



Funding the Rise of Mass Schooling

*The Social, Economic and Cultural
History of School Finance in Sweden,
1840 - 1900*

Johannes Westberg



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PREFACE

During the past few years, I have dedicated my research primarily to the rise of mass schooling. In addition to articles that have addressed the school act of 1842, state subsidies, teachers' allotted farms, firewood and the architecture of school buildings, my primary contribution to this research field has been a Swedish-language monograph on school buildings and the rise of mass schooling (Westberg, *Att bygga ett skolväsende*). The intent of that monograph was to shed new light on the pre-conditions for the rise of mass schooling by examining the school building process in chapters devoted to its rationale, organization, building sites, labour force, building materials and finance. As a result of this original approach, mass schooling was tied not only to well-known factors such as population growth, proletarianization and the intervention of nation states but also to a broader socioeconomic and cultural context that includes the organization of the Swedish parishes, changes in local tax systems, the liberalization of the property market and the expansion of the construction materials market. Thus, a largely novel explanation of this development was accomplished.

This book is the result of my continuing efforts to explore the history of schooling from new perspectives. Obviously, there is no such thing as an entirely new perspective. There is certainly, as Michel Foucault noted in the introduction to his second volume on the history of sexuality, an irony in the efforts that we make to change how we look at things: being sure of having travelled far, one will still have the experience of remaining in the same place. By focusing on school funding, I nevertheless like to imagine that I have been able to slowly move the history of Swedish mass schooling another quarter turn. Although my desire to examine schooling

within the wider context of social, cultural and economic history remains, the specific context has consequently changed. Inspiration from the social history of wages and studies of moral economy has replaced research into British building history, which was the main impetus for my previous book. Consequently, this book has a different focus. While including a chapter on the motives behind school spending and a section on loans, which are revised and restructured versions of texts published in my previous book, this book adds chapters covering topics such as school districts' economic culture, in-kind economy and the monetization of school districts' economy.

In addition to shedding new light on how the rise of mass schooling was funded, this history of school finance is an attempt to break free from contemporary narratives of schooling, politics and pedagogy. I have pursued this approach not because these narratives exhibit major shortcomings but because I believe that the history of education can exceed the limits defined by the predominant paradigm of the cultural turn. Regardless of whether I have succeeded, I hope that my attempt at telling a rather unusual story of grain taxes, damp firewood and school districts' frugal impulses will stimulate further research into this relatively neglected aspect of educational history.

Naturally, this book is not solely the result of one scholar's efforts. Without the generous economic support of the Swedish Research Council and Handelsbanken's research fund, this book would not have been possible. The necessary language editing was enabled by a grant from *Vilhelm Ekman's universitetsfond*. This book was also contingent on the support of my colleagues. I have continued to rely not only on Esbjörn Larsson's advice, as I have done for many years now, but also on my colleagues at Uppsala Studies of History and Education (SHED). It is certainly with mixed emotions that I will be leaving Uppsala University for a position at Örebro University: a better research and work environment for an educational historian than SHED is difficult to find. I remain deeply indebted to Jonas Lindström, with whom I have had stimulating discussions on history for almost 20 years. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Carla Aubry, not the least for the early interest that she took in my project.

Special thanks also go to those who generously commented on my drafts. Chapters have been read by Anne Berg, Jonas Lindström, Ingrid Brühwiler, Esbjörn Larsson and Sara Backman Prytz. I also received productive comments from participants in the vibrant seminar on the history of education in Uppsala, participants in sessions held at *Svenska Historikermötet* in 2014

and participants in the *Segregation and Integration* conference at Umeå University in 2015. In the final phase of editing, I also benefited from the comments of session participants at the German Educational Research Association Congress in Kassel in 2016 and the European Social Science and History Conference in Valencia in 2016. Additionally, I cannot forget either the references to journal articles that Joakim Landahl so generously shared or the comprehensive work that Germund Larsson performed as my research assistant in 2010–11. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the staff at Palgrave Macmillan for transforming my Word documents into a beautiful book.

Finally, I want to thank my wife Elsa and my children Elisabeth and Josef for sharing their lives with me. When one is so committed to historical research, it is wonderful to have a family that is not. Men trying to finish a book are undoubtedly a bit difficult. Therefore, I am glad that I will not be writing any more books for a while.

A surprisingly warm October morning in Uppsala, 2016
Johannes Westberg

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ABBREVIATIONS

BiSOS	Contributions to the Official Statistics of Sweden (<i>Bidrag till Sveriges officiella statistik</i>)
DKH	The Cathedral Chapter in Härnösand (<i>Domkapitlet i Härnösand</i>)
ED	Ministry of Education and Ecclesiastical Affairs (<i>Ecklesiastikdepartementet</i>)
HLA	Regional State Archive in Härnösand (<i>Landsarkivet i Härnösand</i>)
ka	Parish archive (<i>kyrkoarkiv</i>)
RA	The National Archives (<i>Riksarkivet</i>)
SFS	The Swedish Code of Statutes (<i>Svensk författningssamling</i>)

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A Mundane History of School Finance

The nineteenth century saw the rise of mass schooling. During this era of the agrarian and industrial revolutions, school acts were implemented in countries such as Prussia (1763), Denmark (1814), France (1833), Sweden (1842) and Finland (1866). In the northern US states, compulsory school systems were established during the period 1830–60; in the southern states, they were established after the Civil War. Schooling was made compulsory during 1869–82 in 15 crownlands of the Austrian Empire, four Australian states, Scotland, The Netherlands and New Zealand.¹

These developments pre-supposed major economic investments. In country after country, tax revenues were spent at the local, regional and central government levels to employ increasing numbers of teachers and to build an increasing number of schools. As a result, schooling prevailed. Available numbers show that there were 83,700 primary schools in France in 1900, 187,500 primary school teachers in Imperial Germany in 1914, 65,000 rural schools in European Russia in 1911 and 212,000 single-teacher schools in the USA in 1913.² In 1900, a total of 94 per cent of primary school-aged children in the USA attended school, while enrolments in Canada, France and Prussia ranged from 77 to 90 per cent.³

This book explores the seemingly simple question of how this development was funded in Sweden during 1840–1900. Using a case study as a starting point, I will delve deeper into issues such as the moral aspects of local school districts' economic practices and the role of in-kind taxation

in the rise of mass schooling. Thus, in addition to shedding new light on the history of school finance, I will explore the complex web of social, economic and cultural processes that made the expansion of schooling possible.

PIECES OF A LARGER PUZZLE

The rise of mass schooling during the nineteenth century that included increasing numbers of so-called *almueskoler* (Denmark), *écoles primaires* (France), *folkskolor* (Sweden), *kansakouluja* (Finland) and *Volksschulen* (Germany) is one of the main puzzles in the historiography of education. It has raised a number of questions that have been addressed in acclaimed historical, sociological and economic history studies of schooling and its links to industrialization, urbanization, the creation of nation states, political voice, equality and policy decentralization. These studies include the analysis by Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis of the relationships among mass schooling, industrialization and urbanization; analysis by Andy Green of state formation processes; analyses by John Meyer et al. of mass schooling and nation-state models; and analysis by Peter Lindert of decentralized school systems.⁴

Despite these massive contributions to our knowledge about the rise of mass schooling, the funding of this phenomenon has remained remarkably understudied. This research gap might, as Marcelo Caruso suggests, be explained by the strong position of the history of ideas within educational history or the perceived sacred character of schools as sites of moralization.⁵ More mundane reasons may also play a role. Carl Kaestle and Maris Vinovskis have suggested that the neglect of the financial aspect of education might be due to the difficulty in obtaining source materials or the perception of the topic as dry and boring.⁶

However, there are several reasons to study the history of school finance. Brian Simon emphasized that matters of finance are fundamental because they are “the life blood of any system that requires effective resources for healthy functioning.”⁷ Although this view implies that studies of school finance are valuable in themselves, such studies are also of more general interest to historians of education. Since public education, as R.D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar explained, “rests on dollars and cents,” studies into the history of school finance provide insights into the factors underlying the rise of mass schooling.⁸ Investigations into the world of economic transactions may also reveal much about schooling in general. Financial decisions tell the historian what nations and local communities

have wanted, what they could afford and what they prioritized. Financial decisions reveal intentions and plans and make it possible to expose policies that are only rhetorical.⁹

The purpose of this book is to answer fundamental but neglected questions about how the rise of mass schooling was financed during the nineteenth century. Focusing on school districts' management of their economic affairs and on the precise nature of their revenues and expenditures, I will provide new insight into the political will of school districts to levy local taxes, their economic culture and the changing nature of their expenditures and revenues. Thus, this book deals with some of the major questions regarding the expansion of mass schooling during the nineteenth century. What motivated school districts to spend money on schooling? How did they decide how much to spend? How did school districts mobilize resources, and how and why did the districts' methods for mobilizing resources change over time?

To answer such questions, this book is based on a case study of 12 rural school districts in the Sundsvall region, in the northern part of Sweden, during the period 1840–1900. Exploiting the advantages that case studies offer scholars—this includes the possibilities of collecting a rich and multifaceted source material—this study is able to present a comprehensive narrative of local school districts' economy.¹⁰

Although the specific setting has local, regional and national features, the depth of the case study allows an analysis of broader themes and general mechanisms. Sweden's school system, like every school system, followed a unique historical path; nevertheless, it has many commonalities with other school systems. It is in the latter respect that this book tells the story of how a rather decentralized school system was funded in one of the Western countries where schooling experienced massive growth during the nineteenth century, in a largely rural society reshaped by the agrarian and industrial revolutions. To highlight these facets of school finance—facets that transcend regional and national borders—this book features recurrent international comparisons. These comparisons distinguish this book from studies of schooling in a particular region or locality and make this study relevant for scholars researching the history of schooling in, for instance, Germany, France, England or the USA.

In addition to its contribution to the history of school finance, which is elaborated further below, this work offers two important and more general contributions to the history of education. First and foremost, my findings add to the research that has explored the forces driving the rise of mass schooling. In this respect, the history of school finance may be perceived

as a method for addressing more general question regarding the processes that gave rise to mass schooling. By examining the history of a decentralized school system in a rural setting, this volume is intended to provide an important—and, in some respects, corrective—supplement to the eminent studies on schooling and industrialization, schooling and state formation and schooling and decentralization.¹¹

Second, this book is a contribution to what I choose to call a materialistic turn in the field of educational history. Of course, historians of education have benefited from the cultural turn and from the wealth of excellent investigations into ideologies, discourses and systems of meaning. However, in a research field where analyses of educational policy and content dominate, there is a growing need for studies that shift their focus away from policies and perceptions and towards the social and economic aspects of schooling. This need for a counter-movement is particularly pressing in educational history, which remains enchanted by famous pedagogues, neglected female educators, influential educational ideas and political decisions. As Ben Eklof once noted, the history of schooling has been particularly affected by the “illusion of politics,” that is, the notion that politicians, schoolmen and legislators are the origins of change.¹²

In this book, such a reorientation is accomplished in part via the choice of topic. The funding of mass schooling is in this respect both an object of study and a methodological choice. By focusing on school finance, one’s attention is easily drawn to the numerous mundane practicalities of schooling: the heating and cleaning of schoolrooms, the remuneration of teachers and the decision-making processes of school boards. In a nineteenth-century rural setting, this focus means that the history of schooling must, almost by necessity, encompass the grains and hay comprising teachers’ salaries, local taxation systems and the household-based economy of the Swedish countryside. Using school finance as a point of departure, it is thus possible to present new perspectives on the expansion of mass schooling.

THREE ISSUES IN THE HISTORY OF SCHOOL FINANCE

Although the history of school finance remains understudied, some of the most pressing issues have been addressed. In my view, this is the result of two historiographical developments. First, this is due to economic historians’ interest in human capital and economic growth and to their analyses of educational investments and returns.¹³ Second, this is the result of studies on the social history of schooling from the 1970s and onwards,

which occasionally touched upon matters of finance, and the result of educational history's renewed interest in educational finance in recent years.¹⁴

The work of economic historians has resulted in quantitative analyses of educational expenditure that provide valuable estimates of how education expenditure developed over time. In certain countries, the rise in expenditure levels was remarkable. According to Albert Fishlow's classic study, during the 1860–1900 period, expenditure on primary, secondary and higher education rose from 13 to 74 million dollars in France, from 19.9 to 229.6 million dollars in the USA and from 24 to 150 million dollars in Germany. In other countries, the development was less impressive. Estimates by Ana Bela Nunes and Claude Diebolt indicate that the public expenditure on education in Portugal and Spain remained low during the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁵

These varying expenditure levels have also been examined in econometric analyses of the determinants of the expansion of mass schooling, including factors such as fiscal capacity, the distribution of political voice and educational policy. Latika Chaudhary's survey of 23 countries in 1910 shows that school expenditure per school-aged child varied greatly, ranging from 10 cents in India and 16 cents in China to 14.30 dollars in England and Wales and 20.90 dollars in the USA. Sweden is ranked third in Chaudhary's survey, with 10.40 dollars per school-aged child, followed by Prussia (8.70 dollars), Ireland (7.90 dollars) and France (6.50 dollars).¹⁶ Similar investigations have revealed significant regional variations in the national educational systems of France, Italy and Germany.¹⁷

Research on educational expenditure has been supplemented by investigations of school systems' revenue sources. In accordance with the historiography of schooling, which has traditionally devoted considerable attention to the agency of the central government through school acts, state school inspectors and national school standards, scholars have considered the history of government grants and subsidies. Significant contributions to this line of research include David Mitch's examination of the impact of state subsidies on enrolment rates and Norman Morris' work on the national politics of English school finance during 1833–70.¹⁸ Among many other subjects, the latter study covers the creation of the Revised Code of 1862, which is probably the most widely studied state funding formula. The Revised Code introduced payments based on results, which meant that government subsidies would be distributed in accordance with pupil attendance and test scores.¹⁹

Scholars have also explored local school funding, offering insight into the various revenue sources available to schools in the nineteenth century. Although school finance was not the main focus of the seminal works of

Nancy Beadie, Mary Jo Maynes, Ben Eklof and Carl Kaestle, these studies show that school districts relied on multiple sources of funding. In addition to state subsidies and a wide variety of local taxes, school districts drew on revenues from publicly owned lands, school fees and voluntary contributions such as subscriptions, small gifts and large donations. Similar to the pioneering efforts of Carla Aubry and Ingrid Brühwiler on the local histories of Swiss school finance, the studies of Beadie et al. present intriguing examples of how schooling relied on non-monetary transactions, such as the levying of grains and firewood.²⁰

Judging from existing studies, local school funding was crucial to the mass schooling of the nineteenth century (see Table 1.1). According to Peter Lindert's survey, local government agencies, including communes,

Table 1.1 National, provincial and local sources of school funding

<i>Year</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Level of government</i>		
		<i>National</i>	<i>Provincial</i>	<i>Local</i>
1874–75	Ireland	85.0		3.6
1869	Belgium	42.5	3.9	37.4
1870	Württemberg	40.8 ^a		59.2 ^b
1870	Bavaria	39.6 ^a		60.4 ^b
1874–75	England and Wales	35.5		15.4
1874–75	Scotland	30.0		33.2
1874	Sweden	29.0		68
1870	England and Wales	17.3		5.2
1879–80	Netherlands	14.5	4	81.5
1870	France	13.7	13.6	34.6
1879	European Russia	11.3	0.0	75.7
1876	East Prussia	10.8	0.0	71.2
1876	West Prussia	8.5	0.0	75.9
1870	Saxony	1.6 ^a		98.4 ^b
1870	Italy	1.0 ^a		95.8
1870	Switzerland	0.0	55.0	45
1873–74	USA	0.0	16.6	78
1863	Canada West ^c	0.0	12.6	78.4

Sources: Peter H. Lindert, *Growing Public*, 116–17; Westberg, “Stimulus or Impediment,” 11; Eklof, “The Myth of the Zemstvo School,” 568

^aIncluding grants from the provincial government

^bIncluding grants from private sources and donations

^cUntil 1840, Canada West was called Upper Canada; it became Ontario in 1867

municipalities, townships and school districts, were responsible for nearly all school revenues in Italy and as much as 71.2 per cent in East Prussia, 78 per cent in the USA and 81.5 per cent in The Netherlands in the 1870s. Using official statistics, local government's contribution to Swedish school revenues can be estimated as 68 per cent in 1874.²¹ On the other side of the spectrum, the national government contributed 85 per cent of school funding in Ireland, 42.5 per cent in Belgium and 35.5 per cent in England-Wales (1874–75).²²

Although tax-based funding models prevailed in the nineteenth century, there were school systems that relied heavily on other revenue sources. In the 1850s, school fees covered 36 per cent of the cost of public primary education in the Dutch Republic, and in the early 1860s, in the absence of local taxes, English schools were still largely dependent on a combination of fees, voluntary contributions and state subsidies. According to a government report from 1860, the inspected schools received 38.6 per cent of their revenues from state subsidies, 25.7 per cent from school fees, 25 per cent from voluntary contributions and 4 per cent from endowments.²³

There were also land-based models of school support. In the USA, the Land Act of 1785 specified that one of the 36 sections that the land of new townships consisted of should be reserved for the maintenance of public schools. The revenues from these lands have been estimated to, at the absolute most, a quarter of school districts' expenses in the USA. Owing to mismanagement and increased revenues from other sources, school lands were reduced to a minor source of income by 1900.²⁴ In Spain, the minor revenues from local taxes and state subsidies meant that common lands could be highly important for the operation of schools. Portions of common lands could be assigned to teachers, or the revenues generated by common lands could be used to fund teacher salaries. In Cádiz in 1840, revenues from common lands funded most of the teachers' salaries.²⁵

Naturally, these investigations into the history of school finance are of great value. In addition to providing fundamental estimates of expenditure levels, they have offered vital insight into the design and politics of school finance systems. Consequently, scholars have been able to delve deeper into the driving forces of mass schooling, applying both econometric and qualitative approaches to historical data. Despite these accomplishments, several questions require further inquiry. This book focuses primarily on three of them.

First, we lack knowledge about how school districts' rising expenditure was motivated at the local level. Despite the significance that has been

attributed to the “spontaneous political will to levy local taxes in thousands of school districts” by scholars, including Peter Lindert, the local politics of schooling remains largely understudied.²⁶ In contrast, the national politics of schooling are well known. National schooling campaigns tend to be described as a response to the great social and economic upheavals of the period: schooling as a means to manage social instability and to foster nationally minded citizens.²⁷ With regard to local politics, the historiography of schooling has instead given comparatively ample attention to local resistance, highlighting everything from absenteeism and protest rallies to arson and teacher abuse.²⁸ How local school districts argued for the establishment of additional schools and the hiring of additional teachers, however, remains relatively unknown.

Second, the analysis of school districts’ economic culture has remained underdeveloped. In the disciplines of economics, economic history and history, economic culture has become an increasingly significant concept for explaining the outcomes of specific business ventures, the emergence of market economies and the so-called rise of the West.²⁹ In contrast, the economic culture that enabled massive investments in the expanding school systems of the nineteenth century remains a largely uncharted territory. The schematic descriptions of this culture range from characterizations of the involved farmers as entrepreneurs to widespread assumptions about the frugal attitudes towards schooling in local communities. For example, the pre-occupation with schooling at low cost has been described as distinctive of rural school organizers in the USA.³⁰

These narratives raise a number of questions about the beliefs and ideals that guided school districts’ economic practices, not the least with respect to the apparent contradiction between the descriptions of frugal school districts and the remarkable increase in school spending in the USA and other countries in the West. These questions consider whether school districts were truly frugal, and if so, how such frugality could be accompanied by the massive investments in schooling during the nineteenth century.

Third, the nature of nineteenth-century school spending requires further study. Despite having contributed immensely to our understanding of the rise of mass schooling, quantitative estimates of expenditure levels cannot compensate for the lack of qualitative historical studies. Although these estimates reveal developments and variations in education expenditure, they do not subject the precise nature of school spending to closer scrutiny. Qualitative changes in the monetary and non-monetary composition of educational expenditure have thus mostly remained unacknowledged,

as have the contributions to school districts' economy made through teacher gifts and unpaid services provided by teachers, schoolchildren and villagers. Although scholars have noted that teachers in France, Germany, Switzerland and the USA could receive in-kind salaries, the extent of such arrangements and their role in school districts' overall economy require further investigation.³¹

A HISTORY FROM BELOW

The way in which these three issues may be addressed clearly depends on your vantage point. Where you choose to sit will always affect what you will be able to see. Although I believe that it is neither necessary nor especially fruitful to create elaborate theoretical models of school finance and its relation to society (at least at this stage), it is nevertheless important to present the main research priorities and assumptions that have governed this investigation.³²

Perhaps most importantly, I have chosen to explore the history of school finance from below.³³ Instead of adopting the vantage point of politicians, schoolmen or state school inspectors, I have taken a seat close to the action at the local school district level, among the members of school boards and parish meetings. This is thus a book devoted to grassroots history, the mundane history of school finance. In contrast to studies of great historical forces and fundamental structures, this study focuses on the everyday practices of the everyday men that made schooling possible.

In this respect, my intention is to explore what Nancy Beadie describes as the human, or tragic, dimension of history.³⁴ My analysis will not shy away from practices motivated by vanity, mistakes, selfish behaviour or petty squabbling. I am also inspired by Michel Foucault's genealogical analysis and Friedrich Nietzsche's investigations into the lowly origin (*pudenda origo*) of things. This study is certainly, as Foucault put it, an analysis that reveals "the accidents, the minute deviations—or conversely, the complete reversals—the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us."³⁵

Exploring the mundane history of school finance, I will address an issue regarding how "society" has been treated in the historiography of schooling. As Konrad Jarausch has noted, the recurrent references to society in educational history often tend to have a liturgical rather than explanatory character.³⁶ In other words, studies tend to treat society as a backdrop to

educational development instead of analysing the relation between education and society.³⁷ This separation between education and society has, as Marcelo Caruso noted, been expressed in sociological concepts such as “relative autonomy” (Pierre Bourdieu), “grammar of schooling” (David Tyack and Larry Cuban) and “pedagogic discourse” (Basil Bernstein).³⁸

In contrast, this study is characterized by efforts to explore the complex web of social, economic and cultural processes that compose school finance. Like my previous studies into the history of schooling, this study of the multiple connections between schooling and society is inspired by the concept of contingency, which has become increasingly important in social and cultural history.³⁹ Unlike a conception of history that emphasizes historical linearity and universality, the concept of contingency denotes a perspective that highlights history’s lawlessness, context dependence, complexity and causal heterogeneity. Because it is sceptical of grand narratives and mono-causal explanations, such an analysis offers contributions founded in laborious explorations of local contexts and non-reductionist investigations into the multitude of diverse historical processes that school finance was a part of.⁴⁰

This theoretical conception of history implies that an analysis of school finance cannot be limited to the context of schooling. Instead, an analysis of such matters creates what Michel Foucault described as a “polyhedron” of intelligibility” that encompasses various types of historical processes.⁴¹ Starting with school funding, I will, almost by necessity, have to explore the history of bookkeeping practices, conspicuous consumption in rural societies, the history of ethics, the social mechanism of gifts, the funding of road maintenance and the changing salaries of military officers. Moreover, I will not limit my analysis to a certain level of generality but will instead address processes ranging from the political issues of teachers’ cow fodder and the forms of tax collection to changes in the international grain market and the great depression of 1873–96. As a result, the funding of mass schooling will be examined from a higher altitude, as if it were a matter of social, economic and cultural history.

Although these are the general guidelines of my analysis, I have been particularly inspired by the study of economic culture. My analysis of school districts’ economic culture has been guided by historical and anthropological studies into the moral culture of crowds and peasants and the economic culture of merchants, including those conducted by scholars such as E.P. Thompson, James C. Scott and Brodie Waddell.⁴² Specifically, my analysis of school districts’ economic practices builds upon

their analyses of the interaction among economic practices, norms and values under specific social, economic and cultural conditions.

My analysis has also been influenced by the social history of wages and the manner in which the history of wages has been extended to include questions relating to the exact means by which people were paid for their work and to the social and cultural context of those wages. Thus, instead of focusing on the size of the wage and its changes over time, new questions are introduced. These questions include the significance of non-monetary wages (food, clothing), the costs of raw materials that artisans had to cover and other sources of income of artisans. This does not mean that questions of “how much” are exempt from the analysis but rather that other questions regarding how people were paid appear to be more important.⁴³ My intention is to approach matters of school finance in a similar fashion.

Examining economic transactions, the explorations of non-monetary transactions conducted by scholars such as Marcel Mauss, Karl Polanyi and Douglass North have furthermore influenced my study. In addition to highlighting the largely informal and non-monetary resource allocation systems that have been found to characterize families, friendships and local communities, these scholars have provided me with concepts that are highly useful in the analysis of how school districts mobilized resources.⁴⁴ The conceptualization of in-kind taxes, gifts and informal arrangements in terms of redistribution and reciprocity has been particularly significant. These concepts will be explained when they are applied in the following chapters.⁴⁵

THE SWEDISH SETTING

While drawing upon examples from several countries, this mundane history of school finance focuses on the rise of mass schooling in Sweden. During the investigated period, Sweden was a large but sparsely populated country. Despite losing Finland and its dominions in continental Europe, Sweden still encompassed an area corresponding to roughly 80 per cent of France’s territory, with a length equivalent to the distance between Rome and Sweden’s southern coast. However, Sweden’s population, at 3.3 million in 1845, was less than one-tenth that of France. As such, Sweden was distinctly rural. In the 1840s, a total of 90 per cent of the Swedish population lived in rural areas.⁴⁶

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Sweden was reshaped by the great social, economic and cultural changes, termed the agrarian and industrial revolutions. The agrarian revolution meant sharp increases in population and agricultural production, and a rapid trend towards

increasing social differentiation. This period also witnessed increases in farmers' profitability, which stimulated the growth of a domestic market in which farmers could both sell their products and spend their profits. This pre-industrial growth created a country that was far from poor and backward, with a gross national product per capita that did not differ significantly from the European average in the mid-nineteenth century.⁴⁷

The agrarian revolution created the conditions necessary for the industrial revolution, which was characterized by an expanding industrial sector and sharp economic growth. In Sweden, this development began comparatively late, with its breakthrough period in the mid-nineteenth century, followed by a second industrial revolution beginning in the 1890s marked by increased specialization, technological innovations and improvements in productivity.⁴⁸ The 1850s saw the advancement of the sawmill industry, and the 1870s witnessed the growth of the engineering industry, followed by a sharp increase in iron and steel production until the beginning of World War I.⁴⁹ Although the social, economic and cultural consequences of this development cannot be overestimated, Sweden remained rural. In 1900, only 20 per cent of Sweden's population of about 5.1 million lived in the cities.⁵⁰

In this rural setting, household instruction (*hemundervisning*) was the main mechanism of popular education well into the nineteenth century. This system, regulated by the Church Law of 1686, laid the burden of instruction on the households. The head of each household was responsible for the education of its children and servants, while the clergy conducted regular examinations. In accordance with the Church Law, the instruction focused on reading ability and catechetical knowledge. As a result, reading ability became universal in Sweden during the eighteenth century.⁵¹

In the nineteenth century, a national school system regulated by the school act of 1842 (*folkskolestadgan*) replaced the system of household instruction. The school act did not mark the introduction of the first schools, because nearly one-half of the Swedish parishes had already established schools by 1842, and did not make schooling compulsory for children. Instead, the school act made it compulsory for each of Sweden's 2,308 parishes (1839) to organize a school district (*skoldistrikt*) that operated "at least one, preferably fixed, school."⁵² In this book, the term school district denotes either the geographical area of the district or, when applicable, the organizational entity governed by parish (and later, church) meetings and a school board.

The school act of 1842 created a rather decentralized school system in which the Swedish school districts had the main responsibility for organizing and funding schooling. These districts were required to establish schools, remunerate teachers and provide them with housing, necessary fuel, summer pasture and winter fodder for a cow and, if possible, a suitable land plot. In part, because Swedish school districts were based upon parish organizations, which had medieval origins, they had not only the legal right but also the legitimacy to collect the necessary taxes. Only when school districts could not accomplish this mode of financing due to poverty could they apply for subsidies from the central government.⁵³

Following the school act, the Swedish school system expanded. In the mid-1850s, all Swedish parishes had established school districts and schools, employing an estimated 3458 teachers in 1850. By 1868, the number of teachers had doubled to 7145, and following a rapid increase, the Swedish school districts employed 16,619 teachers in 1900.⁵⁴ As a result, the extent of schoolchildren's education increased. In 1910, estimates show that 75 per cent of all school-aged children in Sweden were enrolled in school, with an average attendance of 80 per cent during the 166 days of an average school year (see Table 1.2).

As they grew in number, Swedish primary schools became increasingly differentiated. The school act of 1842 distinguished between fixed schools,

Table 1.2 The rise of mass schooling in Sweden, 1812–1910

<i>Year</i>	<i>Enrolment ratio (%)</i>	<i>School year (weeks)</i>	<i>Attendance (%)</i>	<i>Actual school year (days)</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Schools</i>
1812	5.4	23.9	25	36		957
1839					1,537	1516
1843	21.2	29.3	33.9	60	2,785	
1868	64.9	34.3	43.2	89	7,145	6919
1890	72.9	34.3	59.3	122	13,508	10,563
1910	75.3	34.3	80.4	166	21,585	14,894

Sources: Ljungberg and Nilsson, *Human Capital and Economic Growth*, tab. 1; BiSOS P (1868, 1890), *Statistisk årsbok* (1914), Paulsson, *Historik öfver folkundervisningen*, 432; Aquilonius, *Svenska folkskolans historia* 2, 266–67; Sjöstrand, *Pedagogikens historia* III:2, 341. Attendance refers to those enrolled. The data for school attendance refer to schoolchildren aged 7–15 years. The data for teachers refer to all kinds of teachers, including teachers of handicrafts. The data for schools in 1812 refer to the year 1814, and the data for teachers in 1843 refer to the year 1847.