examine the emotions and ideas about childhood, belonging, malleability and race at play in the Danish mission.

Taking the cue from newer historiography on European empires, Vallgård places Indians and Danes within one and the same analytic framework in order to shed light on the mutual influences between the metropolises and colonies. With this perspective she intends to demonstrate the influence of these types of imperial relations on the emerging scientific and allegedly universal category of childhood, arguing that that category played an important role in the formation of Danish and even European identity.

Vallgård's examination of how the modernist sentimentalisation of childhood functioned in a colonial setting offers a fine