Tomáš Cvrček

Schooling under control

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Tomáš Cvrček

Schooling under control

The origins of public education in Imperial Austria 1769–1869

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

I first became interested in the history of the Theresian school reform in 2012. As I delved deeper into the statistical sources that the schooling authorities of the Austrian Empire generated over the decades and centuries, my fascination with the topic grew and so did the scale of the task before my eyes. Fortunately, from 2015 to 2019 I was able to rely on the support of two grants, one public and one private. The public one was a grant no. 15-16481S from the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic (Grantová agentura České republiky). The private was one was the Neuron Impulse grant no. 14/2015 awarded by Neuron Fund for Support of Science in Prague. Funds from these grants paid for the data collection without which there would be no book.

Throughout my work, I have benefitted greatly from the advice and comments of many colleagues, most of all Jeremy Atack, Diane Koenker, Michael Pammer, Ulrich Woitek and Thomas Lorman who have read drafts of every chapter, and also Tamás Vonyó, who read some, and Miroslav Zajíček, who started out as my collaborator in the whole project but whose professional path has since taken him elsewhere. To them I owe special thanks. I am also thankful for the comments I have received over the years from Jörg Baten, Howard Bodenhorn, David Chilosi, Rowena Gray, Tim Guinnane, Naomi Lamoreaux, Melinda Miller, David Mitch, Stefan Nikolic, Michael Pammer, Paul Wilson and anonymous referees at Explorations in Economic History and Cliometrica where papers dealing with various individual topics, covered in the book, have been published in the meantime. I owe a great debt of gratitude to all the members of the WEast network, and particularly those who participated in the network workshops in Budapest, Prague, London and Krakow, where drafts, working papers and finished chapters have also been presented. Those meetings have been a source of helpful suggestions, important corrections and (hopefully) improvements in the book.

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Last but not least, I thank my wife Zuzana who has shown great patience and forbearance during the time when I worked on this book and who has heard more *curiosa* about the history of Austrian schooling over the last seven years than she ever bargained for.

In London, 1st December 2019

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Introduction

The origins of mass schooling in Central Europe date back to the early modern era. Its rise is closely tied to active involvement of government: mass education was and is overwhelmingly public education in that its content, public access and financing are matters of detailed regulation.[1] The lands under the Habsburg sceptre were on the frontier of that development: how to refashion the empire's education had already become a prominent issue in the middle of the 18th century. The policy debate at the highest levels of the Habsburg court spanned the better part of two decades and coincided with a broader reform of the state, the aim of which was nothing less than transforming the motley Habsburg lands into a functional, unified modern great power. It swept across all levels of the education system but the sustained attention paid specifically to elementary schooling, hitherto the domain of the Church, was a first.[2] The fruit of this reform effort was a uniform institutional framework, whose underlying principles remained in force, unchanged, well into the 19th century. Here, then, was the moment when the government declared basic schooling too important to be left alone, assumed full control and has never let go of it to this day. Subsequent reforms restructured state control in various ways but changed little of the basic fact of it. This book is an analysis of the first incarnation of the system, bookended by the 1769 letter of bishop Firmian, which served as the immediate impulse for the policy, and the liberal educational reform of 1869, which marked a new departure in Austrian elementary education.

Few policies stay in place for a hundred years. If it makes any sense to pass judgment on a whole century of schooling policy, it is because the Austrian system retained the core of its original regulations throughout the period. These regulations made it fundamentally distinct from what existed before it and what came after it. Not even such upheavals as the Napoleonic Wars and the 1848 revolution could quite dislodge it. When the system final-

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[1] In the words of Peter Lindert: "The history of mass primary and secondary schooling is dominated by the rise of public, not private, supply." See Lindert. *Growing Public: Social Spending and Economic Growth since the Eighteenth Century. Vol. 1.*, p. 88.

[2] Engelbrecht. *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens: Erziehung und Unterricht auf dem Boden Österreichs Vol. 3.*, p. 95–96; Veselá. *Vývoj české školy a učitelského vzdělávání*, p. 8.

ly died, it died by slow attrition, as its various components fell apart from the early 1850s onwards, before it was dealt a *coup de grace* by the reform laws of 1868–69. It is with this underlying unity of time, place and action in mind that this book seeks to answer its main question: was this, the first large-scale public schooling policy in the Habsburg realm, successful? Was it worth the trouble? But, successful at what? And whose "trouble" – whose effort and sacrifice to make it happen – was involved? On the point of the policy's success, my analysis leads me to a rather unambiguous and mostly pessimistic conclusion – perhaps more pessimistic than has been customary in the academic literature on this topic so far. This re-evaluation emerged from my examination of a hitherto underused source material – namely, the statistical data on the operation of the Austrian schooling system.

Until quite recently, these data, generated by the state's administrative apparatus in the process of operating the schooling system, were too vast and too scattered about to be effectively available for research. Advances in information technologies changed all that. Today, the sum total of the statistical material that I have collected for this book adds up to about 10 GB, which easily fits on a cheap flash drive. Twenty years ago, this would have required perhaps fifty 3½-inch floppy disks. Hundred and fifty years ago? The administration generated more data than any contemporary could have reasonably hoped to process. What this means, among other things, is that the statistics contain plenty of information that the school administrators did not even realize was actually embedded in them. That is my opening to say something new about the whole matter. Handled properly, the statistical analysis can be an important complement as well as corrective to past research into the more "literary", or non-numeric, evidence. Together, they yield a more accurate picture of what the Austrian schooling actually looked like and how it compared to what the Habsburg policy makers were trying to achieve.

Nations establish education systems for a variety of reasons. Modern discourse, especially among economists, has focused on the role of education as an engine of economic development. The school fulfils this role to the extent that it generates the necessary human capital, which then bears its proper return on the labour market. Skills such as literacy and numeracy are the most obvious examples of such human capital but one could just as well broaden the definition to cover general cognitive skills (the ability to learn) and social skills (the ability to effectively cooperate with others).[3] Historically, as industrialization unfolded and economies grew more complex, the demand for workers who could read blueprints and follow written instructions increased markedly.[4] Public schooling arose to meet that demand and it is for this rea-

[3] See Hanushek and Woessmann. "Do better schools lead to more growth? Cognitive skills, economic outcomes and causation."

[4] Mokyr. "Long term economic growth and the history of technology", p. 1159.

son that it has been called "the most profitable investment of public money" and "an important force in the escape from the Malthusian trap" of bare subsistence and slow growth, characteristic of all pre-modern economies.[5] But both of these quotes refer to education systems that arose in the late 19th century in the context of the Second Industrial Revolution, characterized by advanced sectors such as the chemical industry and electrical engineering. The farther back into the past one goes, the weaker the link between education and growth becomes. In the First Industrial Revolution, known for the development of textiles, iron making and machinery, the usefulness and effectiveness of schooling for economic development is a more dubious proposition. In fact, judging by evidence from England, it is plausible that the move from artisanal workshops to factories initially coincided with a trend towards de-skilling, as machines and production processes were made deliberately undemanding in terms of competence, so that ideally even a child could do it (and frequently did).[6] One consequence was that the dispersion of skills among workers actually increased, where the bulk of factory workers could be perfectly untouched by any formal schooling but they were supervised by, say, a skilled mechanic. The industrial workforce bifurcated: on the one side, a mass of illiterate lever-pullers; on the other, a fledgling cadre of technical staff who had more expertise (basic though it was) than had been customary in pre-industrial times. Still, the implication remains that even in the first phase of the Industrial Revolution, the economy undoubtedly offered a certain amount of jobs where literacy and numeracy were either outright indispensable or at least constituted a competitive edge when applying for the position.[7]

For rulers, at any rate, the economic advance of the masses mostly mattered not as an end in itself but as a way to increase the economic power of their realm, which in turn underpinned its military might. Here, the smoking gun (so to speak) is the frequently observed link between military rivalry and education reform. The argument is that public mass schooling inculcates in

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[5] Lindert. *Growing Public Vol. 1,* p. 87; Galor. *Unified Growth Theory*, p. 46. The quote from Galor actually refers to a later incarnation of schooling, brought about by Second Industrial Revolution in the late 19th century. See also Easterlin. "Why isn't the whole world developed?"

[6] See Humphries. "Childhood and child labour in the British industrial revolution", p. 409; Mokyr and Voth. "Understanding growth in early modern Europe", p. 29; Mokyr, "Long term economic growth and the history of technology", p. 1160.

[7] One potential complication in making inferences from the English experience is that the situation of the technological leader, which England then was, may be fundamentally different from that of the rest of the world that was trying to catch up. It is plausible that follower nations saw fit to adopt mass schooling even during those stages, which England had completed without it, because their main pre-occupation was technological transfer, not new invention. See Becker, Hornung and Woessmann, "Catch Me If You Can: Education and Catch-up in the Industrial Revolution".

pupils a sense of national unity formed through a suitably nationalistic curriculum as well as the discipline and basic competence that makes for effective soldiers – loyalty and obedience, for short. Prussia usually serves as the defining example: Frederick II's resolve to reform his kingdom's schools crystallized while campaigning in the countryside during the Seven Years' War.[8] Some forty years later, the Prussians were again forced to think boldly about education reform, having been defeated by Napoleon in 1806. By the 1860s, with a string of prominent military victories under their belt, they were congratulating themselves that the reforms had indeed borne fruit on the battlefield.[9]

Similar narratives exist for other countries, too. In France, after the Bourbon restoration, schooling was long mired in a mostly unproductive tug-of-war between the conservative Catholic camp and the reform-minded republican camp. The defeat at Sedan in 1870 "tipped the scales in favour of the educational reformers", their efforts culminating in Jules Ferry's Laic Laws of 1881.[10] France then adopted a recognizably modern tax-based public schooling with compulsory attendance. Outside Europe, the Meiji reforms of Japan were motivated by a keenly felt military rivalry with the West and the desire to build up national strength across all sectors, not just education. After a brief civil war in 1868–69, the progressives in the Japanese government prevailed with their plans for a more mathematically and scientifically oriented curriculum and a new school system was introduced in the 1870s.[11] The United States, too, experienced an upswing in primary school spending in the wake of the First World War which was at least partially motivated by the anti-German sentiment arising from the recent conflict.[12]

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[8] Melton. *Absolutism and the eighteenth-century origins of compulsory schooling in Prussia and Austria*, p. 172. Riedl argues that what spurred Frederick was that during the campaign he could not find enough literate men to fill the ranks of low-level army officers. See Riedl. *Zavádění povinné školní docházky na území současného jihomoravského kraje*, p. 8. For a general history of the development of the Prussian state apparatus and its reforms, see Clark. *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600–1947.*

[9] At the battle of Sadová in 1866, as one newspaper put it, "the Prussian schoolteacher defeated the Austrian schoolteacher." The same argument resurfaced in France after the Prussian victory at Sedan in 1870, suggesting that it became a journalistic cliché by then. See Oscar Peschel. "Die Lehren der jüngsten Kriegsgeschichte." *Das Ausland: Ueberschau des neuesten Forschungen auf dem Gebiete der Natur-, Erd- und Völkerkunde* 29, 17th July 1866, p. 695; Moody. *French Education Since Napoleon*, p. 87.

[10] Lindert. *Growing Public Vol. 1,* p. 112.

[11] Aghion et al. "Education and Military Rivalry", p. 382–384.

[12] Schmick and Shertzer quote Fletcher Harper Swift, an early 20th century American professor and researcher of education, who argued that "every great war in which the United States has played a part has been followed by educational developments of supreme national importance". See Schmick and Shertzer. "The Impact of Early Investments in Urban School Systems in the United States." p. 2.

Not all national schooling histories followed this neat pattern, the most visible counterexample being Britain. The Parliament there passed numerous small education acts throughout the 19th century and then introduced a substantial reform of its elementary education in 1870 with no obvious recent military humiliation to pin it on.[13] However, one does not need to embrace the view that education is a continuation of war by other means to still appreciate that schools can serve an eminently political, state-building purpose. The military argument is only partly about battlefield prowess. More important was the effect of schooling on forging a united national identity that would provide the necessary cohesion in times of crisis.[14] The American example of post-First World War education expansion is a case in point: spending on schools increased particularly in areas with strong German minorities, who, it was felt, needed to be better integrated into the American body politic.[15] This was, by then, considered a tried and tested method, for already in the late 19th century, using similar rationale, many US states passed compulsory schooling laws so as to socialize immigrant children into the American way of life.[16] Europe was no different. Having won the many wars of unification, Germany came to view the school, together with the

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[13] Lindert. *Growing Public Vol. 1*, p. 113. Instead, what disturbed the English complacency on education was that at the 1867 Paris World Exposition the country's manufacturing proved pre-eminent in "only" ten out of the 90 exhibition categories. Lyon Playfair, one of England's representatives among the jurors, hastened to point out, diagnosing immediately the main cause of England's disappointing performance, that "there was most unanimity of conviction [among other jurors] that France, Prussia, Austria, Belgium and Switzerland possess good systems of industrial education and that England possesses none." But as an indefatigable advocate of technical schooling, Playfair had an axe to grind, not to mention the talent to always stay on message, no matter the facts. Perhaps that was why he omitted to mention that at the Paris Expo Austria, with her allegedly superior technical schooling, scored just one Grand Prix across all categories and Prussia two, compared to England's "only" ten. See Green. *Education and State Formation: The Rise of Education Systems in England, France and the USA*, p. 296; Goñi. "Landed Elites and Education Provision in England: Evidence from School Boards, 1870–99", p. 10–11; Monaghan. "Some views on education and industrial progress a hundred years ago", p. 188; *Berichte über die allgemeine Ausstellung zu Paris im Jahre 1867. VII. Heft*, p. 553–587; K.k. Österreichische Central-Comité. *Bericht über die Welt-Ausstellung zu Paris im Jahre 1867. I. Band*, p. 357–359.

[14] See Ramirez and Boli. "The Political Construction of Mass Schooling: European Origins And Worldwide Institutionalization"; Soysal and Strang. "Construction of the First Mass Education Systems in Nineteenth-Century Europe."

[15] Schmick and Shertzer. "The Impact of Early Investments in Urban School Systems in the United States", p. 4–5.

[16] See Bandiera et al. "Nation-building Through Compulsory Schooling during the Age of Mass Migration." They were of doubtful effectiveness according to Landes and Solmon. "Compulsory Schooling Legislation: An Economic Analysis of Law and Social Change in the Nineteenth Century".

army, as the chief tool of national integration.[17] The newly created German Empire was even willing to go as far as to try to make Germans of the Poles within its borders. Ethnic Germans, too, received their share of indoctrination into proper loyalty to the *Reich*.[18] The Jules Ferry Laws in France operated from the premise of national unity also: towards elimination of local dialects in favour of standardized French and towards strengthening the republican values on which the Third Republic was built.[19] Of course, the usefulness of school for ideological purposes had been apparent long before the modern nation state: this was the reason why Protestant and Catholic Church alike so closely guarded their own role in schooling already in the pre-modern era.[20] It does not require all that much cynicism to argue that ideological propaganda is in fact the main *raison d' être* of modern mass schooling: the rulers' benign phrases about "welfare of the masses" cannot be taken at face value.[21] More often than not, the mass of the people was not so much the user of public education as its target.

The nation-building explanation of the rise of mass schooling has the advantage that it also accounts for why the educational build-up historically coincided with the invasion of the state into this sector, seizing control of its operation and crowding out – sometimes partially, sometimes entirely – church-based and private provision. Inculcation of belief, whether religious or ideological (e.g. patriotism, religious orthodoxy), differs from the simple teaching of skills in that beliefs are hard to verify externally whereas skills can, by and large, be tested for. People can fake ideological commitment or religious fervour to no end but for every skill there exists some more or less conclusive test that can reveal its true extent. Consequently, skill instruction can be contracted privately whereas inculcation in belief, especially if that belief is to be instilled in a third party (i.e. children), cannot.[22] Governments interested in shoring up their own legitimacy – whether a French republican one or a nationalist German one – could not but conclude that outsourcing such important task to the market was unreliable and promptly moved in and asserted their power. In terms of curriculum, this move usually also coincided with a shift in emphasis towards that kind of content that does not bear labour market return.

At the risk of certain oversimplification, then, the multitude of social forces and factors behind the rise of mass schooling can be said to fall under two

[17] Cinnirella and Schueler. "Nation building: The role of central spending in education."

[18] Ibid. section 3.2

[19] Lindert. *Growing Public Vol. 1*, p. 112–113; Aghion et al. p. 378

[20] Easterlin. "Why Isn't the Whole World Developed?" p. 10, 12–13.

[21] Lott. "Public Schooling, Indoctrination, and Totalitarianism".

[22] This argument has been most forcefully put forward by Pritchett and Viarengo, "The State, Socialisation, and Private Schooling: When Will Governments Support Alternative Producers?"

broad headings, the economic-developmental and the political-ideological. In real life, they were, of course, often intertwined: one strand of argument, for example, which puts the school's potential for indoctrination in the service of an economic goal, sees the historical task of public education as one of instilling in pupils discipline and punctuality that would prepare them for factory work.[23] But analytically, it is helpful to see these two headings as separate because each aligns with a distinct *modus operandi*. The economic-developmental one envisions the school as a locus of skill acquisition and predicts that the build-up of the school network should, at least partly, come "from below", (i.e. in response to popular demand informed by the growing sophistication of the labour market), allow ample room for private provision (whether charitable or based on tuition) and produce a diversity of types of schools with a variety of curricula of mostly practical orientation – depending on what the economy needs. Under the political-ideological heading, conversely, the school is a tool of social control, the impulse for its nationwide diffusion comes from the top, accompanied by a tight control of its operation, and the economic usefulness of the curriculum is of secondary importance.

Austria was not exempt from the forces that shaped schooling in all the other countries that have so far served as illustrations of the two paradigms. The "war theory" of school reform, for example, could fit the Austrian case well. Both the Theresian legislation of 1774 and the liberal reform of 1869 came in the wake of lost military conflicts. In the first instance, it was Austria's two-fold defeat at the hands of Prussia in 1740–48 and again in 1756–63. Swallowing their pride, the Catholic Habsburgs accepted the need to learn from the experiences and practices of the victorious Protestant power to their north.[24] In the second instance a century later, Austria's rising bourgeois politicians echoed the Prussian press in blaming the disaster of the Austro-Prussian War on, among other things, the lag of Austrian soldiers in education behind their Prussian counterparts. The embarrassing literacy rates of Austrian conscripts served as one of the cabinet's chief arguments in favour of a thorough modernization of the empire's schools.[25]

Certainly, there is plenty in the Austrian educational record that places it comfortably within the political-ideological paradigm. Ideological considera-

[23] See, for example, Field. "Economic and Demographic determinants of Educational Commitment: Massachusetts, 1855".

[24] Melton. *Absolutism*, p. 206.

[25] In the Austrian case, however, a conspicuous counterexample is the failure of Napoleonic defeats to inspire any education reform in a way that the humiliation at Jena led to a modernization of schools in Prussia. Neither Austerlitz (2nd December 1805), nor Wagram (6th July 1809) had any educational consequences, glorious defeats though they were. Perhaps bad timing was to blame: Austria had just completed a decade-long review of its educational policies in August 1805 and updated its schooling law in a manner that reinforced its conservative character – five months before the "Battle of the Three Emperors".

tions (about curriculum content, appropriate teacher training etc.) were of primary importance to policy makers, as was the uniformity of schools across the whole empire. This was arguably also the most effectively enforced part of the whole educational policy. Whether it achieved the aim of buttressing the legitimacy of the existing political regime is another matter. One of the aims of the Austrian policy was to use education to limit political change by discouraging popular participation. Yet, historically, the spread of education has often coincided with, and further fuelled, *increased* political participation.[26] It may well be that the complex issue of education caught the Habsburg rulers in an unresolvable paradox. Instituting ideologically loaded schooling so as to ensure that the political opinions of the masses are of the "right" kind amounted to an implicit admission that those opinions somehow mattered and that the masses were already a force on the political scene, even if the empire was as yet devoid of any of the usual trappings of democratic governance (e.g. suffrage). Needless to say, electoral politics and representative government eventually came to Austria anyway (1860) and a liberal school reform, which completely rewrote the curriculum, followed shortly thereafter.

In terms of the economic view, it would be anachronistic to look for the modern development-based, growth-oriented vocabulary in the 18th century documents inaugurating Austria's new educational policies. The best evidence of any awareness of the potential for schooling to improve the situation of the masses could perhaps be found in the grand words of the preamble, where empress Maria Theresa declared "education of youth of both sexes [...] the most important grounds for the true welfare of the nations".[27] Judicious reading certainly demands a proper critical distance from such lofty phrases. After all, there is a reason why soaring rhetoric is usually reserved for the preambles: if it appeared in the body of the law, someone might try to actually enforce it.

Ultimately, the proof of the pudding is in the eating: whether a particular public education system could (even theoretically) be conducive to economic betterment or whether it effectively enforces ideological conformity will depend on how it operates and what it offers. It is inevitable that the two paradigms, outlined above, imply somewhat different standards of evaluation because they embody such different ideas of what a successful educational policy looks like. Fortunately, school systems created out of the political-ideological motives offer the modern researcher a relatively easy way out: the social and political elites driving the policy usually wrote their ideal schooling parameters right into the law. Surely, as a first pass, there is no harm in

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[26] See Glaeser, Ponzetto and Shleifer. "Why does democracy need education?"

[27] See Allgemeine Schulordnung, 6th December 1774, TGB 1629/1774.

taking them at their word, which is what this book aims to do in the case of Austria.

I am not the first person to attempt such an evaluation. The writings on Austria's schooling system date back at least to the middle of the 19th century. The first broadly analytical publications on the topic were pamphlets and treatises of the revolutionary years 1848–1849, written by active teachers, where a critique of the existing system served as a pretext for various reform proposals. Modern academic historiography, informed by a clear research focus and a rigorous methodology, begins with Joseph A. Helfert's exhaustive work on the system's 18th century origins, published in 1861.[28] Helfert was not just an academic; he was also active in policy circles, serving as an undersecretary at Thun's Ministry of Education during the neo-absolutist era. Almost immediately after the publication of his book the baton of academic study passed into the hands of more liberal scholars, first among them Adolf Beer and Franz Hochegger, whose 1867 comparative study placed the Austrian system in the context of changing educational landscape of Europe and thereby sought to make the case for liberalization of schooling.[29] Further work in a similar vein, such as Adolf Ficker's in 1873 or Gustav Strakosch-Graßman's in 1905, continued to voice the liberal critique of the pre-1869 educational system.[30] By the turn of the century, more specialized, period-focused studies began to appear, such as Ferdinand Frank's retrospective of Austrian education since 1848 and Anton Weiss' analysis of the reformulation of the Theresian schooling under Francis I.[31] Weiss, a professor at the university in Graz and later Prague, was the first researcher to pay systematic attention to the statistical material produced by the schooling administration, even though statistical sciences of his time were not quite advanced enough to offer him tools for any sophisticated analysis beyond constructing basic descriptive tables.

It is arguably one of the regrettable side effects of the First World War that the new post-St Germain geopolitical realities of Central Europe impressed themselves so strongly into subsequent academic writing on education. From 1918 practically to this day, most monographs stay, so to speak, within their

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[28] Helfert. *Die österreichische Volksschule. Geschichte, System, Statistik. I. Band – Die Gründung der österreichischen Volksschule durch Maria Theresia.*

[29] Beer and Hoechegger. *Die Fortschritte des Unterrichtswesens in den Culturstaaten Europas. I. Band*. Beer was actually directly involved in writing the reform law of 1869 under minister Hasner. See Aliprantis. "The afterlife of Enlightened Absolutism: commemoration of Maria Theresa and Joseph II and the politics of liberal reform in nineteenth-century imperial Austria", p. 314–315.

[30] Ficker. *Bericht über österreichisches Unterrichtswesen*; Strakosch-Grassmann. *Geschichte des österreichischen Unterrichtswesens*.

[31] Frank. *Die Österreichische Volksschule von 1848–1898*; Weiss. *Geschichte der österreichischen Volksschule 1792–1848.*

post-1918 borders, causing them to lose sight of the full amplitude of educational experiences associated with an empire-wide perspective. One can see Šafránek's two-volume work on the history of Czech schools as perhaps the first instance of this trend.[32] Though written during the last years of the Austrian Empire's existence, its geographic focus on Bohemia, accompanied by an even more pronounced national focus on the specifically Czech educational experience, made for a most auspiciously timed publication, when the second volume came out in barely established Czechoslovakia in January 1919, but also for one that was rather nationalistically one-sided. Subsequent Czechoslovak studies retained the country-based focus as did even foreign authors, such as Michail Kuzmin.[33] The self-enclosure into the new borders occurred on the Austrian side also.[34] A good example is the monumental work by Helmut Engelbrecht published in several volumes throughout the 1980s. As a comprehensive and exhaustive description of Austrian schooling across all epochs and educational levels, it arguably remains unsurpassed to this day. Yet perhaps as an inevitable trade-off of depth for breadth, it remained limited in its empirical focus to the area of the Austrian republic. This in no way diminishes the importance of his work as a source of insightful and often unique information on the shape of empire-wide policy or the inner workings of central government in educational matter. In fact, a similar observation can be readily extended to most other serious monographs with a country-specific focus: they usually cover the common ground of imperial legislation in good detail, even when they only assess its implementation within the limited confines of a single successor state. However, the cost of such approach is that, to use statistical jargon, it artificially limits the sample with inevitable consequences for accurate policy evaluation. After all, the Habsburg education system certainly looks much more robust and effective if the dismal records of Dalmatia, Bukovina and Galicia do not enter into the picture. In a further irony of history, when Galician educational data actually resurface in Polish national histories, written with the post-1921 or post-1945 borders in mind, suddenly even the subpar Galician school system – far below Bohemia or Lower Austria in all respects, but the most Pole-friendly across the three Partitions – looks rather good in contrast to the backwardness of Russian Poland and the merciless Germanizing pressures of Prussian Po-

[32] Šafránek. *Školy české I.svazek*, 1913; *II. svazek*, 1919.

[33] Kuzmin. *Vývoj školství a vzdělání v Československu.*; Jaroš and Job. *Rozvoj československého školství v číslech*; Veselá. *Vývoj české školy a učitelského vzdělávání*. After the Second World War, historians of the respective national educations also barely cited each other across borders, a fact no doubt caused in large part by the intellectual isolation of the Eastern bloc until 1989.

[34] See Battista, Ludwig. *Die österreichische Volksschule: ihr Werden, ihre äusseren Arbeitsbedingungen und ihre Erziehungs- und Bildungsarbeit*; Scheipl, Joseph and Helmut Seel. *Die Entwicklung des österreichischen Schulwesens, 1750–1936*.

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