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# The slow dichotomization of elementary classroom roles. 'Grammar of schooling' and the estrangement of classrooms in Western Europe (1830-1900)

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## ABSTRACT

Before and during the era when mass elementary schooling took off, children populated classrooms in many roles and not only as learners. The traditional teaching situation was actually full of children in roles as instructors, inspectors, and helpers, among others. In this contribution, the dichotomisation of expected classroom roles, being a central aspect of the grammar of schooling, is in focus. This dichotomisation resulted in one adult and trained teacher controlling all relevant activity in the classroom and children being confined to only one function: learning. On the basis of teaching manuals for school management and the organisation of teaching from four European countries, the article presents evidence of the slow process of the marginalisation of children from other roles than learning. Children as “learners only” was a relatively late reality for elementary and primary classrooms in Western Europe. The article proposes an interpretation of these trends as being an estrangement of classrooms from other fields of practice, particularly concerning the increasing division of labour in the modern world and the activities of children as workers and carers outside classrooms.

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Classroom management; Western Europe; educational knowledge; grammar of schooling; teaching and learning

In 1913, the American children’s author Carolyn Sherwin Bailey (1875–1961) visited Montessori’s school in Rome. She intended to gain a first-hand impression of the much-publicised new system of teaching. In her report, Bailey expressed the view that children in regular schools were mostly inactive: “If we suffocate children’s activities, we suffocate their lives. The good child is not the quiet, inactive child.”<sup>1</sup> In the same year in which her report was published, John and Evelyn Dewey presented their collection of “schools of tomorrow” showing the new possibilities unleashed by progressive pedagogies. Again, activity and individuality clearly contrasted with the predominant image of classrooms: “To the great majority of teachers and parents the very word school is synonymous with ‘discipline,’ with quiet, with rows of children sitting still at desks and listening to the teacher, speaking only when they are spoken to.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Carolyn Sherwin Bailey, *Montessori Children* (New York: Henry Holt, 1915), 48.

<sup>2</sup>John Dewey and Evelyn Dewey, *Schools of Tomorrow* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1915), 132.

This article has been corrected with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

American and progressive Western Europeans coincided in their diagnosis: the normal order of teaching had become a symbol of all things wrong in education. At the core of the progressive and reformist critique of the classrooms of the mass school systems, the idea that children were quiet, sitting, exclusively occupied with learning in a rather passive way, prevailed. The image of passive children in classrooms soon epitomised a state of things that seemed old and well established. Educational historiography has partly confirmed this perspective on elementary classrooms. Regardless of numerous reform concepts, the attempts to radically change this setting proved futile. Scholars working on the thesis of a “grammar of schooling” have called the continuity of the teacher-centred classroom the “persistence of the inevitable”.<sup>3</sup>

In the following, I will discuss one central dimension of this grammar of schooling in its formative period: the dichotomisation of elementary and primary classroom roles. I will present evidence about a process of dichotomisation of expected classroom roles for some European countries during the nineteenth century. This dichotomisation – a term that does not stem from the sources – promoted the strong separation between the trained teacher, the adult, who controls all relevant activity in the classroom on the one hand, and the pupils, the children confined to the function of learning on the other hand. This slowly evolving but growing dichotomisation resulted in the cliché of all modern pedagogical critique: learning, often characterised as merely passive, and the positioning of children as “learners only” representing the opposing pole to the ascendance of the teacher figure as sole “teacher”. I will argue that this was a relatively late reality for elementary and primary classrooms. Before and during the era when mass elementary schooling took off, children populated classrooms in many roles and not only as learners, but also as instructors, inspectors, and helpers, among others. I will present my argument in four steps. I will briefly reconstruct some aspects of the ubiquity of children’s active roles in classrooms in Europe and point at some critiques against it during the eighteenth century (1). After that I will present the material on which the main analysis relies: teaching manuals for school management and the organisation of teaching in the nineteenth century. As a distinctive type of source, these manuals were seldom the focus of scholarly attention (2).<sup>4</sup> Then the analysis of these manuals for teaching and managing schools from a selection of Western European countries will be presented (3). Finally, I will propose two types of interpretation of the pace and significance of the dichotomisation of primary classrooms in Western Europe. First, I will briefly discuss the limits of a purportedly consistent grammar of schooling in light of these findings. Second, I will sketch a second type of interpretation stressing functional and anthropological dimensions of classroom work: The dichotomisation of classroom roles implied the estrangement of classrooms from other fields of practice, particularly the activities of children outside classrooms (4). In sum, I will argue that the process of dichotomisation of classrooms in an era of mass schooling was by no means a solely internal transformation of classrooms as some formulations of the thesis of

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<sup>3</sup>Larry Cuban, “Persistence of the Inevitable. The Teacher-Centered Classroom,” *Education and Urban Society* 15, no. 1 (1982): 26–41; and David Tyack and William Tobin, “The Grammar of Schooling: Why Has It Been So Hard to Change?” *American Educational Research Journal* 31, no. 3 (1994): 453–79.

<sup>4</sup>Pierre Giolitto, *Histoire de l’enseignement primaire au XIXe siècle. L’organisation pédagogique* (Paris: Fernand Nathan, 1983); and Teresa Rabazas Romero, *Los manuales de pedagogía y la formación del profesorado en las escuelas normales de España (1839–1901)* (Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 2001). Recently, Paddy Dolan analysed a sample of Irish teaching manuals: see Paddy Dolan, “Adult and Child Identities in Irish Primary Schools, c. 1830–1909,” *History of Education* 45, no. 5 (2016): 530–46.

a “grammar of schooling” might imply. It might also have constituted a fundamental estrangement of school from the other worlds that children inhabited.

## 1. Children as instructors and inspectors in classrooms: ubiquity and critique

During the late Middle Ages and early modern times, the simple binary distinction between teaching and learning roles in classrooms had not yet been established. Teachers may indeed have only taught, but pupils did both teaching and learning. The simple identification of adulthood/teaching and childhood/learning does not deliver an appropriate description of the numerous classrooms all over Europe. Assistants and helpers in charge of instruction, exercise, and repetition populated schools, as well as children and youths of different ages who were responsible for order and discipline. It was not merely circumstantial help, restricted to difficult classroom and school situations. For some authors, children and youths assuming active and changing roles as agents of classroom order and schoolwork became an essential part of well-ordered schools.<sup>5</sup> School regulations and early pedagogical works reflected this general tendency as well.<sup>6</sup>

Discomfort with this state of things also existed. Educational historiography has emphasised above all the purported “discovery” of childhood as a turning point in generating a clear concept of the difference between adults and children, a difference that could be translated into distinct roles in the classrooms. Although the idea of this discovery has been repeatedly contested, a further idea associated with it, the decisive educationalisation of childhood, is still widely accepted today.<sup>7</sup> Related to this, the ascendancy of pessimistic views on children, mostly advanced in theological discourses, also concurred, at the very least, to consolidate an ambivalent view of the powers and inclinations of children. Calvinist theologians in particular seem to have advanced a negative perspective of children’s nature. With the souls of the children being of most value, a robust education, delivered early enough, should prevent them from yielding to their corrupt instincts. A strong will and stubbornness, among other character traits, were clear signs of the workings of the devil on children’s souls.<sup>8</sup> These representations certainly placed a lot of emphasis on early childhood; yet the need for a vigorous educational programme reached well into the following years of life and led to a critique of the extended employment of children and youths in classrooms.<sup>9</sup> For instance, French Jansenists, a rigoristic group within Catholicism, in open conflict with Jesuit theologues, invoked original sin when questioning the active

<sup>5</sup>Jakob Ackstaller, *Das Helfersystem in der mittelalterlichen Schulerziehung* (Munich: Im Selbstverlag, 1933); and Stephan Jürgens, *Das Helfersystem in den Schulen der deutschen Reformation* (Langensalza: Beyer, 1913).

<sup>6</sup>See e.g. Charles Démià, *Règlements pour les écoles de la Ville & Diocèse de Lyon* (Lyon: Aux dépens du Bureau des Écoles, 1674); Reinhold Vormbaum, *Evangelische Schulordnungen* (C. Bertelsmann, 1863); Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, *Conduite des Écoles chrétiennes* (Rome: Maison Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, 1965); and Lorenzo Ortiz, *El maestro de escribir* (Venice: Presso Paolo Baglioni, 1696).

<sup>7</sup>Colin Heywood, “Centuries of Childhood: An Anniversary – and an Epitaph?,” *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 3, no. 3 (2010): 343–65.

<sup>8</sup>C. James Sommerville, *The Discovery of Childhood in Puritan England* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992).

<sup>9</sup>Fritz Osterwalder, “Die pädagogischen Konzepte des Jansenismus im ausgehenden 17. Jahrhundert und ihre Begründung,” *Jahrbuch für historische Bildungsforschung* 2 (1995): 59–84; and Fritz Osterwalder, “Theologische Konzepte von Erziehung. Das Verhältnis von Fénelon und Francke,” in *Das Kind in Pietismus und Aufklärung*, ed. Josef N. Neumann and Udo Sträter (Tübingen: Max-Niemeyer-Verlag, 2000), 79–94.

role of children in classrooms. In their model schools at Port-Royal, founded in 1637, they excluded children from all instruction, surveillance, and inspection. Admittedly, they only accepted a reduced number of children in their schools and organised an intensive programme of adult surveillance and common life, a model that would be impossible to transfer to the masses of the population.<sup>10</sup>

At the begin of the eighteenth century, other religious groups aiming at a more general re-ordering of classrooms intensively rejected schoolchildren helping in classroom instruction, exercises, and surveillance. Now, children should be confined to learning. Inspired by Jansenist positions, the preacher and social reformer August Herrmann Francke (1663–1727) followed the idea of eliminating children as agents of the school order. Francke was quite adamant about the question of childhood: 'Experience teaches us that children, particularly when they are together, lapse into all kinds of futile things and they distract themselves with them, if they are let alone during the time, when they have to learn . . . In contrast, if the teacher is present and the children love him . . . they pay attention and act in an orderly fashion'.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, Francke and his followers, who would gain enormous influence on the development of education and schools in eighteenth-century Prussia, mostly banned children from active roles in the classrooms. In German-speaking countries this view gained momentum at the end of the century, when techniques for group teaching under the exclusive direction of the adult teacher widely circulated in Central Europe and Switzerland and not only in the numerous German states in both Lutheran and Catholic regions. Following central regulations issued during the reign of Maria Theresa in the Habsburg monarchy, adult-centred instruction exerted significant influence on educational thinking from central Italy to Denmark.<sup>12</sup>

The sudden popularity of the monitorial system of education in the nineteenth century halted the momentum of the adult-centred approach. Monitorial schools relied almost entirely on the agency of children for instruction, exercises, discipline, and order. They re-established the preference for classrooms with many different active, albeit strictly coded and even regimented roles.<sup>13</sup> The monitorial school system spread from Western Europe into many world regions exposed to European influence.<sup>14</sup> English and French school societies pushed further for the promotion of this system through networks of correspondence and the shipment of books and materials.<sup>15</sup> After early episodes of religious and political persecution directed against monitorial teaching in the 1820s,<sup>16</sup> doubts about the efficacy and moral

<sup>10</sup>Harvey Chisick, "School Attendance, Literacy, and Acculturation: Petites écoles and Popular Education in Eighteenth-Century France," *Europa* 3 (1979): 185–221.

<sup>11</sup>August H. Francke, "Kurzer und einfältiger Unterricht, wie die Kinder zur wahren Glückseligkeit, und Christlichen Klugheit anzuführen sind," in *Pädagogische Schriften* (Osnabrück: Biblio-Verlag, 1966), 15–71.

<sup>12</sup>James van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Gerhardt Petrat, *Schulunterricht: Seine Sozialgeschichte in Deutschland 1750–1850* (Munich: Ehrenwirth, 1979); and Carlo Jenzer, *Die Schulklasse. Eine historisch-systematische Untersuchung* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1991).

<sup>13</sup>David Hamilton, *Towards a Theory of Schooling* (London: The Falmer Press, 1989).

<sup>14</sup>Carl F. Kaestle, *Joseph Lancaster and the Monitorial School Movement: A Documentary History* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1973); and George F. Bartle, "The Role of the British and Foreign School Society in Elementary Education in India and the East Indies, 1813–1875," *History of Education* 23, no. 1 (1994): 17–33.

<sup>15</sup>Patrick Ressler, *Non-Profit-Marketing im Schulbereich. Die globale Verbreitung des Bell-Lancaster-Systems in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt/M: Peter Lang, 2010).

<sup>16</sup>Anna Ascenzi and Giuseppina Fattori, *L'alfabeto e il catechismo. La diffusione delle scuole di mutuo insegnamento nello Stato Pontificio (1819–1830)* (Pisa: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 2006).

legitimacy of the system gained momentum only in the 1830s. This led to a search for alternatives, emphasising orderly primary schooling while reducing the agency of children in classrooms.

## 2. Towards norms for children's roles: manuals for classroom management and organisation of teaching

It was certainly not an easy endeavour to ban children from all active roles in elementary classrooms. Schools were often too crowded, classes and sections, if any existed, too numerous, and the need for coordinating different and simultaneous tasks too urgent. The expansion of schooling in the nineteenth century in particular, and population growth following the industrialisation of some European societies made the situation worse. Under these circumstances, the programmatic exclusion of children from active positions within classrooms was very difficult to impose.

One major proposal for managing large schools included a limited, but still significant inclusion of children in the ordering and managing of schools. For instance, in the United Kingdom, the systematic use of pupil teachers was a major change in the middle of the century.<sup>17</sup> French school policies, even if they generally favoured group teaching by an adult as a desirable norm,<sup>18</sup> frequently compromised and accepted mixed systems of teaching including both the centrality of the adult teacher in the dynamic of the classroom and the selective help of older or better pupils.<sup>19</sup> News about these and other mixed systems circulated across Europe, producing local variations.<sup>20</sup>

In the following, I present the results of an analysis of a sample of 120 manuals dealing with classroom management and the general order of teaching in elementary and primary schools from four Western European countries – two advanced (France, England) and two peripheral ones (Spain and Ireland) – between the time when the decline of monitorial teaching accelerated (the 1830s) and the end of the century, when new critiques against the order of schools began to surface.<sup>21</sup> These manuals explicitly catered to school teachers and trainees in normal schools and teachers' colleges. Works with only cursory comments concerning classroom management or that only discussed questions about the teaching of particular subjects – also a major genre in the nineteenth century – are not included. The sample does not include encyclopaedic works such as Ferdinand Buisson's *Dictionnaire de pédagogie et d'instruction primaire* (1882–1887), or Mariano Carderera's *Diccionario de educación y métodos de enseñanza* (1855).

Authorship of these works for teaching and classroom management varied hugely, but the bulk of them were written by school inspectors and directors of teacher training

<sup>17</sup>Report of the Departmental Committee on the Pupil-Teacher System (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1898); and W. Robinson, *Pupil Teachers and their Professional Training in Pupil-Teacher Centres in England and Wales, 1870–1914* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2003).

<sup>18</sup>Christian Nique, "Guizot, ministre de l'instruction publique. L'étonnante politique de généralisation de l'enseignement simultané," in *François Guizot, 1787–1874. Passé-Présent*, ed. Robert Chamboredon (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010), 83–92.

<sup>19</sup>Giolitto, *Histoire de l'enseignement primaire*; Jean-Michel Chapoulie, "L'organisation de l'enseignement primaire de la IIIe république: ses origines provinciales et parisiennes, 1850–1880," *Histoire de l'éducation*, no. 105 (2005): 3–44.

<sup>20</sup>Overview in Marcelo Caruso, ed. *Classroom Struggle. Organising Elementary School Teaching in the 19th Century* (Frankfurt/M: Peter Lang, 2015), 9–30.

<sup>21</sup>Although the bulk of the sample was published between 1830 and 1900, I have also included three manuals from the 1820s from France and Ireland that were influential over time. For the sake of simplicity, Table 1 will count them together with the manuals published in the 1830s.

institutions. In very few cases, authors were not practitioners – such as Marc Antoine Jullien de Paris. Yet, in other cases, simple urban and even some rural teachers authored such works, like the “three schoolteachers from Cuenca” in Spain. As a rule, manuals written by simple schoolteachers were shorter than those published by inspectors and directors of teacher training institutions. The shape and range of these manuals changed over the 70 years covered here. Whereas many of the manuals in the 1830s showed a markedly practical character and did not put much emphasis on the foundation and legitimation of their proposals, later manuals included more theoretical reflection and not just an artisanal approach to education and teaching.

The manuals were explicitly normative in character and by no means intended to describe classroom practice. They are nonetheless a valuable proxy for an analysis of classroom practice for at least four reasons. First, the authors of these manuals, many of them in high positions in the educational hierarchy, knew the field of teaching quite well. In particular, the numerous school inspectors were close to the realities of life in classrooms and schools. The manuals offer very specific observations about general patterns of work, practical problems, and even singular anecdotes. Second, these manuals, while mostly conveying the expectations of the educational establishment, did not emphasise official regulations and norms. Only in nine manuals are the official regulations insistently quoted or mentioned; an additional 19 manuals mention them. Yet the main discourse of these manuals intended a realistic discussion of the norms advocated in the texts; the practical and more pragmatic tone of the manuals was characteristic. Third, these manuals were successful works as indicated by their multiple reeditions (total: 320). Apparently, these manuals conveyed a type of knowledge that resonated with schoolteachers. Their reprints hint at a steady and considerable demand from schoolteachers and normal school attendants. Their availability and accessibility were unparalleled in comparison with other works, such as the many volumes and higher prices of the encyclopaedias. Fourth, although major analyses of their specific impact are still a desideratum, recent scholarship offers scattered evidence for the rural and backward provinces of Cuenca and Ciudad Real in Spain<sup>22</sup> that these manuals were actually in use in the schools and teachers often alluded to them. It is plausible that many schoolteachers used these manuals as compendiums and guidelines.

The total number of manuals and their editions (Tables 1 and 2) does not represent a full census of this type of text. In particular, minor manuals of local reach may be under-represented. Nonetheless, the sample includes not only publications from the large cities,

**Table 1.** Number of manuals and editions, by countries.

	Number of Manuals	Number of editions
France	44	119
United Kingdom	26	103
Ireland	4	24
Spain	46	74
	120	320

Source: Own elaboration.

<sup>22</sup>See Till Eble, *Gelehrter Eklektizismus? Moderantismus, Schule und Unterrichtsorganisation in Spanien, 1834–1900* (Frankfurt/M: Peter Lang, 2020).

<sup>23</sup>Giolitto, *Histoire de l'enseignement primaire*, 277–8.

<sup>24</sup>Rabazas Romero, *Los manuales de pedagogía*, 317–453. I did not find any similar survey for the English and Irish cases.



**Table 2.** Distribution of manuals of elementary teaching (including identified editions), by countries and decades (1830–1900).

	1830–1839*	1840–1849	1850–1859	1860–1869	1870–1879	1880–1889	1890–1899	N
France	15	18	10	13	11	42	10	119
United Kingdom	7	8	19	16	28	21	6	103
Ireland	2	5	–	3	3	6	5	24
Spain	1	8	8	24	11	13	8	74
	25	39	37	56	53	81	29	320

Source: Own elaboration. \*In this column, as in the following tables, three manuals published before 1830 have been included.

but also some texts published in smaller cities. In the case of France, Pierre Giolitto listed about 36 manuals of this type for the time between 1830 and 1900,<sup>23</sup> and my sample includes 29 of these titles, and several more not listed in Giolitto's book. For Spain, Teresa Rabazas collected a similar sample, in which at least 62 manuals referred to school organisation and classroom management.<sup>24</sup> Our sample of 46 manuals shows a coverage of about 75%. Furthermore, the number of editions is underestimated. I only counted those editions for which a bibliographic reference exists. For instance, the manual by Henry Dunn from 1837 had its 19<sup>th</sup> edition in 1870 but I did not count Dunn's manual 19 times. Only those identified editions – 11 out of 19 – have been counted. For the other eight editions I was unable to find any reference, even within library catalogues. The sample offers a baseline for the developments that took place at that time. On the whole, this sample offers a reasonably differentiated picture of the codified practical knowledge on classroom management and organisation of teaching in these countries.

As a general trend, the urgent question of classroom management resulted in an increasing number of titles dealing with this problem. A major context for this expansive dynamic was the fact that the average primary school in Western Europe in the nineteenth century was the one-classroom school, in which the whole course of primary studies took place. Classroom management was, in many cases, identical to school management. Under these circumstances, the question of the general order of the classroom and the definition of classes and sections was at least as important as the question of teaching particular contents. Later, the establishment of schools with more classes in the cities and even in some densely populated rural areas<sup>25</sup> led to a less urgent treatment of classroom management in the manuals.

The coding of the manual contents took place in two steps. First, the positions on classroom organisation and management were generally classified in two categories: Whether children were considered only as “learners”, or whether they were also considered in other roles in schoolwork.<sup>26</sup> Second, for those manuals intending roles for children other than mere “learning”, a second, more fine-grained classification was used. In this case, codes were:

<sup>25</sup>Octave Gréard, *Éducation et instruction. Enseignement primaire*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Hachette, 1889); Chapoulie, “Organisation de l'enseignement primaire,” 3–44; Carlos Miguel de Jesus Manique da Silva, *Do modo de aprender e de ensinar. Renovação pedagógica e cenários de experimentação da escola graduada (1834–1892)* (Universidade de Lisboa, 2008); Marc Depaepe, “De theorie van de interne organisatie van de Belgische lagere school tussen 1830 en 1879,” *Pedagogisch Tijdschrift* IV(1979): 454–66; and Joseph Doyle, “Model Schools – Model Teachers? The Model Schools and Teacher Training in Nineteenth-Century Ireland” PhD thesis, (Dublin City University, 2003).

<sup>26</sup>Results published in Marcelo Caruso, “Erwachsene(r)/Kind als Leitdifferenz. Zur Entstehung der modernen Unterrichtsordnung für die Massen im 19. Jahrhundert,” in *Bildung und Differenz in der Bildungsgeschichte*, ed. Carola Groppe and Gerhard Kluchert (Wiesbaden: VS, 2015), 65–92.



- (1) *Teaching*. This was the most contested issue of the time. Some authors doubted the pedagogical powers of children, but a total rejection of children as instructors – if not as full-value teachers – was by no means the consensus. This complicated issue demanded a further differentiation while coding:
  - (a) “yes”, depicting all those works where recurrent instruction by children was viewed as a key technique in organising and managing good classrooms; legitimacy for their employment as instructors resulted from a positive view of children’s teaching powers.
  - (b) “with restrictions”, characterises those works to which conditions and restrictions to the active role of children in teaching substantially applied; these included mostly the exclusion of these young instructors from particular subjects (above all, religious instruction), their use only in crowded classrooms, or their use only in the lower classes of the school; in all these cases, including pupil teachers, a certain uneasiness with teaching and organising roles for children is explicit; legitimacy for their employment was strongly situational and associated with a discourse advocating “realism” over principle.
- (2) *Exercises*. Although “exercises” may also be seen as a part of teaching, pedagogical discourses increasingly differentiated “real” teaching that explained or presented something new from mechanical instructional forms (repeating and exercising, or interrogating). When authors of the manuals saw children in the role of coordinating exercises and repetitions, the code “exercises” applied.
- (3) *Discipline*. Some authors considered children to be useful supervisors of their schoolmates. In this view, children controlled the continuous work of small classes – for instance, writing exercises in silence – and reported what the teacher could not see. Significantly, all manuals excluded punishments from these functions.
- (4) *Services*. Children helped in arranging objects, cleaning blackboards, organising the entrance and the exit to and from school. Beyond individual anecdotes, the code for “services” was only used when these actions were considered to be a recurrent element of a system of school and classroom management.
- (5) *No teaching/managing-related roles*. When manuals did not recommend any role for children in the ordering and management of classrooms, the code “none of them” applied. In these cases, only learning constituted the “job” of the pupil.

I used available editions of the manuals for coding. I did not have access to the first edition in all cases. For the sake of a stronger validity, two coders, one of them being the present author, coded the material following the above definitions, and divergent codes were discussed and cleared. Lastly, I controlled for changes in discourses about classroom management and the organisation of teaching in the manuals throughout the different editions of the manuals. This by-no-means-complete review showed an unexpected stability of the positions and discussions over the different editions.

### 3. Commonalities and differences in the expectation of children's roles across countries

In the following, I present the results based not on the number of editions ( $N = 316$ ), but on the number of book titles ( $N = 117$ ). Although counting the number of editions makes a case for showing the widespread presence of these manuals, the main perspective here is on the differing pace and constellations of change. By focusing on these 117 manuals, the analysis emphasises the emergence of *new* versions of pedagogical knowledge about classroom management and organisation of teaching. A last cautionary note about the cross-national analysis is necessary. Although educational historiography has recently adopted a more transnational outlook when analysing the structuring and transformation of educational systems, institutions, and practices, national framings were still determinant. At that time, international referencing and educational travelling were deeply ingrained into the fabric of the nation.<sup>27</sup> The cross-national perspective adopted here will consider particular national cases and more general trends. A consistent transnational analysis would demand consideration both of the entanglements and translations, on the one hand, and of lending and borrowing, on the other.

On the whole, children were not expected only to “learn” (Table 3). Independent of the year of publication, only 14 manuals out of 120 excluded children from all types of active roles, aside from learning, in their descriptions and norms. In the crucial question of teaching roles, 84 manuals foresaw the active participation of children at least to some degree. Moreover, all manuals that excluded children from any teaching capacity were published after 1870. Manuals from different countries address the issue differently. In Spain, practically all works – 42 out of 46 – include some teaching as a legitimate role for children in schools. Similarly, 24 of the 30 manuals in English (published both in the United Kingdom and Ireland) intended this role. On the other hand, less than half of the French manuals considered teaching, even with restrictions, a legitimate classroom role for primary school children. Contrary to expectation, Spanish manuals are closer to those in English than to the French ones.

**Table 3.** Recommendations of active functions for pupils in the organisation of elementary classrooms (1825–1900) in selected Western European countries.

	France	United Kingdom	Ireland	Spain
Number of manuals	44	26	4	46
Teaching				
Yes	10	6	4	28
With restrictions	7	14	–	14
Total teaching	17	20	4	42
Exercises	34	19	4	43
Discipline	13	11	4	38
Services	2	8	1	8
No teaching/managing-related roles	9	5	–	–

Source: Own elaboration.

<sup>27</sup>Overview in: Damiano Matasci, “Le système scolaire français et ses miroirs: Les missions pédagogiques entre comparaison internationale et circulation des savoirs (1842–1914),” *Histoire de l'éducation* 125(2010): 5–26; and Marcelo Caruso, “The History of Transnational and Comparative Education,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Education*, ed. John L. Rury and Eileen H. Tamura (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 568–87.

**Table 4.** Recommendation of active functions for pupils in the organisation of elementary classrooms in the United Kingdom and Ireland (1830–1900).

	1830–9	1840–9	1850–9	1860–9	1870–9	1880–9	1890–9
Number of manuals	4	2	7	4	7	4	2
Teaching							
Yes	3	2	1	2	2	–	–
With restrictions	1	–	6	1	2	2	–
Exercises	4	2	7	4	4	2	–
Discipline	3	2	6	3	1	–	–
Services	4	1	3	1	–	–	–
No teaching/managing-related roles	–	–	–	–	2	2	2

Source: Own elaboration.

The fact that an overwhelming majority of manuals (100) accepted or recommended exercises conducted by children is not so unexpected in view of the difficult situation faced by many primary schools of the time. The difference between teaching and exercises is almost fully accounted for by the French manuals that accept children conducting exercises far more than children in charge of instruction. Control and surveillance are explicitly recommended in about half of the manuals of the sample. Recurrent services, for which the teacher could also “appoint” individual pupils, are mentioned in only 19 cases.

In the case of England and Ireland, manuals followed the monitorial script for classroom management and the organisation of teaching until the 1850s (Table 4). Over time the table shows a shift from a full-fledged monitorial school, where children played all the roles listed in the tables, to recommendations that children be restricted to the roles of pupil-teachers and paid monitors.

In one of the formative institutions of monitorial teaching, the *British and Foreign School Society*, monitors were still viewed in a mostly positive light in the manual from 1856: 'But it may be objected that monitors, being but children, must, as teachers, be very unequal to adults . . . In the first place, children, while thus acting the part of subordinate teachers, feel a sense of the responsibility and of the comparative importance assigned to them, quite sufficient to make them anxious to perform their parts well . . . Beside which, children are, in many respects, the most efficient instructors of companions less advanced than themselves . . . Monitors can sympathise far more readily with the difficulties of their pupils, having but just emerged from those difficulties themselves . . .'<sup>28</sup>In this view, a deficient monitorial school was rather the result of inadequate teacher's work. The Irish school inspector Patrick Weston Joyce (1827–1914) put it in clear terms: 'Whether the monitors do their work well or ill, depends entirely on the teacher. If he appears indifferent, merely sending them to their classes, and giving himself no further concern, their teaching is sure to be of a worthless character'.<sup>29</sup>

In the course of time, scepticism about monitors and teaching children gained traction. Joyce himself, still advocating for children's teaching role in classrooms, did not consider them real teachers: “A monitor holds an intermediate position between

<sup>28</sup>British and Foreign School Society, *A Hand-Book to the Borough Road Schools; Explanatory of the Methods of Instruction* (London: Sunday School Union, 1856), 14–15.

<sup>29</sup>Patrick Weston Joyce, *A Hand-Book of School Management and Methods of Teaching* (Dublin: McGlashan & Gill, 1867), 87.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>32</sup>Editor of the “National Schoolmaster”, *Handbook on the Teaching and Management of Elementary Schools* (Manchester; London: Heywood and Deansgate; Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1872), 25.

a teacher and a pupil, and unites in himself the functions of both.”<sup>30</sup> He also cautioned: “He [the teacher, MC] employs monitors to assist, not in any degree to supersede his own labours.”<sup>31</sup> The manual of the *National Society* also rejected the idea of children being considered teachers: “as *teachers*, these monitors are not to be relied upon: their use consists in hearing reading and spelling, and seeing that the work prescribed by the master is properly done.”<sup>32</sup> The director of the *Church of Scotland Training College* in Edinburgh, James Currie (1827–1886), was also circumspect: “There can be no education worthy of the name where there is not a matured mind and an unquestionable and respected authority brought to the work. However much the support of a vigorous master may avail to carry his monitors through their routine work of hearing tasks, or to aid them in maintaining external order, it cannot lend them the power of exciting and guiding thoughtfulness in a class, or of wielding a moral as distinct from a mechanical authority. The monitorial agency fails utterly, therefore, for the higher purposes of the school.”<sup>33</sup> After 1870, manuals increasingly saw this agency as a mostly pragmatic help: “Monitors and curators<sup>34</sup> render services of sufficient value to warrant their employment.”<sup>35</sup> Later texts were either silent about the issue<sup>36</sup> or they condemned the very idea of children as instructors as an “extravagant” one.<sup>37</sup>

The local version of the apprenticeship system (pupil-teachers) in Ireland was closer to the monitorial heritage than in the English version and from 1855 onward there were two categories of paid monitors in classrooms.<sup>38</sup> In many Irish model schools, children were in charge of different functions, particularly exercises. However, over the course of time, even the agency of pupil-teachers – older students in teachers’ colleges – was seen in increasingly narrower terms. As early as the 1860s, Rector Thomas Morrison in Glasgow restricted the “proper sphere of duty in the school” for pupil-teachers. He saw many of them entirely in charge of the younger classes, which he rejected: “These young persons are themselves learners ...”<sup>39</sup> Answers to the question about who was in charge of schoolwork increasingly narrowed towards the trained adult teacher, as a manual from the 1880s formulated: “Leave no class to do work without a teacher.”<sup>40</sup>

The more abrupt shift in the knowledge conveyed in the manuals occurs in the category “discipline”. Whereas in the 1850s all manuals and in the 1860s two out of three manuals recommended the employment of pupils for disciplinary tasks, only one in seven did so in

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<sup>33</sup>James Currie, *The Principles and Practice of Common-School Education* (Edinburgh; London: James Gordon; Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1861), 158.

<sup>34</sup>Curators were charged with supplying the classes with book, slates, and keeping the schoolroom, blackboards clean. See John Gill, *Introductory Text-Book to School Education, Method, and School Management* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1876), 65.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>36</sup>J.R. Blakiston, *The Teacher. Hints on School Management* (London: Macmillan, 1879), 8–13; and Arnold Tompkins, *The Philosophy of School Management* (London: Ginn and Co., 1895).

<sup>37</sup>Joseph Landon, *School Management* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1883), 127.

<sup>38</sup>*The Twenty-Second Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland (for the year 1855)*, vol. 1 (Dublin: Printed by Alex. Thom, 1856), 18–19.

<sup>39</sup>Thomas Morrison, *Manual of School Management for the use of Teachers, Students, and Pupil Teachers*, 3rd ed. (Glasgow: William Hamilton, 1863), 47.

<sup>40</sup>Henry Major, *How to Earn the Merit Grant: An Elementary Manual of School Management*, vol. 1 (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1883), 202.

<sup>41</sup>William Ross, *The Teacher's Manual of Method; or, general principles of teaching and school-keeping with illustrations* (London: Longman et al., 1858), 150.

<sup>42</sup>Henry Major, *How to Earn the Merit Grant: An Elementary Manual of School Management*, vol. 2 (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1883), 322.

**Table 5.** France. Recommendations of active functions for pupils in the organisation of elementary classrooms (1830–1900).

	1830–9	1840–9	1850–9	1860–9	1870–9	1880–9	1890–9
Number of manuals	9	4	6	5	2	13	5
Teaching							
Yes	6	1	3	–	–	–	–
With restrictions	1	2	1	1	–	3	–
Exercises	9	4	6	4	1	9	2
Discipline	5	1	4	3	–	–	–
Services	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
No teaching/managing-related roles	–	–	–	1	1	4	3

Source: Own elaboration.

the 1870s and none in the 1880s. In manuals from the 1850s, monitors still played a role in achieving order in the classroom: “While the eye of the master, or of the monitor, will command respect, it is not necessary even to speak.”<sup>41</sup> Twenty-five years later, the actions of the teacher alone defined discipline: “Discipline viewed subjectively is the active instrument by which good order, etc., is maintained. Viewed objectively it is the result of this special work of the teacher.”<sup>42</sup> The exclusion of children from all types of active roles in the classroom was the recommendation of those manuals published only after 1880.

A closer look at the developments in France shows that these trends were not limited to England (Table 5). Also, in the French case, it was only during the decades after 1860 that newly published manuals for schoolteachers and for pupils in normal schools began to exclude children from all intermediate roles in the classroom.

Probably, the harsh controversies between liberals and Catholics after 1815 about organising teaching with the help of children<sup>43</sup> led to an earlier erosion of the idea of children teaching than in the other European countries. As a consequence, French authors did not recommend relying on young instructors after the 1860s. Nonetheless, an ambivalent attitude towards children teaching or helping remained. In the 1880s, Paul Rousselot (1833–1914), another inspector of schools, clearly opined: “The only mode [of teaching, MC] of truly educational value is the simultaneous one.”<sup>44</sup> However Rousselot still allowed for compromise with the grim reality of many primary schools of that time: ‘By no means, I wouldn’t prohibit the mode called mixed one, in which the teacher benefits from the help of certain pupils; this mode is only a reminiscence, but not a resurrection of the monitors. It is evident that in a crowded class and without an assistant teacher, the teacher cannot be everywhere at the same time.’<sup>45</sup> Octave Gréard (1828–1904), one of the leading educational administrators of the Department of the Seine in the 1860s and 1870s, agreed with this restrictive view of children’s possibilities: ‘To teach is to learn twice, it is rightly said, but the condition for that is that the person who teaches should know to reason on what is being learnt. For carrying the light to the mind of the others, it is necessary first to have enlightened oneself and this supposes the reflexive and persevering action of an educated spirit’. Monitors had been, at best, only “improvised teachers”.<sup>46</sup> Arguments that centred on

<sup>43</sup>*L’Institut des Frères des écoles chrétiennes et les nouvelles écoles à la Lancaster, cités au tribunal de l’opinion publique* (Paris: Le Normant, 1817); and Onuphre-Benoît-Claude Moulin, *Enseignement mutuel dévoilé, ainsi que ses jongleries et prétintailles révolutionnaires; ou l’Art d’affranchir l’éducation de l’enfance de toute influence morale et religieuse. Dédié à la jeunesse pensante* (Lyon: Boursy, 1820).

<sup>44</sup>Paul Rousselot, *Pédagogie à l’usage de l’enseignement primaire* (Paris: Hachette, 1890), 329.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup>Gréard, *Éducation et instruction*, 51.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 53.

mental powers, reflexivity, and a certain amount of self-control and inwardness gained momentum.

Authors unambiguously dismissed children as disciplinarians from the 1870s onwards. Referring to the discipline in old monitorial schools, Gréard remarked: “These orders conveyed and executed in mute compliance made sure that the pupils obeyed. But did they have the true intelligence, which is the result of a feeling of a fully-understood duty?”<sup>47</sup> “True” intelligence, and the moral feeling of duty, both being alien to children in their full meaning, pointed at mental capacities and self-reflective powers. Certainly, permitting the work of children in the classrooms was, at the end of the century, more a question of “pure necessity” than a proposal related to the good order of classrooms.<sup>48</sup> As another author put it at the time, the use of monitors, instructors and young assistants was an “illusion” both in intellectual and moral respects.<sup>49</sup>

The pace of these shifts is not particularly connected with individual central regulations for primary schools. The regulations for primary school from 1834 prohibited individual instruction in schools. Monitorial and mixed teaching were the two preferred modes of conducting schools. The regulations from 1851 were silent in reference to the question of monitors and helpers. Only the reforms introduced by Gréard in Paris from 1868 onwards, while still not banning children’s agency from the classrooms, advocated more classes and more teachers in schools.<sup>50</sup> One additional legal factor reinforcing the trend towards more complex schools with more classrooms and teachers and fewer assistants and helpers was certainly the Goblet Law (1886), that defined a more complex structure of primary schools including classes for infants and a differentiated upper primary school.<sup>51</sup>

Two main tendencies are common among the English and French manuals. First, towards the end of the century, they clearly pushed for a dichotomisation of classroom roles in which one adult teaches, inspects, controls, and organises while children only learn. This shift occurred rather gradually. Second, the tables showed that the end of children as acceptable disciplinarians surfaced suddenly after 1870. Neither of these two common trends applies to the case of Spain.

**Table 6.** Spain. Recommendations of active functions for pupils in the organisation of elementary classrooms (1830–1900).

	1830–9	1840–9	1850–9	1860–9	1870–9	1880–9	1890–9
Number of manuals	1	5	6	15	5	7	8
Teaching							
Yes	1	4	3	12	2	4	3
With restrictions	–	–	3	3	2	3	3
Exercises	1	4	6	15	5	7	6
Discipline	–	5	5	13	5	6	4
Services	1	3	1	1	–	1	1
No teaching/managing-related roles	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Source: Own elaboration.

<sup>48</sup>I. Carré and Roger Liquier, *Traité de pédagogie scolaire* (Paris: Armand Colin & Cie., 1897), 257.

<sup>49</sup>Raphael Horner, *Guide pratique de l'instituteur. Notions élémentaires de méthodologie* (Paris: Librairie Poussielgue Frères, 1887), 41.

<sup>50</sup>Chapoulie, “Organisation de l’enseignement primaire,” 35.

<sup>51</sup>Françoise Mayeur, *Histoire de l’enseignement et de l’éducation. III 1789–1930* (Paris: Perrin, 2004), 609–11.

<sup>52</sup>Antonio Viñao Frago, *Innovación pedagógica y racionalidad científica. La escuela graduada pública en España (1898–1936)* (Madrid: Akal, 1990).

None of the Spanish manuals stipulate a complete exclusion of children from instructional, disciplinary, or managerial functions in classrooms (Table 6). Although the erosion of the positive views about young instructors is also recorded, manuals still recommended exercises and disciplinary tasks as acceptable classroom roles for children over the whole period. Indeed, this general acceptance of children's active roles is not unexpected, since the first forms of graded schooling – including the multiplication of classrooms and teachers – were first introduced on an experimental basis only in 1898.<sup>52</sup> Until then, the dominant form of school management was closely associated with the mixed system of teaching, in which active roles for children in the handling of large schools existed.

Legal provisions in 1838 defined simultaneous and mutual teaching, or “a combination of both” as the only acceptable forms of school management and organisation of teaching.<sup>53</sup> Hence practically all Spanish manuals foresaw the agency of children in some capacities. Complicated schemes of school organisation included many intermediate positions in the classroom such as that from the director of the Central Normal School in Madrid, José Francisco de Iturzaeta, who included “assistants, apprentices, controllers, and instructors”<sup>54</sup> in classroom routines. In the case of female schools, some reservations about giving young girls too much power, as in France, also existed in Spain. But manuals also recommended the employment of female “officials” being in charge of “instruction, surveillance and direction of the girls composing the sections of the school”.<sup>55</sup> Children were well integrated into the schemes of good classroom management for disciplinary purposes: “Inspectors or monitors of order direct and control the school from their position on the platform.”<sup>56</sup> This included specific disciplinary tasks, for instance, granting merit points and “bad points” (*puntos malos*) to students in the classes.<sup>57</sup>

Of course, there was criticism of the agency of children in classrooms as well. For the inspector Mariano Carderera (1815–1893), “no matter how zealous and educated the teacher is, no matter how carefully he prepares his instructors, these instructors will never be capable of replacing him in issues of intellectual and moral education”.<sup>58</sup> These critiques became dominant only at the end of the century. For the schoolteacher Pedro Crespi in Palma de Mallorca, the dominant mixed system suffered from the fact that ‘the teacher does not have a direct intervention during teaching. The instructors can communicate the most elemental knowledge, but for abstract studies, such as grammar, moral and religious precepts and the natural sciences, only the teacher may teach them properly.’<sup>59</sup> Pedro de Alcántara García (1842–1906), a teacher, reformer, and one of the founders of the famous journal *La escuela moderna*, admitted the unqualified need for children to assist the teacher in crowded classrooms. Yet he issued caution about the narrow limits and benefits of this help: “we consider

<sup>53</sup> *Reglamento provisional de las escuelas publicas de instruccion primaria* (Madrid: En la Imprenta Nacional, 1838), 5.

<sup>54</sup> José Francisco de Iturzaeta, *Sistema misto general* (Madrid: Imprenta de D. Victoriano Hernando, 1846), 23.

<sup>55</sup> Odón Fonoll, *Nociones de sistemas y métodos de enseñanza* (Barcelona: Librería de Juan Bastinos é Hijo, 1860), 33.

<sup>56</sup> Mariano Carderera, *Principios de educación y métodos de enseñanza*, 2. ed. (Madrid: Imprenta de Don Ramón Campuzano, 1866), 355.

<sup>57</sup> Joaquín Avendaño and Mariano Carderera, *Curso elemental de pedagogía* (Madrid: Establecimiento Tipográfico de A. Vicente, 1865), 335.

<sup>58</sup> Carderera, *Principios de educación*, 333.

<sup>59</sup> Pedro A. Crespi, *Nociones elementales de pedagogía ó principios de educación y métodos de enseñanza* (Palma de Mallorca: Establecimiento tipográfico de Juan Colomar y Salas, 1891), 114.

<sup>60</sup> Pedro de Alcántara García, *Compendio de pedagogía teórico-práctica* (Madrid: Librería de la Viuda de Hernando, 1891), 234.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*



this intervention, at best, a necessary evil for those children involved: it is necessary but inconvenient.”<sup>60</sup> Alcántara recommended that in the event the help of monitors and instructors was unavoidable, “this should be restricted as much as possible”.<sup>61</sup>

Common trends, but divergent paths are evident in the context of the transition towards dichotomised classroom roles. These findings are not easy to generalise within Western Europe. The Netherlands, the German States (after 1871, German Empire), Austria, Switzerland may have had a pioneering role in this story. Certainly, a part of the attraction Prussia enjoyed for educational travellers and reformers lay in the fact that a teacher-centred classroom had become rather the norm in the first decades of the nineteenth century. But for many other European countries this was not the case. Moreover, revivalist nationalist movements in Eastern Europe and Greece in the late nineteenth century often worked with the idea of a classroom, in which the dichotomisation of roles was by no means dominant. Beyond Europe, local teaching cultures also knew forms of pupil collaboration, instruction through young and advanced pupils, etc. These and other caveats apply to this description; but extensive research in the history of teaching and schooling, some of it quoted in the different sections of this contribution, supports the case for a chronologically quite recent dichotomisation of classroom roles.

#### 4. Interpreting dichotomisation: grammar of schooling and the estrangement of classrooms

The Methodist pastor and educator James Harrison Rigg (1821–1909) saw the end coming. When he spoke before the pupil-teachers of two reputed teachers’ colleges in London in the early 1870s, he complained: ‘Men go hastily to Germany and see a German school taught only by adult teachers, a teacher to each separate class . . . They see or hear besides that a similar plan is in operation in the expensively appointed and efficient schools which are among the shows of some towns in the United States, and they come to the conclusion that modern science is opposed to the employment of pupil-teachers, and requires that only adult teachers should have any charge of children’.<sup>62</sup> He was right: The discussion was more complicated. There was at that time still no consensus within the “modern science” of education about whether adult agency was the only agency of benefit for managing schools and organising teaching. The strict identification of teaching with adults and learning with children without any intermediate positions was still in the making.

The slow process of the dichotomisation of classrooms unveils one of the empirical shortcomings in the historiography that overstates the persistence of the teacher-centred classroom within the “grammar of schooling”. The original formulations of this powerful thesis discussed classroom organisation and management in terms of middle-class values stressing efficiency and managerialism.<sup>63</sup> Hence Tyack and Tobin’s thesis related inner structures of schooling to social, economic, and political determinants. Further formulations of the thesis of persistent, almost inescapable features of modern schooling, resulted

<sup>62</sup>James Harrison Rigg, *Primary Education in England: Its Prospects, Methods, and Merits* (London: Book dept. Training College, Westminster, 1872), 15.

<sup>63</sup>Tyack and Tobin, “The Grammar of Schooling.”

<sup>64</sup>Larry Cuban, *How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms 1880–1990* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993).

<sup>65</sup>David Tyack and Larry Cuban, *Tinkering towards Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), particularly 85–109.

from a productive collaboration between David Tyack and Larry Cuban. Cuban had published a persuasive book about constancy and change in American classrooms from 1880 until 1990.<sup>64</sup> Cuban's stronger instructional focus fitted quite well with Tyack's previous analyses and the result was the consolidation of grammar of schooling emphasising organisation and management as inner moments of schooling.<sup>65</sup>

Beyond the critique about its exclusive US-American focus, most of the historical evidence supporting this thesis referred to developments beginning at the end of the nineteenth century. In contrast, this analysis of manuals of teaching and classroom organisation has addressed the time in which this grammar was still in the making. For centuries, classrooms – not only in Europe – had known roles for children other than that of mere learner. Taken as a proxy for the changing shape of classrooms, these manuals tell the story of a relatively late exclusion of children from all active roles other than learning. The adult- or teacher-centred classroom, often characterised as monolithic and difficult to change, appears in the manuals as a more fragile and recent construction of a classroom scheme. Well into the late nineteenth century, “the division between adult and child responsibility within the school was subject to gradation rather than dichotomy”.<sup>66</sup> Still, the slow dichotomisation of classrooms does not contradict central insights of the grammar of schooling. The difficulty of changing routines and the ascendancy of the teacher-centred classroom are unequivocal. But the long-term temporality of the very idea of a consistent “grammar” becomes more controversial in the light of the relatively young dichotomisation of classrooms.

When Tyack and Cuban discussed the grammar of schooling, internal organisational aspects came to the fore stressing the relative autonomy of schools.<sup>67</sup> Yet the slow but consistent reduction of children's many roles to the sole role of learning may also be interpreted not only in terms of the internal structures of schooling – something the manuals analysed here did – but also in its wider significance. Going well beyond the evidence discussed in this article, I claim that the slow dichotomisation of classrooms meant their estrangement from other social situations in at least two functional respects. First, one of the major tenets in the observation of social life in the nineteenth century was the unprecedented differentiation of the division of labour, the process of specialising and separating productive tasks. Following pioneering observations by Adam Smith in the eighteenth century, the considerable impact of industrialisation on society and culture increased the significance of division of labour in different social philosophies.<sup>68</sup> From different perspectives, Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer, and Emile Durkheim, among others, discussed division of labour in this vein. All of them emphasised that division of labour was not only a technical but also a social process. Whereas the growing specialisation in Marx's analysis constituted a central piece in his theory of alienation, Spencer's and Durkheim's analyses, building on evolutionism, characterised the social division of labour as the basis of modern and advanced societies.<sup>69</sup>

These insights also impacted education. Educationalists all over Europe realised that the division of labour and the emergence of a managerial class represented crucial transformations applicable to the field of schooling. For instance, one author in the

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<sup>66</sup>Dolan, “Adult and Child Identities,” 536.

<sup>67</sup>This is the main focus of the discussion of the thesis of a “grammar of schooling”. See the special issue dedicated to the question and coordinated by Rita Hofstetter and Bernard Schneuwly in *European Educational Research Journal* 12, no. 2 (2013).

<sup>68</sup>Hamilton, *Towards a Theory of Schooling*, 75–96.

<sup>69</sup>Anthony Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 224–41.

*Ragged School Union Magazine* in London praised the participation of monitors as “teacher’s helps” by linking the agency of these children in the classroom to the economic principle of the “distributive labour system”: ‘And what is of great importance to a school is, that a monitor can be kept at one particular kind of work till he is tolerably perfect in it (. . .) In making a simple pin many hands are employed, each engaged in a separate or distinct part. One straightens the wire, another cuts it, a third makes the point, and a fourth the head, and so on. Now the greatness of the manufacturing power of England lies entirely in this proper distribution of labour; by this system we have every kind of manufactured goods quadrupled in quantity, of better quality and at half the price than we could have under the old method. And it is not saying little for a monitorial system, to allow that I can be used in the same way’.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, some manuals of school management in England (2), France (2), and Spain (4) explicitly referred to the division of labour, when they discussed their organisational proposal for classrooms. However, the transformation of elementary classrooms in Europe displayed the opposite trend: the dichotomisation of classroom roles clearly stood for a simplification of the division of labour within classrooms. Adult teachers and young learners reduced the hitherto existing range of possible tasks and roles for children.<sup>71</sup> Of course, this was only possible because a good deal of the division of labour was transferred to the level of schools with numerous classrooms and increasingly specialising adult roles such as principals, special teachers, secretaries, janitors, etc. In the long run, the dichotomisation of classroom roles led to a more complex organisation of schools.

Second, dichotomised classrooms meant the estrangement between outside life and school life as for the reduction of possible roles for children in the latter. Childhood, as a constitutive part of the human life cycle, has been everything but passive in nature.<sup>72</sup> The participation of children in adult life was ubiquitous in non-elite households before the imposition of intensive and extensive school attendance. Historians of European schooling often focus on the hardships of children’s industrial and agricultural labour in the nineteenth century, when discussing the obstacles that the spread of mass compulsory schooling had to face. The estrangement of classrooms meant however not only the difference between the school, on the one side, and the agricultural field, the artisan’s workshop or the factory, on the other side. Intensive and extensive school time put a constraint on the availability of children’s work in two respects: the loss of (predominantly) boys’ earnings and also of the collaboration of girls in helping and providing care at home. As extensive cross-cultural surveys have shown, domestic and care labour represented an essential part of children’s lives, particularly for girls. In this sense,

<sup>70</sup>“Teacher’s Helps. Monitors,” *Ragged School Union Magazine* 7 (1855), no. 73, 174.

<sup>71</sup>Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott, “Childhood,” in *Social Divisions*, ed. Geoff Payne (London: Red Globe Press, 2013), 164–81. See also Cornelia Dietrich and Valerie Riepe, “Praktiken der Homogenisierung. Soziale Choreographien im Schulalltag,” *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* 65, no. 5 (2019): 669–91.

<sup>72</sup>Harry Bogin and B. Holly Smith, “Evolution of the Human Life Cycle,” *American Journal of Human Biology* 8 (1996): 703–16.

<sup>73</sup>Ray Pahl, *Divisions of Labour* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984).

<sup>74</sup>Candice Bradley, “Women’s Power, Children’s Labor,” *Cross-Cultural Research* 27, no. 1&2 (1993): 70–96.

<sup>75</sup>T.S. Weisner and R. Gallimore, “My Brother’s Keeper: Child and Sibling Caretaking,” *Current Anthropology* 18 (1977): 169–90; Beatrice Blyth Whiting and Carolyn Pope Edwards, *Children of Different Worlds: The Formation of Social Behaviour* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); and Barry Hewlett, “Demography and Childcare in Preindustrial Societies,” *Journal of Anthropological Research* 47 (1991): 1–37.

<sup>76</sup>David F. Lancy, *The Anthropology of Childhood: Cherubs, Chattel, Changelings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 318–20.

<sup>77</sup>Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

a quick look into family dynamics may offer a more comprehensive view of the modern division of labour that not only focuses on economic production places.<sup>73</sup> Usually beginning after the age of six,<sup>74</sup> child and sibling caretaking was and is still common.<sup>75</sup> Care labour had a “great potential worth as future workers and as caretakers for their elderly parents”.<sup>76</sup> The many active roles that children undertook in non-bourgeois settings, paid and unpaid, resounded strongly in the age-mixed situation of nineteenth-century pre-age-graded classrooms, where instructing, helping, and caring for other children was for a long time a substantial element in managing classrooms and organising teaching.

Anthropologists have defined the roles played by children in community and domestic tasks as “legitimate peripheral participation”.<sup>77</sup> The dichotomisation of schools, as it reduced the range of legitimate roles for children to only learning, meant the considerable contraction of this legitimate peripheral participation in the order of the classroom and in the task of teaching. In sum, the analysis of the manuals showed both the emergence of a classroom at the end of the nineteenth century, in which the division of labour became practically a binary system (teaching/learning) and children’s usual activities in the domestic sphere largely disappeared. As a side-effect, the continuous integration of individual children into the workings of the classrooms, having been the foundation of a teacher’s training concept rooted in apprenticeship, lost its cultural legitimacy. In the end, modern primary classrooms were de-differentiated and children’s roles in them were more strongly limited. Both features of dichotomised classrooms partly substantiate the claim that their estrangement from other social spheres was fully underway.

The evidence presented in this article reasonably argues for the gradual dichotomisation of classrooms in the late nineteenth century. Whether the sketchy interpretation of dichotomisation as being a central element in differentiating classrooms from other contexts – what I called “estrangement” – can be upheld, is a matter of further historical research focusing not only on the inner workings of school teaching. In the context of the digital revolution (and, quite recently, the pandemic), schools today may be spatially on the brink of the end of the era of confinement.<sup>78</sup> Yet from the perspective of instructional tasks and classroom roles, children are still institutionally confined to only one role. Even neoliberal human capital theories and newer modes of educational governmentality address them primarily as “learners”. The production of dichotomised classrooms that accompanied the definitive imposition of mass schooling in modern societies certainly emerged in association with the spatial confinement facilitated by separated school spaces; yet the increasingly porous boundaries of the latter does not necessarily imply a weakening of the social confinement of children as “learners only”.

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<sup>78</sup>Inés Dussel, “Digital Classrooms and the New Economies of Attention: Reflections on the End of Schooling as Confinement,” in *Designing Schools: Space, Place and Pedagogy*, ed. Kate Darian-Smith and Julie Willis (London: Routledge, 2017), 230–44.

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