The Monitorial Movement and the Rise of Curriculum Administration: A Comparative View

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Except, perhaps, for "Herbartianism" (which was, however, more or less a secondary-level event), no educational concept had such a worldwide impact on the early history of mass education as the monitorial movement initiated by Andrew Bell (1753–1832) and Joseph Lancaster (1778–1838). Unfortunately, we do not possess a complete account of this movement's unusual story. Whereas Anglo-American or Scandinavian research on the history of elementary education has always been aware of the era of the monitorial system (see Vormeland, 1956; Kaestle, 1973a, 1973b; Lawson & Silver, 1973; Nordin, 1973; Barcan, 1980; Coolahan, 1981; McGary, 1986; Dokka, 1989; Hamilton, 1989), the contrary is true for Germany, where the movement is hardly ever mentioned in the more recent historiography of schooling.[2]

Trying to make up for but a little of what has been neglected would still be beyond the scope of this outline. Instead, an example shall be used to find out about the role curriculum administration, i.e., a country's top level of national curriculum control, was able to play in preparing the way for monitorial instruction. The first section sums up the origins of the monitorial system, the second is a brief outline of its expansion, and the third takes up the case of Denmark, Schleswig, and Holstein to illustrate the role of curriculum administration. Finally, section four asks why the implementation of the monitorial system failed in several countries.

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[1] Hopmann, S. T. (1990). The monitorial movement and the rise of curriculum administration: a comparative view. In H. Haft & S. T. Hopmann (Eds), Case Studies in Curriculum Administration History (pp. 13–30). Falmer Press. Falmers does not exist anymore, permission granted by S.T. Hopmann.

[2] The following account of the movement's role in curriculum administration history singles out preliminary results concerning one feature of a research project about the formation of curriculum administration in Schleswig, Holstein, Denmark and Prussia in the 19th century. A documentary history of the movement's rise and fall in these countries contains those (often unpublished) sources and documents of the case which to present and explain here would have exceeded the purpose of the paper.

The Origins of the Monitorial Movement

The rise and fall of the monitorial movement are connected with the aforementioned names of Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster (see Hamel, 1818; Southey, 1846; Salmon, 1904, 1932; Kaestle, 1973a; Nordin, 1973; McGary, 1986). Bell's own story of his 'experiment in education' (1797) is widely known. About 200 years ago, Bell, a Scottish clergyman, went to India as an army chaplain. He had already held various posts when in 1789, he was appointed superintendent of the Military Male Orphan Asylum at Egmore near Madras. On one of his morning rides, he passed a school where he saw the children write with their fingers on plain sand heaped up especially for the purpose, instead of using slates or other material of the usual kind. Bell was so enthusiastic about this easy method of teaching how to write that he wanted to adopt it for the school of Egmore Asylum. His teachers, however, opposed the idea. Bell did not give up but fired them all and replaced them with some of his pupils.

Bell's pupils did not, of course, possess the skills and training necessary to organize lessons completely on their own. Thus, the next steps followed almost as a matter of course. First, subject matter had to be carefully subdivided and systematically restructured, so that the pupil teachers could be provided with a precise and clear-cut introduction to their tasks. Second, since there were no more teachers, maintenance of discipline was all the more dependent, particularly in a military orphanage, on strict regulation of the daily routine, which would force every pupil to comply with the necessary order.

Shortly after his return to the United Kingdom in 1797, Bell published a brief account of his experience, which met with weak reception. Somebody who managed to attract more interest in those days was a young Quaker of not even 20 years of age, Joseph Lancaster, who had opened a school without any public funds, in one of London's slum quarters. He must have been an exceptionally popular teacher in his neighborhood, as his school was soon overrun by so many pupils that regular operation became completely impossible. Since Lancaster could not afford to employ assistant teachers, he filled the vacancies with the best of his pupils, as Bell had done at Madras. The conceptual implications were the same as Bell's: subdivision of subject-matter, rules to enforce discipline, etc. (Lancaster, 1803). Lancaster earned himself a reputation which soon spread to secure him even the king's favor so that an ever-increasing number of schools adopted his approach (Salmon, 1904; McGary, 1986).

However, since Lancaster was a Quaker, religious instruction in his schools was not shaped to inculcate the doctrines of the state church. Thus, quite a few

of the latter's representatives who were anxious to preserve the church's control over the schools felt uneasy about Lancaster's success. Remembering Bell's treatise, which Lancaster had repeatedly referred to, they invited the former to launch a counter-movement founded on both his (identical) educational principles and firm adherence to Anglican beliefs. The ensuing battle of paternity of the monitorial system, fought with sharp polemics and poignant attacks (see Burgess, 1958; Kaestle, 1973a; McGary, 1986; Salmon, 1904), met with very little understanding from contemporary writers outside of England. In England, the state church soon won out, although it could neither eradicate the Lancaster schools altogether nor secure a position of durable control (Burgess, 1958). Outside of England, the *British and Foreign School Society* founded by Lancaster's friends gained the upper hand, since Lancaster's version was not prejudiced in favor of any particular Christian denomination (see Binns, 1908; Burgess, 1958; Kaestle, 1973a; McGary, 1986; Nordin, 1973.; Salmon, 1904).

Despite much ado about differences between Bell and Lancaster, outside of England, the method soon came to be known, without any distinction, as the Bell-Lancaster system.[3] Therefore, it may be sufficient to give a short summary of the basic rules of the monitorial system common to both approaches:

- As may be gathered from the name, all the various systems of monitorial instruction were based on using pupils as assistant teachers.
- In order to operate the system, all the pupils were grouped according to different kinds of subject matter (i.e., reading, writing, arithmetic), so that each group could be looked after by one of the more advanced learners.

[3] Apart from the religious differences, educational ones were scarcely ever noticed. From the point of view of the history of schooling, the authorship debate was quite meaningless. The concept of the helper-system can be easily traced back as far as ancient Athens, Sparta, Rome, or Jerusalem. It was one of the most widely discussed educational approaches during the era of the reformation and the subsequent centuries (for example in Monster & Abrahamson, 1821; Riecke, 1875; Tiegs, 1897; Jurgens, 1913; Kintrup, 1926; Uhlig, 1964; Nordin, 1973, pp. 16 ff.; Foucault, 1976, pp. 173 ff.; Hamilton, 1989). Just before it was revived by Bell and Lancaster, Fleuri de Paulet, in 1772, had won the French king's support to try it there, in a military orphanage. The concept of adequate elementarization and systematic stratification of subject-matter had been discussed at least since Comenius, and remained a major issue of the educational discourse all through the 18th century up to the days of Pestalozzi. In short, from a theoretical viewpoint, Bell and Lancaster's "discovery" was just another incidence of the educationist's favorite occupation: the re-invention of the wheel.

- Grouping the pupils according to levels of achievement required subject matter to was subdivided into portions small enough for the monitors to handle.
- Since the pupils' groups all worked simultaneously, there was constant bustle going on. Thus, a disciplinary system had to be introduced that would help the monitors ensure control and steadiness of work.
- The classroom and the teaching materials had to be arranged in a way so as to provide the technical and spatial facilities necessary for different groups of pupils to perform their respective tasks at the same time.

There have been other features of the monitorial system listed in the literature, for instance:

- The use of certain teaching materials, for example, cardboard displays of subject matter, or sand tables for elementary teaching,
- The reduction of subject-matter to nothing more than basic teaching of the three Rs and religious instruction,
- The blending of writing, reading, and later also factual subjects,
- Different systems and instruments of punishment, drill, and control.

However, these features were not common to all of the different versions. From the five basic characteristics of monitorial instruction, this method's advantages for the administration and organization of schooling may readily be derived:

- *Low cost:* The idea was that a single teacher could look after any number (even 1000, according to Lancaster, 1803) of pupils. As to materials, hardly anything was required except for cheap cardboard displays (however, the initial investment necessary to provide sufficiently large and aptly furnished classrooms was sometimes quite considerable).
- *Modest demands on teachers' qualifications:* In principle, no educational or other special background was required for someone to be trained to become a teacher within a short span of time (varying, with the different approaches, from two to twenty-six weeks).
- *Standardization:* Portioning of the curriculum necessarily implied a careful selection and sequential arrangement of subject matter, which was thus shaped into a well-structured canonical body.

- *Control:* Subject matter being uniformly patterned and precisely delimitated, it did not take special preparatory training for a supervisor to check whether the canonical body was actually adhered to.
- *Individualization:* Since the portions of subject matter were arranged in consecutive sequences, a pupil who had stayed away for some time could easily resume the course exactly where he had left it.

Besides, some, but not all types of monitorial instruction offered still further advantages, which were particularly popular, such as:

- The military strictness of the disciplinary system,
- The applicability of the basic model to fit any kind of subject matter that lent itself to portioning, the possibility of combining the system with whatever other teaching methods (like different approaches to elementary reading instruction), and (insofar as Lancasterian tradition was followed),
- The suitability of the system irrespective of any particular religious denomination.

A Sweeping Success

About a quarter of a century following Bell and Lancaster's initiative, that is, by the 1820s and 1830s, monitorial schools had been established in various countries all over the world, and frequently came to be the prevalent form of mass education.[4] One of the reasons for this quick expansion certainly was

[4] Until today, accounts of the monitorial movement's international success are based on contemporary reports (see Hamel, 1818; Harnisch, 1819; Bonnier, 1819; Bruun, 1820; Monster and Abrahamson, 1821; Zschokke, 1822; Dinter, 1828). International acceptance being a key argument in the monitorial crusade, these reports may once in a while exaggerate the importance of the movement's impact. However, comparisons with later written case studies (see Riecke, 1846, 1859, 1875; Salmon, 1904, 1907, 1932; Ellis, 1907; Binns, 1908; Reigart, 1916; Bang, 1921; Kintrup, 1926; McCadden, 1936, 1937; Riley, 1941; Spragge, 1941; Erichsen, 1950; Vormeland, 1956; Burgess, 1958; Weiss-Pedersen, 1960; Uhlig, 1964; Wall, 1966; Hoybye-Nielsen, 1969; Daly 1979; Kaestle, 1973a, 1973b; Nordin, 1973; Larsen, 1984; McGary, 1986; Hopmann & Haft, 1988; Hamilton, 1989) and with national histories of schooling (see Japsen, 1972; Lawson and Silver, 1973; McCann, 1977a; Barcan, 1980; Coolahan, 1981; Dokka, 1989) indicate that the basic facts and figures reported by contemporaries (was there a monitorial institution; who took the initiative, etc.) are reliable.

the Lancastrian *British and Foreign School Society*'s vigorous (and, once again, pioneering) effort which fell nothing short of a world-wide public relations campaign; members of the Society travelled to Australia, India, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and the United States, or, across Europe, to Greece, Bulgaria, Denmark, Sweden, and Russia, among other countries (Salmon, 1904; Binns, 1908; Uhlig, 1964; Wall, 1966; Kaestle, 1973a; Nordin, 1973; McGary, 1986; Möckle, 1986).

Success is not, of course, just a matter of advertisement. The offer must have been in demand. Yet the fact that in some countries, the system got stuck with a few experimental schools, while in others, it did not gain a foothold at all, still awaits explanation. According to one customary view, the monitorial system mainly served as a cheap means for enforcing compulsory school attendance (see Madoc-Jones, 1977) and thus could not make an impact where, like in Prussia, Austria, and the states of Southern Germany, compulsory schooling was already established on an extended scale (Gunther, 1988). This view, however, does not stand well with a sample examination of national histories of schooling (based on the above-mentioned literature). Outside of England, monitorial instruction actually scored its biggest successes in countries with relatively advanced systems of formal education, such as Denmark, Schleswig, Holstein, or certain Swiss cantons. The majority of the other countries where the method was applied had certainly not yet established compulsory education, but this does not really prove anything, since, at the beginning of the 19th century, worldwide expansion was quite unlikely to meet with compulsory school attendance as a nationwide reality.

Considering the diversity of the histories of the monitorial system's implementation attempts to credit one single factor with its success would not seem very promising. Apparently, each of the eight characteristics listed below made its contribution.

Low cost

When the success story started off in Europe, the continent was financially ruined after the Napoleonic Wars. Among the various alternating governments, almost none was ever in a position stable enough to enforce the financing of elementary education. At the same time, however, the French Revolution as well as the Napoleonic "people's army" had created a public

need for mass education as a means of securing loyalty. Monitorial instruction seemed to offer both, i.e., mass education at low cost as a means of social control (the low-cost-argument is used in almost every contemporary European and American appraisal of monitorial instruction).

This approach was found convincing elsewhere, too, as in Simon Bolivar's Latin America (Salmon, 1904; Uhlig, 1964; Kaestle, 1973a; McGary, 1986), or in British colonies (Binns, 1908; Spragge, 1941; Barcan, 1980).

Reduced teacher training

Apart from a few scattered seminars, formal teacher training had as yet not been introduced. Hence, a concept was an attractive offer that did not require any particular educational background from those who wanted to become teachers and trained them within a few weeks. This is why monitorial instruction, where it was not launched off solely by local initiative, often began with a so-called "normal school" operating as a teacher training establishment (as was the case, for instance, in Australia, Denmark, France, Ireland, Colombia, Prussia, Russia, Schleswig, and in some of the Swiss cantons, normally following the examples given by the normal schools of the National or the British and Foreign Society. (See Bonnier, 1819; Zschokke, 1822; Salmon, 1907; Binns, 1908; Uhlig, 1964; Holm, 1957; Daly, 1979; Barcan, 1980; Coolahan, 1981; Larsen, 1984).

Standardization

Public curriculum administration was as yet unknown (or only just emerging as in Prussia), as was, therefore, a unified definition of an elementary curriculum reaching beyond the interests of the church. The system of monitorial instruction, however, permitted a simple definition of a canonical body of elementary skills by means of its standardized tools for reading, writing, and arithmetic. This standardization had an important side effect for curriculum history: from then on, the criteria relevant to curriculum organization ceased to be mainly external ones (such as the ecclesiastical year, or the catechism), but came to be tied, instead, to the school's own logic of the teachability of subject matter (see Hopmann & Haft, 1988a). This risk of losing curriculum control may explain why some church leaders had an ambiguous relationship to the implementation of monitorial instruction.

Control

Not only Bell and Lancaster's followers were quarrelling about how to maintain control in view of the irresistible development of mass education. The problem rose, inevitably, wherever schooling spread. Control became impossible without a precise definition of what elementary schooling should consist of (Hopmann, 1988). Especially where the state itself had taken over educational responsibility, like in the case of the military orphanages, which often served as model schools (beginning with Bell's experiment in the Military Male Orphan Asylum at Madras followed by similar schools in, e.g., Christiania in Norway, Copenhagen, Eckernförde in Schleswig, Königsberg in Prussia, and Paris) the delimitation of subject matter was a much-debated problem, and the monitorial system promised an easily supervisee solution (Zschokke, 1822; Vormeland 1956; Nordin, 1973; Hopmann, 1988).

Individualization of school attendance

This seems to be a recurrent motive in nearly all of the histories of the method's implementation. It is, moreover, one of the few factors that provide some grounding for the assumption that the system may have been particularly useful prior to the firm establishment of compulsory education. The monitorial approach permitted the simultaneous instruction of irregularly attending children at quite different developmental stages. This advantage may also explain why the system was highly successful not only in the urban regions with their comparatively large numbers of school children but also in rural areas, where the children spent the summer months working in the fields rather than sitting in the schools. Unfortunately, until now, no one has thoroughly studied this aspect.

Rigid discipline

Without an established school culture, the teachers often felt quite helpless in front of large, heterogeneous groups. So, they could not but welcome a teaching system which kept the pupils at work and under supervision all the time, and which could be easily directed by simple commands. Besides, as capitalism rose, accustoming the pupils to the strict order of factory work may well have been an additional appealing feature (see Braun, 1838; Uhlig, 1964; Hamilton, 1989; from an early critical viewpoint: Diesterweg, 1836). However, the more important disciplinary problem was a different one: after

the Prussian drill had been both socially and militarily frustrated by the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, transformation into a bourgeois society depended on the development of achievement-based structures of discipline. This was exactly what monitorial instruction promised. So, it was not a mere accident that politically engaged military leaders[5] were especially keen about the introduction of monitorial instruction, and that the system was nowhere as successful as in military education (see Hedegaard, 1974).

Versatility

Basically, monitorial instruction could be applied to any course and any subject matter. It simply claimed to be the most effective method for nearly every teaching purpose (as proposed by Bell, 1797 and Lancaster, 1803; for a splendid late example of this viewpoint, see Wangemann, 1851). Such a claim must be understood with a view to the educational debate of the time, which was (like the educational concept of the Enlightenment before, and Herbartianism afterwards) still guided by the conviction that there must be an educational passe-partout, or some "natural" method to teach everything. The universal approach of monitorial instruction rendered some plausibility to this claim. Moreover, since the system was indifferent to the contents, it could be utilized by conflicting political factions alike.[6]

Non-denominational character

Being indifferent as to the contents, the system developed, at least in its Lancaster variant, a non-denominational character, which helped its expansion in such denominationally mixed areas as the United States, where the heterogeneous immigrant population could be treated to Protestant but certainly not to denominational mass schooling (see Reigart, 1916; Smith, 1967; Kaestle, 1973b).

A comprehensive review of all these arguments reveals that, during the first period of expanding mass education, monitorial instruction offered a cheap

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[5] Military leaders took an active part in those days' educational politics (see Monster & Abrahamson, 1821, 1823, 1828; Kintrup, 1926; Uhlig, 1964; Nordin, 1973) and supported, for example, as well the usage of Pestalozzi's methods (Stübig 1982).

[6] As it was not only in England, amid the struggle between National Church and dissenters, but also, for instance, in Russia by both the tsar's administration and the decabrists (Burgess, 1958; Kaestle, 1973a; Uhlig, 1964).

and versatile system of teaching and control, which was readily applied. At the zenith of its popularity, in the 1830s, the system was practised at more than 20,000 schools all over the world (an almost unbelievable success, given the conditions of that early period of organized education!), about 3000 of them situated in Schleswig, Holstein, and Denmark.

Mutual Instruction and the Rise of Curriculum Administration in Denmark, Schleswig, and Holstein

After all, one should not be surprised to find that it was a young military officer who propagated monitorial instruction in Denmark, Schleswig, and Holstein. He had come to know the system when, as a soldier, he had spent some time in England, France, and Switzerland, before he managed to win the Danish king over to the new concept (see Hedegaard, 1974; Larsen, 1984).

Things were going badly in Denmark in those days. During the Napoleonic war, the country had sided with Napoleon and thus not only lost Norway but also was forced to declare national bankruptcy (for a comprehensive overview, see Carr, 1963). However, in 1814 and still in the midst of the crisis, the king had enacted, after 25 years of preparation (Markussen, 1988), new school regulations for Denmark as well as for the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, which were then still subordinate to the Danish crown.

Compared with the standards of the time, these regulations were masterpieces. They provided for a distinct subdivision of the educational system into rural, urban, and advanced schools, each being prescribed a number of briefly stated minimum achievement standards, and they settled the questions of educational obligations as well as financing (Erichsen & Sellschopp, 1964; Markussen, 1988). The first teacher training seminars had already been founded by the end of the 18th century (Markussen, 1988). The development of local schooling had become subject to more careful state control. News about monitorial instruction had already been spread—by, among others, delegates of the British and Foreign School Society—but the system had as yet not really taken off (see Bell, 1808; Lancaster, 1808; Natorp, 1817; Hamel, 1818; Bonnier, 1819; Harder, 1819; Harnisch, 1819; Krszjyer, 1819).

Goodwill was there, but money was lacking, and so were methods of actually implementing existing plans for mass education. This was the state of

affairs when, in 1819, the aforementioned young officer. J.N.B. Abrahamson, arrived, and recommended to the king that a committee be set up to supervise a practical test of the system at one of Copenhagen's garrison schools. The experiment worked well enough for the committee to be ordered to disseminate monitorial instruction (despite strong objections from within the administration and the church), with the state intervening heavily in support of the new system (see Monster and Abrahamson, 1821; Ström, 1821; Larsen, 1984). As to Schleswig and Holstein, comparable efforts started one year later, in 1820, when a military orphanage school at Eckernförde was declared an experimental school, and, again, a committee was set up to promote the expansion of monitorial instruction (see Eggers, 1822; Krohn, 1825; Jessen, 1860; Erichsen, 1950; Holm, 1957; Weiss-Pedersen, 1960; Hopmann & Haft, 1988a).

Things would most probably have remained within the confines of a local educational experiment, had not all the different levels of school administration become involved with further implementation. Successive demands included sending properly qualified teachers to the normal schools of Eckernförde and Copenhagen for advanced training, selecting new teachers, preferably from among those who had passed through that training, to publish annual reports on the method's implementation, establishing experimental schools in each of the school districts, adapting new school buildings to the needs of the system, and having all teachers regularly submit written reports on their work (ibid.).[7]

These state regulations were supported by countless regional and local requests, controls, and orders concerning every aspect of school organization and teaching. The local clergymen and school boards were held responsible

[7] To give but a short impression of the administrative interventions on behalf of the implementation of monitorial instruction, the following list sums up the most important decisions made in Copenhagen (i.e. at the state level) to support the implementation process in Schleswig and Holstein: Concerning the official distribution of Monster & Abrahamson, Om den indbyrdes Undervisningsvesen og Verd (13/11/1821):

- Concerning the status of the normal school in Eckernförde (22/2/1823)
- Concerning the implementation in every suited school of the duchies (29/5/1824)
- Concerning the request that teachers should attend the normal school (1/6/1824)
- Concerning the order to select new teachers preferably from among those who had passed through that training (8/6/1824)

for enacting the required steps to implement the system; clergymen and teachers had to report about school organization and advances in teaching, school attendance, etc., at least once a year. Although monitorial instruction was not made compulsory in a formal sense, both willingness and failure to participate in its implementation were carefully registered until the early 1840s. This was, in fact, sufficient: at that time, nearly all of the appropriately sized schools were fully or partially run according to the new system (Ronnenkamp, 1840; Weiss-Pedersen, 1960).[8]

But how did a system that was geared to the schooling of large masses within the shortest possible span of time fit into an educational scene where 7–9 years of school attendance were compulsory, and where there were hardly any blanks left on the school map? Like everywhere else where it was applied, the monitorial system had to be tailored to match national conditions.

As a first step, the committee of Copenhagen developed guidelines for limiting the system's usage (Monster & Abrahamson, 1821; Larsen, 1984). As a rule, monitorial instruction was to be applied to primary teaching only, i.e., during the 2–4 years needed to learn reading, writing, and fundamental arithmetic. The upper one of the two grades of the elementary school continued to be taught in a traditional way. To be sure, experiments were staged (in Sweden, Switzerland, and Scotland; ibid.; Nordin, 1973) to offer monitorial instruction to advanced learners, too, but these experiments never

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- Concerning the request to buy appropriate teaching materials (7/9/1824; 1/2/1825)
- Concerning the use of those materials (17/1/1826)
- Concerning the establishment of experimental schools in each of the school districts (14/3/1826)
- Orders concerning the request to produce regular reports on the methods implementation (5/2/1827; 16/6/1827; 15/12/1827 etc. until 4/3/1833) C
- Concerning the need to adopt school buildings to the needs of the system (14/4/1829; 14/1/1830)
- Concerning the complete implementation of mutual instruction in the duchies (8/8/1839)

[8] The combined juridical and administrational effort could, however, not overcome any local resistance or idleness. After 20 years of fierce promotion and rising control, one of the most engaged leaders of the monitorial movement in the duchies, the reverend and member of the monitorial commission J.C. Jessen, had still to complain about incompetent teachers and inactive local communities (Jessen, 1840).

found their way into the state's implementation policy. It was this deviation from Bell and Lancaster's basic concept which, at least in theory, avoided the rigid restriction of mass education to elementary skills, with all its effects on the social distribution of knowledge, which monitorial instruction had frequently been criticized for.

The second step, which was developed at Eckernförde, aimed at a change in the arrangement of instruction (Eggers, 1822; Krohn, 1825; Diekmann, 1826; Moller, 1826; Baumfelder, 1835; Holm, 1957; Weiss Pedersen, 1960). The teachers were to remain more than what Lancaster had reduced them to, i.e., more than just organizers of lessons. Therefore, from the groups of learners, sections were combined to be taught, one at a time, by the teachers themselves. The monitors, meanwhile, had to look after the other sections, doing exercises on what the teacher had explained to them before. Thus, the monitors acted as mere supporters, whereas responsibility for the lessons rested with the teacher alone. To stress its difference from the Bell-Lancaster system, this new variant of monitorial instruction was named, after a French example, mutual instruction (although this somewhat curious choice of name did nothing to point to the specific difference).[9] It was religious instruction that posed especially difficult problems.

As long as all that mattered was traditional rote learning of biblical verses, or of the catechism, monitorial or mutual instruction had stood the test exceptionally well. Difficulties arose, however, when the children were expected to develop a vivid understanding of religious subjects like the life of Christ or the confession (as they were by a Protestant reform movement that flourished during the first half of the 19th century, both within and outside the state church; Bugge, 1965). To this end, the teacher had to be able to narrate, to

[9] The difference between the original Lancasterian model, its Danish version, and the adaption made at the Eckernförde Military Orphanage was a much disputed issue in Germany (Witt, 1827, 1828; Peters, 1829, 1837; Redling, 1831; Schmidt, 1831; Zerrenner, 1832, 1834, 1837; Nissen, 1833; Panum, 1833; Baumfelder, 1835; Müller, 1835; Diesterweg, 1836; Ronnenkamp, 1837; Grafe, 1839; Sickel, 1839; Jessen 1840; Reimers, 1849). Why it was so important to differ from the English and Danish models cannot be explained by educational history (e.g. different standards of teaching and school organization) alone. Apparently, the constant effort to appear different was also guided by raising tensions about the national status of the duchies (should they be Danish or German), which made anything coming in from Copenhagen suspicious.

explain, and to illustrate, i.e., to teach in a way no monitor could.[10] After some time, the administration gave in to increasing pressure and ordained that each school day had to begin with religious instruction taught exclusively by the teachers themselves (see Larsen, 1984; Weiss-Pedersen, 1960).

The dispute about religious instruction indicates that the mutual system was not implemented without friction. The relationship with the church, as with a traditional curriculum power, turned out to be a particularly precarious one. Nothing could be reformed without the church's support. All regional and local school supervisors were clergymen. The committees charged with the promotion of mutual instruction, however, were expressly placed under the authority not of the church but of the highest civil administrations at Copenhagen. The state church itself proved unable to pronounce a clear attitude. There were friends and enemies of the new system on each level (Ronnenkamp, 1840; Jessen, 1840, 1860; Erichsen, 1950). This discord was detrimental to the church's chances of regaining dominance over the curriculum. The church's power had been weakened too much to achieve more than partial success (like in the case of religious instruction). Thus, the door to secular curriculum administration was open. However, the objectives or instruments of administration were not replaced but systematically combined to make up a coherent implementation policy serving the purpose of the state.

Stories of Success and Failure: Or, Why There Was No Monitorial System in Prussia

The example of Denmark, Schleswig, and Holstein did not go unnoticed outside the national borders. The early 19th century's fondness for educational tourism discovered Copenhagen and Eckernförde. As could be expected, judgment was divided. Whereas some observers, like Bell and Lancaster before, pondered over the dawning of a new educational era, to others, the whole system seemed just horrible. Still others—for instance, Diesterweg and

[10] As a last resort, leading members of the monitorial movement in Schleswig and Holstein tried to present the didactical approach of mutual instruction as a truly christian one (see Jessen, 1840; Ronnenkamp, 1840), thereby implicitly changing the point of reference from Lancaster to Bell.

Zerrenner, the then-leading theorists of elementary education—successively held both opinions (Zerenner, 1837). Model schools emerged in Central, East, and Southern Germany (see Riecke, 1846, 1875; Kintrup, 1926), following occasional earlier experiments with mutual instruction. Yet otherwise, in Denmark, the Swiss canton of Fribourg, or, later, Sweden, the respective administrations did not declare the program their authoritative curriculum policy (Zschokke, 1822; Nordin, 1973; Hopmann, 1988).

It had become increasingly clear that monitorial instruction was not going to be implemented everywhere as smoothly as Bell, and Lancaster, and his followers from the *British and Foreign School Society* had hoped it would. The English way of using the program to back up the very beginnings of a national school system could not be repeated anywhere. It seems rather to have ensued from the special conditions of an economically far advanced society which, at the same time, had developed neither organized mass education nor even preliminary steps toward a national educational policy.[11] Lancaster's personal engagements with Simon Bolivar and in the United States both turned out to be short-lived disasters (see Salmon, 1904). In countries like Australia, Russia, Norway, and the United States, for all their structural differences, monitorial instruction never became the prevailing feature of mass education. The present state of research does not permit any clear-cut answer as to which conditions may have accounted for the rise and decline of the monitorial movement. Undoubtedly, however, the respective levels of development of curriculum administration have played a decisive role.

Generally, the rise of curriculum administration is tied to three prerequisites (Hopmann, 1988). First, there must be some acknowledgment of a need for administration. Second, there must be agents capable of attending to such a need. Finally, these agents must be equipped with the appropriate means to approach that need. If one of these components—need, agents, means—is missing, curriculum administration cannot emerge.

The need may be defined either in administrative terms as a policy followed for whatever reasons or socially as an ongoing tendency. For the second variant, England is a clear case in point: from the point of view of the

[11] As demonstrated by national as well as local studies about the implementation of monitorial instruction in England and Wales (Burgess, 1958; Lawson & Silver, 1979; Frith, 1977; Goldström, 1977; Madoc-Jones, 1977; McCann 1977b; McGary, 1986).

National Church, the threat of an uncontrolled school system initiated on a local grassroots level was looming dark (Burgess, 1958). The first variant, however, has been, up to the present, the more frequent one: the central agencies are interested in extending mass education since, for the state, nothing else, perhaps except for conscription, comes in handier as a tool of direct interference with every individual biography. Yet where this central interest lacked economically or otherwise motivated local support, as it did in the poorly developed countries of Latin America, or in Russia, the centrally authorized policy proved insufficient. The usual precondition was a merger of both factors, as it took shape in the Central European states during the early 19th century. Such a constellation, which also appears in other administrative domains, may be described as "defensive modernization" (Wehler, 1987): the state or its representative central agencies take pains to secure their interests by directing irresistible social movements into controllable channels.

Such a strategy requires effective agencies capable of assuming the role of a governmental or quasi-governmental administration. If, like in the United States, a national agency capable of implementing an educational policy did not exist, the monitorial movement was unable to gain national guardianship even where local models were successful, and a given need was recognized (McCadden, 1937; Riley, 1941; Kaestle, 1973a; Nordin, 1973). In England, it was the National Church that played the role of a quasi-governmental agency, while in the colonies, the colonial administrations had taken over together with the National or the British and Foreign School Society. In Denmark, Ireland, France, and other European countries, quite the same pattern prevailed: special committees or societies for monitorial instruction assumed responsibility for implementation, thereby joining forces with the governmental administrations (ibid.; Monster & Abrahamson, 1822; Zschokke, 1822; Salmon, 1904, 1907; Uhlig, 1964; Daly, 1979; Coolahan, 1981). It should thus be emphasized that the system was successful where a non-administrative movement aligned itself with the general administration, or vice versa. If a specialized governmental curriculum administration already existed, so that the movement had to compete with it, cooperation remained wanting, and so did success.

The decisive factor, however, was the availability of appropriate means. Where, like in Denmark, general administration was able to exert a coordinated impact on several different levels, such as supervision, school equipment,

or training and employment of teachers, the prospects for success looked bright. Without the regulations of 1814, which provided for a unification of the educational system, neither the legal nor the technical instruments for such a far-reaching intervention would have been available. In Sweden, a comparable regulation of schooling was not implemented before 1842. As a consequence, monitorial instruction, although introduced even earlier and under otherwise similar conditions, for a long scored only modest success (Nordin, 1973). Nothing very different seems to have happened in a number of other European countries, which equally lacked a national organization of elementary schooling, and where the initial success of the monitorial movement soon fell flat.

But why did the movement fail even in countries like Prussia or the states of Southern Germany, where the necessary conditions—i.e., need, agencies, and means—were given beyond all doubt? The initiative of the Prussian state even preceded that of Copenhagen by 10 years; a normal school with some sort of mutual instruction had been established as a forerunner to be followed by a reform of the whole organization of elementary education (see Wiese-Zeuch, 1985). The sudden termination of the experiment, after only a few years of operation (something that had happened in other German countries before), cannot really have dealt the final blow to the monitorial movement (Hopmann, 1988).

After a similar experiment using a Pestalozzi-type school had been cut short at Copenhagen, the strategy of implementation was nevertheless soon reverted to (ibid.; Hopmann & Haft, 1988b). The Prussian educationists' oft-quoted criticism of monitorial instruction is equally unlikely to have been the casting vote. By 1820, they took rather a favorable view of the system; it was not before the late 1830s, when the latter had already begun to decline in England, Denmark, and Schleswig-Holstein, that the educational debate of Prussia gained full swing (see note 8).

Maybe it is helpful to remember that the monitorial movement obviously did not go along well with a previously institutionalized curriculum administration. The traditional policy of regulations used to be supplemented by two competing strategies of school innovation (Hopmann, 1988; Hopmann & Haft, 1988b; Haft & Hopmann, 1988a). The one the monitorial movement also adhered to was eager of remodulating classroom teaching to the utmost possible degree. This approach typically utilized normal schools to serve as

a living curriculum equivalent, where teachers could be trained in a short-cut fashion, and where the effects of the curriculum could be documented. Instead of rigid standardization of the curriculum, the other strategy preferred extensive training of teachers in teacher college seminars. The main difference between the two approaches lay in their respective concepts of classroom teaching. The system of the normal schools was based on detailed curricular prescription. The elaborated scheme of monitorial instruction was explicitly aimed at a kind of "teacher-proof effect," i.e., every teacher was to act exactly like he would have done in a normal school. The seminary system, on the other hand, wanted to qualify the teachers so that they could themselves undertake responsibility in reconstructing the curriculum to fit their own particular classroom situation.

Unlike Denmark, Prussia and the states of Southern Germany had responded to their defeats in the Napoleonic wars and the ensuing territorial repartitions of 1806 by launching radical administrative reforms, which, as a rule, also comprised a specialized governmental school administration explicitly charged with the responsibility for the entire curriculum (Hopmann, 1988). Since this responsibility could no longer be transferred to external agencies, like the monitorial movement or the churches, the new administrations found themselves in a difficult position. The normal schools' remodulations of local teaching were rigid enough for any consequences to be most easily ascribed to the supervising agencies.

Where things went that way, like they did in the Swiss canton of Fribourg by about 1820, the administration soon ceased to be able to cope with the critics' pressure (Zschokke, 1822). Less detailed curricula, on the other hand, were also less risky and required less interference with local circumstances. Therefore, newly established specialized curriculum administrations usually opted for the second alternative, that is, for the separation of curriculum construction and instructional implementation. This separation, which figured among the basic characteristics of the Prussian system, was an absolute necessity if the administration wished to avoid being burdened suddenly with the responsibility for any outcome schooling would procure under its authority. To make monitorial instruction compulsory would have meant shouldering that burden.

The remaining question is why monitorial instruction declined even where it had once been successful. Studies on the subject are as yet not available. The

decline cannot have been caused by a lack of achievement. If measured against the rates of illiteracy, the system did at least as well as or even better than the Prussian one (Hopmann & Haft, 1988a). The example of Schleswig-Holstein suggests that the system may have been ruined by its own success. Working with monitorial instruction was quite conducive to improving teachers' performance, in the classroom as well as in the planning of lessons. The more competency the teachers acquired, the less they were prepared to succumb to rigid prescriptions. This, in turn, helped the governmental curriculum administration discharge its duty of control through less detailed curricular guidelines, and thus transfer responsibility for classroom particularities to the individual teacher. After 30 years of experience with monitorial instruction in Schleswig-Holstein, both teachers and the administration, and even former members of the committee of Eckernförde, advocated adopting a curriculum administration of the Prussian kind (Hopmann & Haft, 1988b).

Conclusion

The monitorial movement was able to succeed as a transient phenomenon peculiar to the process of the curriculum authority of the state. It was successful only where the expansion of mass education went along with already existing governmental means of implementing a curriculum policy, but where it did not have to face a specialized governmental curriculum administration, which was charged with undivided curriculum authority but incapable of prescribing the details of local instruction, and thus had to have recourse to less binding programs of improving classroom teaching. As the quality of both teaching and the subordinate level of school supervision improved, while at the same time curriculum administration became increasingly specialized, conditional programs of a wider scope, based on the structural separation of curriculum administration and lesson planning, could be and had to be initiated. One observation supporting this view is that since the rise of centralized curriculum administration, every attempt to pre-shape the particularities of classroom instruction, according to the pattern of mutual instruction, has failed (as, for example, programmed teaching). The argument is further confirmed by the more recent revival of monitorial instruction in such countries as meet the described combination of conditions, i.e., in young national states, which, for historical reasons, had not developed effective

governmental administrations to rely on when they were forced to build up a system of mass education with no time allowed. The cases of Cuba, nearly 30 years ago (see Uhlig, 1964), and nowadays of Nicaragua[12] are both typical.

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