



EDITORIAL

Notes from the Editors

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As a result of technological developments in recent decades we see that the models of editorial management for scientific journals have changed. New needs for openness and access have led to a publishing structure beside printing and distributing only with paper. Rating lists and index over quality have driven scientific journal to specify their demands and develop detailed guidelines to authors and reviewers. The internationalisation of higher education and research, as well as multidisciplinary research trends has motivated journals to broaden their scope and to become multilingual. The specialized journals in the field of educational history have not been left unaffected by these changes. Apart from affecting the major European journals established in the 1960s and 1970s – *Paedagogica Historica* (1961), *History of Education* (1972) and *Histoire de l'éducation* (1978) – these developments have also enabled an increasing number of journals dedicated to this field of research. These include *History of Education & Children's Literature* (2006), *IJHE Bildungsgeschichte – International Journal for the Historiography of Education* (2011), and *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación* (2014). The *Nordic Journal of Educational History* is certainly also a reflection of the changing infrastructure of educational history.

Some consequences of these changes on editorial management were discussed recently during a series of panels and roundtable discussions at the International Standing Conference for the History of Education (ISCHE) in Chicago 2016. The activities were following up on symposia in London 2014 and Istanbul 2015, arranged by the ISCHE Standing Working Group *Mapping the Discipline of History of Education*. During the roundtable debate one issue of most interest for editorial management were especially discussed: the external peer review process. This key component of ensuring the scientific reliability of a journal is, to large extent, carried out by external reviewers. As the roundtable debate showed, journals have to balance a number of aspects – including finding appropriate expertise, keeping a timetable and handling potential bias – in order to find principles for the review process that suits their distinct conditions.

The debate revealed that specialised journals organized the review process in slightly different ways. Some journals selected reviewers mainly, or exclusively, from the editorial board, while others mainly used reviewers outside the editorial board. The role of the editors also varied. Some compiled and summarised the reviewers' comments, whereas others only communicated the reviewers' opinions as they were. Journals also used so-called desk rejection differently. Some journals used this selec-

tion approach fervently, while others rarely did. As was evident, this sort of selection has both advantages and disadvantages. It saves energy and time, both for editors, reviewers and authors, but have to be carried out carefully. Journals have to consider that screening manuscripts that do not conform to clearly stated editorial guidelines or to the journal's scope is one thing, but for editors to discard articles on grounds of research quality or originality, prior to the actual peer review process, is another. The later seems to challenge the principles of anonymity, expert evaluation and equality, which are cornerstones in the double-blind review process. Although there are no definite answers to the questions posed at the roundtable debate in Chicago, they are nevertheless important. For us members of the editorial team of the *Nordic Journal of Educational History*, it is important to follow this international debate closely and the issues will also be discussed at the journal's editorial meeting in late November.

This sixth issue of the NJEdH contains two articles and four book reviews. The first article, written by Professor Christian Lundahl (Örebro University), may be perceived as a part of the increased interest in transnational history and the material culture of schooling. Exploring how Swedish education was displayed at late nineteenth century World's Fairs, Lundahl is able to shed new light on how these fairs functioned as platforms for an aesthetic normativity that had consequences not only on a global scale, but also locally. In the second article, doctoral student in economic history Sandra Hellstrand at Stockholm University, investigate and discuss apprenticeship in Sweden and attempts to adopt an apprentice law following the de-regulation of apprenticeship in 1864. Her analysis shows that opposition against such a law was not uniform. Many key actors could unite regarding the need for legal regulation of apprenticeship, but they disagreed on the content of an apprentice law. The article makes use of Kathleen Thelen's model of institutional change and discusses the Swedish apprenticeship in relation to Germany and Great Britain.

These articles do not only contribute to our knowledge on the studied topic, they are also excellent examples of studies in educational history that can communicate to an audience outside the national realms that are investigated. In our era of international comparisons and international assessment programs, promoted by PISA and TIMMS, Lundahl's article is an example of academic scholarship that creates a critical distance to present day debates that often focus on quantitative estimates. Hellstrand's article similarly informs present day debate on vocational education, in which apprenticeships are often perceived as the perfect solution to the challenges of vocational education. In contrast to an often simplified debate, Hellstrand's investigation of the messy reality of politics shows how complicated political decisions are.