

Benjamin Seifert, „Reform-optimism and civil fury – The referendum against the „kooperative Schule“ in North Rhine-Westphalia”, ibidem Verlag, Stuttgart 2013.

Original title of the dissertation: „Schulkampf als Kulturkampf? Social and political determinations of school reform in Germany by the example of the conflict over the „kooperative Schule“ in North Rhine-Westphalia between 1976 and 1978”.

Summary:

What are the conditions under which referenda emerge and take effect? In 1978, almost 30 percent of the population of the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia voted against a moderate school reform in the name of the social-liberal government under prime minister of the state Heinz Kühn. In this harsh and bitter conflict not only the concept of the so called „kooperative Schule“ failed. Moreover, it became apparent that the reform optimism, which dominated the mentality of the West-German society in the 1960s, lost ground and was replaced by a broad scepticism towards innovation and reform. Furthermore, the desire for a school reform that meets the needs of a modern society was not satisfied. In his dissertation, Benjamin Seifert traces conflict constellations and analyses the complex network of the participating stakeholders. Against the background of recent political events, such as the referendum against a school reform in Hamburg in 2010, the investigation of a similar historical conflict is both relevant and reasonable. In doing so, this study takes account of the modified interest in the nature and dynamics of direct-democratic types of voting and protest.

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