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## TEACHERS' VALUES IN GERMANY AND IRELAND

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### VALUE ORIENTATIONS

The value system of teachers can be analysed in terms of a distinction between 'instrumental' and 'expressive' values. An 'instrumental' concept of education is one in which the pupil's schooling is regarded as a means to an end, such as passing examinations, getting a 'good' job or going to college. Because 'instrumental' values imply the development of intellectual competence, they are normally associated with the cognitive domain.

'Expressive' values on the other hand are broadly concerned with the personal growth of the individual, not only academically but also emotionally and psychologically. 'Expressive' values might include such objectives as helping a child to become a mature human being, to acquire self-confidence or perhaps to internalise Christian principles. 'Expressive' values are, typically, located in the affective rather than in the cognitive domain.

It is important to make it clear from the outset that 'expressive' and 'instrumental' values are by no means mutually exclusive. A young person studying for possible entry to university may be instrumentally motivated but may also derive a great deal of gratification, both immediate and long term, from his studies as he pursues them day by day.

However, such has been the quality of the educational debate in many countries that a harmonious synthesis of 'expressive' and 'instrumental' values has proved difficult to achieve. In a society where schools select people for the labour market, it can appear utopian and unrealistic to champion 'expressive' values. The traditional perceived role of schools in allocating life chances and equipping pupils for economic life provides a powerful rationale for 'instrumental' values and makes it difficult for teachers to concern themselves with the human rather than the academic development of their pupils. While it may not be desirable to have tension or a contradiction between 'expressive' and 'instrumental' values, the fact remains that many teachers are torn between the two. Although the distinction between the two typologies is by no means clear-cut, it can nevertheless be argued that such a distinction constitutes a useful tool.

Let us now consider the Irish and German educational systems in terms of 'instrumental-expressive' values.

### TRADITIONAL VALUES IN GERMANY

The traditional model of German education has been greatly influenced by Prussia, a state which had pronounced militaristic tendencies. Especially after the German victory in the Franco-Prussian war, the prestige of the Prussian educational system increased and it became the model for neighbouring German states and also for some foreign countries. By the end of the nineteenth century, the rate of illiteracy in Germany was only 0.05 per cent, and this high level of literacy was associated with the spectacular growth of German industrial prosperity. The assumed

link between literacy and prosperity naturally promoted a belief in the economic usefulness and 'instrumental' quality of education.

The Prussian system was one which emphasised conformity. Craig<sup>2</sup> writes:

In 1854, the Minister of Education, von Raumer, issued directives which . . . made it clear to all teachers that their function was to impress upon their charges discipline, order and obedience to authority.

It is perhaps an indication of the persistence and pervasiveness of the Prussian tradition that even today and even in the 'western' part of Germany, modern observers comment upon the somewhat regimented character of the educational system and its concentration upon the cognitive rather than the affective domain. Helm<sup>5</sup>, an American professor of political science who has lived in Germany, conveys his impressions of German schools in the following terms:

Although one hears talk of a discipline problem with German children they appear obedient and orderly when compared to American children . . . German teachers also seem to prefer a highly structured curriculum. Lesson plans are elaborately drawn up with each precious minute accounted for.

Hearnden<sup>4</sup> refers to the traditional 'inflexible discipline' in German schools 'which required unquestioning obedience and thereby tended to exclude spontaneous inquiry'. Newcomb<sup>12</sup> after his survey of a sample of German schools, expresses a certain unease about what he has seen:

If I had to sum up my doubts about Germany in one short sentence, I might say that I felt there is the same uneasy conflict between authoritarianism and freedom in the schools that I also feel in the country as a whole.

In view of such comments, it would be of interest to know more about German teachers' own value orientations. Do they in fact have an 'efficient' ad hoc approach to education, or do they see themselves more in the role of character-builders, concerned for the overall personal development of their charges? In other words, do they tend to endorse predominantly instrumental or expressive values?

### EDUCATIONAL VALUES IN A CATHOLIC STATE

Turning now to the Republic of Ireland, we notice that one of its salient features is Church control of the school system. In this respect it contrasts strongly with Germany where, except for some private schools, the system is largely secular and non-denominational. In Ireland, however, many primary and academic (that is, non-vocational) secondary schools are managed by religious Orders and are actually the property of the Catholic Church. With reference to the secondary schools, the Council of Education Report<sup>1</sup> states:

However diverse in origin and tradition, today they all have certain features in common, as well as distinctive individualising traits. First of all, they are strongly religious in character, religious motives having led to their foundation and religious bodies being in the main their trustees, patrons and managers. The dominant purpose of their existence is the inculcation of religious ideals and values.

This statement relates to the secondary school system but it also applies to the primary schools and even to the vocational sector whose management committees are usually strongly influenced by their clerical members. The influence of the Catholic Church is very pronounced in Irish education partly because of the role of the priests, nuns and brothers; and, partly, because of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the lay teachers are members of the Church. In a religious sense, the Republic of Ireland is becoming less pluralistic, so that now about 96 per cent of the population is Catholic. McGriell<sup>11</sup> found that 'Roman Catholic' was the second most acceptable stimulus category out of a list of 70, and that it was approved by 96.2 per cent of his sample. We can, therefore, say with some confidence that not alone the school managers, many of whom are in Orders, but also the majority of the lay teachers are bound to have a commitment to Catholic religious values in education.

A distinctive feature of the Catholic philosophy of education has been formulated by Salters<sup>17</sup> as follows:

... it is opposed to any instrumental view of the purpose of education conceived in terms either of simply 'getting on' in the world or of fitting the individual for society.

Likewise, a publication of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (<sup>16</sup>, p.20) states that:

Education is not given for the purpose of gaining power but as an aid towards a fuller understanding of, and communication with man, events and things. Knowledge is not to be considered as a means of material prosperity and success, but as a call to serve and to be responsible to others.

One can therefore view the Catholic education ethos as one which assigns a higher priority to expressive values than to instrumental and apologists would lead us to expect that the values of teachers in the Irish Republic would have a predominantly expressive orientation.

## THE STUDY

A comparison was undertaken of teachers' pedagogical values in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the Republic of Ireland (RI) with a view to discovering the degree of importance which they attached to instrumental and expressive values.

Questionnaires were used as the research instruments and were developed on the basis of two pilot studies, the first of which consisted of open-ended questions. This procedure was intended to ensure that the questionnaires used in the main study would be 'adapted to the natural frame of reference of most of the subjects', and that 'the final form of the inquiry would not distort the phenomena' (Hyman,<sup>7</sup> p.28). The responses from the open-ended questionnaires were used to develop closed-category questions which in their turn were piloted. Both pilot studies were administered in Germany and in Ireland to samples similar to the target population for the main study.

The final version of the questionnaire (see table 1) was distributed by the author in primary and post-primary schools in Dublin, Munich, Frankfurt, Hamburg and Mainz. The sample was, therefore, confined to urban areas and the findings of the research must be interpreted with this in mind. In Ireland schools are usually denominational and the sample was so composed that the denominations were represented in the same proportions as in the society as a whole. In Germany the sample was based on two fairly conservative Länder where the Christian Democrats tend to receive the majority vote (Bavaria and Rhineland-Palatinate);

and on two Länder which have more socialist leanings (Hesse and Hamburg). The sampling was therefore based on different criteria in each area but on criteria which related to the theoretical background of the study. The sample consisted of 459 German teachers and 270 Irish teachers. These numbers represented a response rate of 78.46 per cent and 86.26 per cent in Germany and in Ireland respectively.

Although the response rate in the Irish Republic is superior to that achieved in Germany, the German response rate can be considered satisfactory when it is compared with that achieved in other studies carried out there: e.g. Niemann (13), 59.78 per cent; Schefer (18), 53.6 per cent; Hammer (3), 20.4 per cent; Kraft (9), 55.5 per cent.

## THE RESULTS

For each of the response options, teachers recorded their answers on a five point scale, 'Very important' (1), 'Important' (2), 'Some importance' (3), 'Little importance' (4) and 'No importance' (5). In order to arrive at a classification which was not a purely subjective one, a number of informants (not involved as

TABLE 1  
TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT OF  
IMPORTANCE OF ATTRIBUTES (QUESTION 1)  
TASKS (QUESTION 2) AND PERFORMANCE (QUESTION 3)

### QUESTION 1

How important is it for a teacher to possess each of the following characteristics?

Item	FRG	medians	RI
* 1 Ability to pass on knowledge	1.317		1.210
2 Understanding of children	1.118		1.163
* 3 Good subject knowledge	1.738		1.586
4 Patience	1.396		1.339
5 A sense of humour	1.858		1.708
6 Fairness and impartiality	1.285		1.205
* 7 Capacity to discipline pupils	1.849		1.493
8 Ability to establish good relationship with pupils.	1.344		1.260

### QUESTION 2

Assess the importance of the following objectives for your school:

* 9 To prepare the pupils for a career	2.944		1.902
* 10 To impart knowledge	1.763		1.895
11 To prepare pupils for life in society	3.760		1.281
12 To inculcate Christian values	1.436		1.450
13 To help pupils fulfil their potential	1.581		1.247
* 14 To teach basic skills (literacy, numeracy)	2.076		1.446
15 To make pupils good, mature human beings	2.843		1.200
* 16 To maintain high academic standards	2.154		2.336

### QUESTION 3

How important do you rate the following aspects of your work?

* 17 Teaching your subject(s)	1.930		1.357
* 18 Developing the pupil's own judgement	1.237		1.196
19 Forming a good relationship with pupils	1.748		1.619
20 Stimulating the pupil's interest	1.330		1.195
21 Developing social skills in the children	1.681		1.794
22 Getting the best out of each child	2.494		1.224
23 Exerting good moral influence on pupil	2.171		1.583

respondents in the study) were invited to classify the items as 'instrumental' or 'expressive'; and these items were subsequently dealt with according to this initial classification. Those items termed 'instrumental' are marked with an asterisk in table 1. Median values (shown in table 1) were obtained for each item in each country. When the rank orders of the medians in the two countries were correlated, a Spearman rank order correlation of .49 was obtained.

Table 2 shows the mean scores of the German and Irish teachers on the expressive and instrumental items. No significant difference was found between the expressive and instrumental scores of German teachers ( $t = .87$ ,  $df = 458$ ), but a significant difference in favour of expressive scores was found for the Irish teachers ( $t = 6.44$ ,  $df = 269$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The mean instrumental score of teachers in Ireland was significantly different from that of teachers in Germany ( $t = 8.85$ ,  $df = 727$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with the Irish teachers rating instrumental values more important than did the German teachers. There was also a significant difference between expressive scores in the two countries ( $t = 14.41$ ,  $df = 727$ ,  $p < .001$ ) with Irish teachers tending to stress expressive values.

TABLE 2  
Mean Scores for Expressive and Instrumental Values  
in each country

	Expressive Values	Instrumental Values
Germany	1.924	1.936
Ireland	1.495	1.656

## DISCUSSION

It must first be noted that the median scores are rather strongly skewed in the direction of 'Very important' (1). The reason for this is that in the pilot studies, teachers tended to specify attributes, objectives and activities which were of some importance to them personally. Under these circumstances, it would have been strange indeed to find many teachers who considered a particular response option 'Not important'.

It must also be noted that there was only a modest correlation ( $r = .49$ ) between median ratings of items in both countries. It is however worthy of mention that there was cross-cultural agreement about the ranking of two items. There was a consensus that an 'Understanding of children' (item 2 ranked 1st out of 23 items) is a teachers' most important professional characteristic. A low priority was assigned by teachers in both countries to the objective of preparing pupils for a career (item 98, ranked 22nd out of 23 items). In both Germany and Ireland, therefore, an item of an expressive nature was considered of high importance, whereas an instrumental item was regarded as of low importance.

Among the German teachers the mean score for expressive items did not differ significantly from the mean score for instrumental items. This finding may appear somewhat surprising in view of the traditional instrumental image of German education. What the results of the present study would seem to indicate is that German teachers emphasise expressive values just as much as instrumental values. It does not therefore support the view that German teachers are severely task-oriented and somewhat lacking in concern for the socio-emotional development of children. In fact, the Germans would appear to hold an almost equal regard for the two types of values.

In Ireland, by contrast, the mean score for expressive items was significantly greater than the mean score for instrumental items. This emphasis upon expressive values is in keeping with the Catholic education ethos and is what one might expect in a

Catholic country. Certainly the Irish express a stronger preference than the Germans for expressive values. It looks, however, as though the Irish also attach more weight than the Germans to instrumental values (see table 2 and note at the end of the article). In view of the 'official' education ethos, this cross-cultural comparison shows the Irish in a rather surprising light. Many observers would have supposed the Germans to be far more instrumentally oriented than the Irish but it seems that in Ireland, a strong expressive orientation exists alongside an unexpectedly strong instrumental tendency.

What the empirical part of this study shows is of course merely the kind of values which teachers *claim* or *wish* to endorse. It is however quite possible that there may be a difference between rhetoric and reality. We have seen that in both areas expressive values are held in high regard and that an 'Understanding of children' is of overriding concern to teachers. What are the chances that teachers in each country will be able to realise their expressive values in practice? Such a question would be almost impossible to answer using a quantitative methodology. Having admitted this, let us now look at the administrative frameworks within which Irish and German teachers work and let us consider what kind of value system they are likely to promote.

In Germany, schools are governed by an elaborate committee structure which is designed to make them run according to the principles of participatory democracy. Pupils as well as teachers are given a role in decision-making and an attempt is being made to induce the young people to take responsibility for their own affairs through such organs as the 'Schülermitverwaltung' (Pupil Committee for Joint Administration). The committee structure, if successful, would certainly have the effect of promoting expressive values and the mere fact that it exists is evidence of a desire for liberalisation and progressiveness. However, some critics (Von Hentig, 6; Müller, 10) tend to condemn the German school committee structure on the grounds that it can be cumbersome and over-legalistic. Expressive values tend to inhere in the spirit rather than in the letter of the law and any attempt to 'institutionalise' them can defeat its own object.

A heavy-handed approach, along with the most praiseworthy of motives, is sometimes evident in the manner which the authorities adopt when wishing to bring about educational changes. To illustrate this point, I would like to refer to a document published by the Ministry of Education of the Saarland.<sup>15</sup> This book sets out a framework for the organisation of a two year cycle of guidance (Orientierungsstufe) for pupils between the end of primary school and the beginning of secondary school proper. It demands that teachers should work to a precise timetable and achieve certain objectives within a given period (Royle, 15). Teachers are to try by every possible means at their disposal to attain cognitive goals and must avoid leaving out learning objectives or distorting concepts (15, p.58). They are expected to be efficient in the pursuit of a legitimate aim — equality of opportunity for their pupils. This is not an unreasonable demand. However, a certain ruthlessness is evident in the discussion of the means by which this aim is to be achieved. There is a suggestion of regret that it is not possible to dismiss teachers who deny their full co-operation to the enterprise 'Das Unternehmen bleibt nur überlebensfähig, wenn es Mitarbeiter entlässt, die das Betriebsinteresse korrumpieren'. The whole enterprise can only survive if it dismisses workers who corrupt the business in hand, 15, (p.128). Difficulties are anticipated with the teachers' unions (Es könnte sein, dass sie ihre eigene Politik zu machen beginnen und ihre gegenseitige Rivalität für wichtigen halten als die saubere Durchführung einer durchgeplanten Konzeption. It could be, that they begin to form their own policies and that they attach more importance to their mutual rivalry than to the efficient execution of a planned concept. 15, (p.128). The role of the teacher is reduced to a comparatively low level - that of faithfully implementing a policy

upon which the authorities have already decided. This in fact represents an intensification of the instrumental approach, since not alone are the teachers expected to promote instrumental values (the whole plan is geared to the realisation of cognitive objectives); they are also expected to acquiesce in being used as instruments of change by the authorities.

The whole work is pervaded by a desire for efficiency at (almost) any cost and the expressive domain is considered only insofar as it might affect motivation or constitute a barrier to organisational change. In an administrative framework imbued with such a spirit, it would certainly be difficult for teachers to give equal weight to expressive and instrumental values. The present study indicates, however, that such is their desire and disposition.

What about Ireland? What is the relationship between Irish teachers' avowed values and the institutions within which they seek to realise them?

Although the Church sets out to champion expressive values, there are countervailing forces which tend to militate against the realisation of these values. One such factor is the widely-held belief that economic growth is dependent upon education. This belief was greatly encouraged by the 1962 O.E.C.D. report, 'Investment in Education'<sup>8</sup> which examined the projected requirements of qualified manpower in Ireland and recommended that various parts of the education system be reorganised in order to improve their efficiency. The very title of the report is indicative of a concept of education as 'investment' in human resources. This is a concept which is instrumental in character, and while it may be incompatible with the Catholic education ethos, it is in keeping with materialistic trends in a society where secularism is gaining ground. It also corresponds to the needs for growth of a developing economy.

Another factor which makes it difficult for Irish teachers to live by expressive values is the role played by the State in education. Under British rule State power had been regarded as inflexible and rigid. It was wielded by an alien Protestant government which was unacceptable to a large proportion of the people. The irony is that under a native, independent government the same inflexible trends continued. In the late 1920s and early 1930s an attempt was made to liberalise the education system by abolishing set books. However, this 'open' course was combined with one, single, uniform external examination for the whole country, with the result that set texts were gradually re-introduced. In Ireland as in Germany, liberal measures are often 'imposed' in an illiberal manner. The introduction of comprehensive schools (1963) and free post-primary education (1976) were both announced first of all to members of the press rather than to teachers and these innovations were launched entirely without consultation with teachers' associations or managerial organisations. Likewise, a new primary school curriculum was 'handed down' by the Department of Education to schools. Although the Department is becoming more sympathetic to the needs and wishes of teachers, it remains true that the whole system is tightly centralised and extremely examination-oriented.

The Irish system is, as has already been indicated, very centralised and, as in most educational systems, the secondary school leaving certificate exerts a decisive influence over the teaching and curriculum in schools. Irish teachers have however much less control than German teachers over the setting and marking of final examinations. The German *Arbitur* is set and marked by the class teachers themselves and the oral examination - even for non-linguistic subjects — plays a much greater role than in Ireland. This has the advantage that children have the opportunity to express themselves in more than one modality and that they are tested not by strangers but by those who know them personally and have taught them. These factors must surely make it easier to realise expressive as well as instrumental goals.

The research of Raven<sup>14</sup> in Ireland indicates that examinations in fact largely control the behaviour of Irish teachers and that the goal of examination success is the only one which teachers achieve even moderately successfully. Nevertheless the teachers in his sample professed to reject a utilitarian concept of education and emphasised instead their support for character-development goals. The values which they *claimed* to endorse were substantially the same as in the present study but Raven highlights a disparity between the goals which teachers consider to be important and those which are promoted by the examination system and curriculum. He points out that little importance appears to be attached to the content of subjects in comparison with that attached to examinations. The work of Raven goes some way towards explaining why the Irish teachers in the present study stressed instrumental values more than their German counterparts.

#### CONCLUSION

The data from our study show that in both countries, but more especially in Ireland, expressive values were highly rated. However, an examination of the administrative frameworks in the two areas shows that in practice it may be difficult for teachers to realise expressive values. In Germany, excessively meticulous planning and the over-codification of rules can sometimes end up by killing the values which the 'law' endeavours to protect and promote. An exception to this trend is the German final examination which, by its flexibility, may facilitate the attainment of expressive goals. In Ireland, the orthodoxy of the educational establishment is to champion expressive values. However in the present study, Irish teachers were found to endorse instrumental values to a greater extent than their German counterparts. A possible reason for this finding is that they work within an examinations system which strongly tends to promote instrumental goals. In addition, factors such as the needs of a developing economy and the organisational style of the school authorities tend to militate against the realisation of expressive goals.

We are left with the impression that in both Ireland and Germany, the pronounced expressive orientation of teachers may well be vitiated by the administrative framework within which they work.

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#### NOTE

This may represent what Hofstede calls an 'acquiescence pattern' - that is the tendency to rate *all* goals as more or less important. Hofstede found that the more individualist countries in his sample showed less acquiescence. See: Hofstede, G, 'Culture's Consequences.' Beverley Hills, California: Sage, 1980, pp.225-7.