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DENMARK

National Socialisation and Education

a Comparison of Ideals for the Upbringing of Children and the School Systems in France, Germany and the Netherlands

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Discussion Paper No. 11/99

SPIRIT - *School for Postgraduate Interdisciplinary Research on Interculturalism and Transnationality*

Director: Professor Ulf Hedetoft

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I. INTRODUCTION

What is the aim of the upbringing of children? What kinds of adults ought to be coming out of the process? Should it be independent critical beings or rather adapting adults who will carry on the society as it is? The answers of these questions depend on where they are asked. They are culture specific. The aim of this article is to discuss to what extent national values on upbringing differ between three European countries: France, Germany and the Netherlands, and how these values are reflected in the national school systems. France, Germany and the Netherlands are three countries in Europe, situated closely to each other geographically, still carriers of different histories and school traditions. The findings are discussed in the perspective of European integration, illuminating factors supporting convergence and factors supporting divergence of school systems in Europe.

In the following pages I compare ideals for the upbringing of children and examine which qualities are stressed as being the most important in the three national contexts (II). I compare objectives of schools and curricula, but also more concrete aspects such as classroom decoration and celebration of birthdays (III). I examine the correlation of socialisation values and school systems, and finally I discuss this in relation to aspects of European integration with respect to the possibilities of convergence of the European school systems (IV).

1

My data material consists of quantitative data on general opinions on how children should be raised, national and international surveys on ideals for the upbringing and studies of different European school systems and a questionnaire survey I have made among children of 8-12 years in the three countries, but also of qualitative interviews with teachers and school directors concerning what kind of adults the schools strive to make from its pupils. In the article the focus is on the ideals for the upbringing and for the school systems more than on the actual results and practises of these.

I deal with nations in the article, and of course it is problematic to talk about 'national' values. Nations and the people living there are rarely homogeneous wholes. However, common history and traditions and for example the national school system, national media, national government seem to have created national identities with agglomerations of values that distinguish Germany from France, and France and Germany from the Netherlands.

Comparing cultures in a very systematic way is not possible because some aspects of the cultures have their own logic such as the concept of "encadrement" which will be presented in the section on French upbringing below, which do not seem to be a meaningful concept in the other two cultural contexts analysed in this article. However, in my analysis, I especially look for differences concerning the view upon ambition, independence, well-being, play and creativity because these aspects seem to reflect perceptions of how the child should be when he or she grows up, and the mentioned aspects seem to vary considerably in the three countries in the study (cf. for example Ester et al, 1994; Malpas and Lambert; 1993; Hofstede, 1980).

II. NATIONAL VALUES AND IDEALS FOR THE UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN

In this section I will present the national profiles of values for the upbringing. In different value-studies, e.g. the European Value Study (Ester et al, 1994) and Eurobarometer (Malpas and Lambert, 1993), it is demonstrated how many aspects of life such as family patterns and work values have become more homogeneous in Europe over the last decades. Pedagogical values and ideals for the upbringing of children, however, seem to stay very different from country to country in Europe. As Ester et al. conclude (p.120-121): "As far as pedagogical values are concerned no uniform developments were found"; on the contrary: "there was a trend towards divergence in socialisation values". In the following the ideals for upbringing of children in the three countries will be discussed on a general level. There are

some clear differences in the upbringing undertaken by mothers and fathers (e.g. the level of authority and insecurity) and also between social classes as many studies show (e.g. Doornenbal, 1996). My aim is, however, to illuminate the national peculiarities of the ideals of upbringing - and I am thus not going specifically into regional, religious, ethnic, social or gender differences, even though a study of these matters would without any doubt reveal some variations from the national norm.

Before going into the presentation below, I will briefly define what I mean by "upbringing". By "upbringing" I mean the way parents and institutions such as kindergartens and schools seek to influence the child, consciously and unconsciously, to teach him or her how to behave in the social community in which he or she lives. An example of this is how to eat, what clothes to wear, but also what to strive for in life, and how to treat others. The ideals of parents are not formally limited by rules and laws, but parents are part of cultural communities with spoken or unspoken common images of what the "perfect" adult is like, which mark their ideals.

1. Ideals for upbringing in France

According to the European Value Study, France is very conformist in the view on upbringing (by conformity the authors mean the positive evaluation of good manners, obedience and the lack of appreciation of qualities such as independence and imagination (Ester et al. p.118, 1994). At the same time France is the country in Europe that is the highest ranking on self-centred achievement (for example to achieve a better life and to get ahead in society), and parents are very ambitious on behalf of their children.

In a survey made for the ABC+ (a Parisian market institute) 394 French parents were asked to point out which words are essential for the upbringing of their child. The criteria that are important for French parents in the ABC survey are primarily traits that are observable for the outside world: politeness, cleanness. Then come tolerance and kindness and arts, which may be seen as being important for the way the child socialises. Autonomy comes as the 6th most important and independence as number 19. That children should "eat everything" is the 11th most important traits, gives strong connotations to French food culture, and stresses that children should adapt to the adult world, unlike the Dutch way, where it is a tendency that children are seen to need special food. French parents are very concerned about the future of their children, and adult life seems to be very much in focus in French upbringing, more than the well-being of the children here and now.

3

The Eurobarometer survey (Malpas and Lambert, 1993) supports the other surveys even though the parents asked in this context also stress 'responsibility', 'tolerance' and 'love of life' as being important. Self-reliance and determination are also mentioned as being important thus supporting Ester et al. in their description of France as being focussed on self-centred achievement.

Threats of punishment are quite common in France, where 75% of the parents consider punishment as being a necessary part of the upbringing (Mermet, 1995, p. 174). French parents are less "soft" concerning their children than in e.g. the Scandinavian countries where punishment is more or less a taboo - at least ideally. This lack of softness is also seen in the school system, where the teacher does not shield the weaker pupils, but confront them with their lack of abilities from the start. Talking to persons who in some way deal with children in France or reading books about this issue, the word 'encadrement' keeps showing up. For teenagers of 10-18, a survey shows that the major reproach the young generation has against their parents is that they do not have enough confidence in their children (Mermet, 1994, p. 173). This reflects the meaning of 'encadrement' which could be translated with the English word 'framing', meaning not letting children be on their own. From the results in my questionnaire survey it appears that French children do not seem to have duties (washing up, carrying out the garbage, etc.) in the household.

Summing up on the French ideals for the upbringing two tendencies can be seen - that children should be taught to be adapting and sociable and that they should focus on self-centred achievement. These two tendencies seem quite paradoxical. A possible explanation is the fact that France is a mainly catholic country, where the religion emphasises values such as generosity and tolerance, and where the school system is built upon values of individualism and competition. French parents in the surveys presented above want their children to be well-behaved, tolerant and respectful, adapted to the existing frames of living and that they are number one in their class. Historically speaking, the French nation has been very centralised, striving for cultural unification for example by prohibiting other languages than French[1], and a strong pride in the values of the French nation is still seen. This might explain the adapting attitude. At the same time, however, there is a long tradition of intellectuals being critical to French society resulting in a continuous critical debate.

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[1]At least till recent decades, where for example Breton is taught in Brittany.

Another paradox seems to be that even though parents stress responsibility as an ideal for the upbringing of their children they do not seem to have much confidence in their children (cf. encadrement) and they do not give children duties in the household to make the children take part.

2. Ideals for upbringing in Germany

Ideals for the upbringing in Germany are - according to the Eurobarometer survey - to encourage private qualities. The most important ideal is self-reliance then comes responsibility, and thirdly tolerance/respect for the other. Love of life and good manners are fourth and fifth, sense of thrift and creativity/imagination sixth and seventh. Obedience and determination then follow. In a survey from Allensbacher Archiv from 1992, the values that are mentioned as being the most important are: honesty, common sense and responsibility. As the 4th most important West Germans mention consideration, 5th social conventions, 6th tolerance, 7th interest. East Germans mention social conventions and obedience as 4th and 5th, as 6th consideration and 7th performance. Even though the results of the two surveys differ, some common traits can be highlighted. The child should have a belief in him- or herself, have confidence. The child should be an honest and responsible being. Moreover, German children have duties at home, they have to take part (even if it is almost on a symbolic level) in the functioning of the home.

In the international survey from Eurobarometer (Malpas and Lambert, 1993) more 'soft' values like love of life and creativity and imagination are tested. Play, creativity and well-being are also of importance in the view German adults in this survey have on children.

Ambition also appears in the surveys. Interest, performance and determination are all values necessary to succeed at school. The school results are seen as being tremendously important in Germany as discussed by Nave-Herz, 1994, and Preuss-Lausitz, 1994. The ambitions parents have for their children are expressed in how they expect the school results to be, but they also want their children to have "Bildung" meaning general knowledge and education.

An issue that was taken up in my interviews again and again was solving conflicts without violence. Children should rather argument, discuss in a democratic manner. And the surveys on the ideals confirm that consideration of the other is important (tolerance, social conventions, consideration). According to Nave-Herz (1994) 90% German parents claim that they do not punish their children physically, which is in coherence with the above mentioned ideals.

Through the last 30 years there has been a change from traditional goals such as honesty, cleanliness and obedience to a bigger emphasis on autonomy in the German upbringing (Nave-Herz, 1994, p.61-62). Some signs show that the traditional values e.g. of how to behave still have some weight. An interesting example of the importance of good manners is to be found in an extremely detailed survey made on table manners from Allensbacher Archiv in 1995. This survey makes it clear that manners matter: the mere idea of making such a survey reflects the importance attached to table manners. Former East Germany seems slightly more strict, than the former West. This could reflect that the East Germans have not taken part in the same process of individualisation and liberalisation as the West. Still the two parts of Germany are relatively close in their answers.

Summing up the big differences between East and West are a stronger emphasis on good manners and self-reliance in the East, and a stronger emphasis on tolerance in the West. These differences could be interpreted as depicting recent history in this recently reunified country. Former East Germans feeling a need for being "just as good" as the West Germans, the West Germans feeling the need of teaching their children tolerance, accepting people with other backgrounds as the East Germans.

In many of the interviews the Prussian virtues are mentioned. These refer to the era when Prussia was primarily a military state, and where values such as thoroughness, punctuality, order and discipline were seen as important. Some school leaders and teachers regret that parents do not teach their children these codes of behaviour any more. It is hard to say, though, if this is something typical German, or just a typical way of perceiving "young people now a days". One could imagine that post modernity and its questioning of values and ideals, can be more difficult to tackle when living in a society that, at least till recently, has been dominated by more authoritarian and strict values than in more liberal societies. Of course this vacuum of values has been felt even more strongly in the former GDR. This might explain the insecurity parents feel in Germany concerning the upbringing of their children (German parents' feeling of insecurity is mentioned in e.g. Nave-Herz, 1994).

In a time with a rising unemployment, school is seen as a positive value. According to the respondents in Germany, many German parents want their child in the Gymnasium, even if the child is not necessarily fit for the high demands in this part of the school system. Words such as "Du sollst was werden" (You should be someone) or "das Weiterkommen" (to go further), "Erfolg zu haben" (to have success), "Sich durchsetzen zu können" (have one's will and reach the goals one has set) and also perseverance. However, learning should

not take place in a blind, unreflective manner: "Nicht nur greifen, auch begreifen" (approx. not just learning, also understanding). The child must take part in what is going on - at least ideally.

Selbstwertgefühl, Selbstbewußtsein, Selbstvertrauen, Selbstständigkeit, etc.: All these 'self' words show up in all contexts. The emphasis on the child's 'self' could reflect a lack of self-confidence by the parents which could be due to the feeling some parents seem to have, that the traditional values are out of tune, and in a way they put some of the responsibility onto the child. Another - crude - explanation could be that the common bad conscience of the war and what happened in East Germany have provoked a wish to make independent individuals taking critically part in the society. The goal seems to be to create strong persons that can take part in a democracy, deciding for themselves.

The Germans appear to be both very concerned with playing and creativity, and at the same time - which might seem paradoxical - good school results are extremely important. Children should feel at ease, have good relations to others, be cared for and feel joy of life. This priority of the well-being is seen in the classrooms decorated by the children, creating a home-atmosphere, but at the same time this serves as an exhibition so that parents and other visitors can see how busy the children are. Play also seems to be perceived as a means to achieve good school results.

The most important ideals for the upbringing thus seem to be that the children become: self-confident, honest, responsible beings with a caring attitude. Creativity is seen as a positive aspect, and play and well-being as means to obtain the other ideals. That the children are good at school is very important but also that they get "Bildung", education and general knowledge and abilities in a more broad sense. Good manners and a sense of order are also valued.

3. Ideals for upbringing in the Netherlands
What is important for Dutch parents in the upbringing of their children? According to a survey made by José Peeters and Claartje Woldringh about the life conditions of children below the age of 12 (549 parents were asked), the answers of the parents show that children ideally should be treated as small individuals who should be informed about what is happening so that he or she can understand the dispositions taken by parents and the world surrounding him. This reflects a relationship of equality between parent and child: the child is entitled to respect. A close relationship between parent and child is stressed as something

important. The well-being of the child is important: if the child is scared or worried he or she should be comforted and explained what is happening, the parents in the survey say. The child is a source of satisfaction and happiness. The child should be taught to cope with problem solving and to some extent make his/her own decisions and to some extent to respect rules and agreements made. Anger and confrontations between parent and child are not approved of.

A survey from 1996 made by Rispens et al. supports the survey mentioned above, and reflects the ideals for the upbringing of 1267 families in the Netherlands. These parents want to bring up their children in a way that they are responsible. An interesting difference between the three countries - which I interpret as being related to the view on responsibility - is the number of police officers. In the Netherlands there are 2,7 police officers per 1000 inhabitants (to compare: 3,7 in France and 3,1 in Germany (Mermet, 1991, p. 265). The wish to control the citizens externally (strong police force) is smaller in the Netherlands than in France. Dutch citizens are expected to take responsibility, which is reflected in the importance of responsibility in the upbringing of Dutch children, and this also seems to be the case in Germany. When individuals are taught to take responsibility for their actions less external control is seen as necessary. Children are thus not seen as irresponsible beings who can not or should not be held responsible for their actions.

The Dutch children are seen as individuals and the use of authoritarian upbringing and distance between adults and children is not emphasised. There seems to be little visible of hierarchy in Dutch society. This is described in the book *The Low Sky: Understanding the Dutch* written by Horst (1996) and also found by Hofstede (1980). Parents seem to want their child to develop a strong personality with an opinion about what is going on around them, and parents seem to worry about shy children.

Tolerance and acceptance of others who are different or who have different ways of seeing life seem to be a very important quality that the Dutch want to pass on to their children. The sociologist J. Braster describes Dutch society as follows in his article about the Dutch school system: "a society which, in principle, has acknowledged ideological pluralism" (Braster, 1993, p. 165). Concerning values on abortion and homosexuality - controversial topics - the Netherlands show a more generally permissive attitude, than e.g. France and Germany in the European Value Study. A general openness seems to be prevailing in the Netherlands, which matches well with the ideals of tolerance as an important issue.

8

Children should also be considerate towards others. In the European Value Study it is concluded that whereas France and to a lesser extent Germany are very focussed on self-achievement values like hard work and thrift, the Netherlands is more focussed on tolerance and unselfishness[2], which is thought to be relatively more important than hard work and thrift. Tolerance and consideration for others seem to be an important cultural trait for the Dutch.

Good manners is mentioned as the fourth most important issue and showing obedience to parents is mentioned as the 11th most important issue. In the European Value study the authors conclude that the Netherlanders stress conformity (good manners and obedience, and less imagination and creativity and individuality) in the upbringing a bit more than the Germans and a bit less than the French.

The importance of school results should not be overlooked in Dutch society even though this is expressed in a much gentler way than in the French and German society. At the age of 12, Dutch children change schools, and at this age it is decided whether the child should have an academic career or not. The choice of school at this level is made on the basis of the results in the national

CITO-test: in cognitive subjects (reading and writing, math, languages, etc). This is of course a reason for parents to care about the results of their child at school.

Concerning physical punishment 45% of the parents in Peeters and Woldringh's survey claim that they punish their 4-7-year-olds, whereas 24% of parents say they punish their 8-11-year-olds. Physical punishment seems to be far less used in the Netherlands than e.g. in France where 75% of parents find it acceptable to use physical punishments. This supports the idea that Dutch children are seen as individuals, and less as irresponsible beings that must be punished. Still that 45% claim that physical punishment is something they practice in their upbringing of children between 4 and 7 years is quite a high percentage and significantly more than in Germany (90% claim they are against). It must be considered that more parents - than the ones who admit it - probably hit their children.

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[2]It must be kept in mind that surveys such as the European Value Study is built on the answers of people, and of course these answers are probably closer to ideals than to actual practises.

Summing up on the Dutch ideals for the upbringing, it can be concluded that the child seems to be seen as an individual, who should develop a strong personality and be social. He or she should feel at ease and at the same time achieve good school results.

Comparing the ideals for the upbringing, it can be concluded that the same qualities - more or less - are approved of in France, Germany and the Netherlands: individuality, responsibility, tolerance. In spite of a more liberal upbringing, good manners still play an important role. Children should behave well. The qualities children should develop, however, show up in different configurations in the three countries.

In France a priority in the upbringing seems to be given adapting attitudes such as selfregulation and politeness, and less an interest in critical and independent children. Children should be tolerant and respectful towards others, but at the same time self achieving. The most important ideals for the upbringing in Germany seem to be that the children become: self-confident, honest, responsible beings with a caring attitude. Creativity is seen as a positive aspect, and play and well-being as means to obtain the other ideals.

Dutch children should be free, creative and critical towards the societies in which they live, and become great personalities. The Dutch ideals are less than the two other countries focussed on self-achievement goals, but more on tolerance, unselfishness and consideration for others. The values and world views behind these ideals for the upbringing is to some extent reflected in today's school systems, and this is what section III is about. The ideals for upbringing are shown below:

Country	Ideals for upbringing
France	be good at school, get a good job, be tolerant, be polite, be adapting
Germany	be self-aware, independent, creative, good at school, well-behaving, feel at ease, be tolerant
the Netherlands	have a strong personality, be social, polite, critical, feel a ease, be good at school

10

III. THE FRENCH, GERMAN AND DUTCH SCHOOL SYSTEMS

In this section, I illuminate differences between the three national school systems, with a special focus on primary education. I examine differences in length of schooling, teaching methods, view on the school and the physical frames of the institutions. Before presenting the three school systems I will briefly discuss the role of the school system with regard to the linkage to the nation and with regard to the 'products' the school system is supposed to produce. As discussed in an article of António Nóvoa (in Winther-Jensen (ed.) 1996, p. 40), the creation of the school systems has been closely linked to the creation of nation states, where the main role of the school has been to unify culturally and nationally. By Winther-Jensen (1996, p.4) education is even called "an important weapon" in the formation of nation states. Besides creating national citizens, the school has to provide knowledge and skills for the children who grow up in the nation and who have to take over all the functions of public institutions and the labour market. The children have to learn how to read and write, to calculate and other basic skills, and they also have to become citizens playing a role in the society in which they are going to live. What role they have to play, however, depends on the view of the individual. But as the role of the school systems is to produce citizens who can make the society function, it has to produce agents for all levels in society. For this reason the goal is not to make all pupils go to higher educations, and for this reason the possibilities of school systems are far from infinite. The school systems compared in this article are very similar in many respects even though there are some national particularities.

1. The French school system

The French school system is something very special in France. An observer has even called it "a holy cow in French society". It is closely linked to the thoughts of the Nation and the spirit of the Revolution in 1789 (liberté, égalité, fraternité). In France the school system has been used as a means to homogenise the huge country, and as a part of this the local dialects (les patois) were forbidden. The French school system is still very centralised. Children between 6 and 11 years go to "l'école primaire"(primary school), but when they enter this school they have already for quite a while been schoolchildren. They start when they are 2 or 3 years old going to "la maternelle"(preparatory school) which is not compulsory but which most children frequent (in 1989, 36% of the 2-year-Olds and 99% of the 3-year- old children attended pre school) (Durand-Prinborgne, 1991, p. 10).The content of these classes is play and learning. In primary school focus is on academic learning: logical thinking, mastery of writing and reading.

11

For French children, the age of 11 signifies a strong rupture because this is the age where they get into the secondary school, le collège, where they change from having one teacher in all the subjects to different teachers in all the subjects, and they are changing to another school building - often in a different location.

The French system is often called an elitist system. The very best students can - after they have gone through the secondary school and high-school - get into "Les grandes Ecoles" (a few and very estimated schools for higher education), if they pass a very selective contest. The graduates from these schools are sure to get very good and prestigious positions in the French society. On the other hand, quite a share of the French pupils can still manage to go through the school system without learning to read and write. This group is called the losers, "les cancres".

The fact that France has been a colonial empire has meant that the country has needed an elite to rule the country and to control its colonies. And the idea of France still being a very strong and important country has meant that ambitions are to be encouraged in the schools, from the very beginning. There is an ongoing debate of loosening up the very tight system, but changes are small and rare. Long schooldays and after that a lot of homework starting in primary school, where the children begin when they are 6 years old, seem unreasonable to some parents. Homework has several times been limited by a circular in France (for example in the Bulletin Officiel de l'Education Nationale, number 33, 15th of September, 1994). This circular stipulates that the work set by the teachers should in future be limited to oral homework or texts to be learnt by heart.

Pre school was originally created to eliminate the gap between the strong and the week children to give all the same chances regardless of their social origin, but critics of the school system do maintain that even the pre school aggravates the gap by using the language of the middle and the upper classes. Families in the upper classes tend to use a lot of time and money on language courses, books, checking homework, talking to the teachers, etc. Also evening courses and courses in the vacations have become widespread (cf. "Ecole. La folie des cours du soir", Nouvel Observateur, 21-27 March, 1996).

Concerning play and sport in the eyes of the French there is a big difference in the way children are looked upon when they are 0-5 years of age, and 6 years and older. In opposition to the school yards in l'école maternelle where there is often a playground, the schoolyards in the primary schools in France are empty. Play do not seem to be integrated

12

as a natural part of these children's schooldays. On the contrary, sport is seen as an occupation that stimulates important traits for the character of children such as courage, competition spirit, cooperation and perseverance. Sport is also a kind of play, but more goal-directed with set rules (cf. Gram, 1995).

2. The German school system

In Germany the Länder have relative autonomy in matters such as research, cultural issues, and the school systems. The school systems in the Länder are thus not identical, they are linked to regional traditions and preferences. Still the 16 school regions are to some extent comparable not least due to the "Kultusministerkonferenz" that was created in 1948. Compulsory schooling begins when the children turn 7 years of age. Normally it is for 12 years, 9 years of fulltime schooling and 3 years of part-time schooling (in Berlin, Bremen and NordrheinWestfalen it is 10 years of fulltime schooling). All children start in the Grundschule. The Grundschule covers the first 4 school years (in Berlin the first 6 years of school). The tasks and goals of the Grundschule are to give the children skills and create interest for the child to continue further education. The curriculum contains, besides introduction to reading and writing of the mother tongue, also the so-called "Sachunterricht", an introduction to social science, history, geography, biology, physics and chemistry. Then math, religion, music, arts, needle- and woodwork is taught. All subjects are compulsory. The weekly teaching time is according to the age of the children between 20 and 30 hours. The "Grundschule" has aims similar to the French école primaire, but playful learning is explicitly mentioned as part of the objective (cf. Bericht über die Entwicklung des Bildungswesens, 1994-1996, p.40), and play seems to have an important place in the schools. Playgrounds are found in the schoolyards in the Grundschule, and the Germans in my study seem to have a very positive view of playing, which is also used as a part of the teaching.

The teachers from the Grundschule recommend whether the child should go to Hauptschule, Realschule or Gymnasium, but it is the parents who decide. The first six month in the Gymnasium is a test period where the children have to show if they are good enough to stay. The gymnasium begins after the 4th grade (11 years) and in places like Berlin mostly after the 6th grade (13 years). In some cases teachers and parents do not agree: the Gymnasium is the goal, even if the child is not skilled enough to go there. Especially the Hauptschule is by respondents classified as having lost value. Even people from the "Realschulen" have problems today in finding an apprenticeship or a job, according to my respondents.

Young children are only at school in the morning, and the older children are also at school for a couple of hours in the early afternoon. In contrast to France, but similarly to the Netherlands, classrooms and corridors are nicely decorated. This could be seen as a sign of that school is not only a place where children should gain knowledge, but also very much feel at ease and develop social skills.

The pedagogue Friedrich Fröbel created the Kindergarten around 1840. His aim was to promote the creative skills of children from the very start. The word "Kindergarten" in English is borrowed from German. That both industrially prefabricated toys and kindergartens have a German origin indicate that play and creativity are important. Lang describes how the curricula get more and more full in Germany, the child must "Zugreifen" there is not enough time for "Begreifen", which means that the child have not really got the time to understand. According to Lang, the atmosphere is more and more marked by a competitive climate, something which is also created by the expectations of parents. Lang regrets that "die Freude am Lernen" (the joy of leaning) and "das soziale Lernen" (the social learning) are pushed out (Lang, 1992, p.15).

Concluding on the section about the German school system, it must be noted that German children when they are around 10 years, have to change from the Grundschule to either Gymnasium, Realschule or Hauptschule. In 1997/98 21,7% of the German pupils went to the Gymnasium, which is the main track to academic careers. 46% of all German parents want their child to get into the Gymnasium (Focus, 1999, p. 62). This means that from the first day at school many of the parents are very interested in the grades that the children get every 6 months. Still the children have very short schooldays compared to the other countries in this survey.

3. The Dutch school system
Freedom of education is laid down in the Constitution of the Netherlands and can be seen in all facets of the Dutch education system. There is freedom to found schools (stichting), to organise them (inrichting) and to determine the principles on which they are based (richting). For this reason there is a wide variety of schools in the Netherlands (*OECD Indicators, Education at a glance*, 1995, p.293). This freedom of education means that different sections of society have the right to found schools on the basis of their own religious, ethical or educational beliefs. For this reason, schools in the Netherlands differ from each other in terms of their philosophical basis. This structural pluralism, known as "pillarisation" (verzuiling), is a vertical differentiation affecting - at its height, in the 1950s

14

- all dimensions of Dutch society - like broadcasting, sporting clubs, youth clubs, unions, health care, housing and political parties (Glenn, 1988, p.17). The "pillars" in the school system mean one each for Catholic, Protestant and non-denominational or neutral schools respectively. A fourth category is developing comprising schools of special pedagogical philosophy and schools sponsored by faiths other than main stream Catholic or Protestant faith. The pillarisation has been dissolving the last decades.

There is no majority or dominant set of schools in the Netherlands, just as there is no dominant religious or ideological group in society. As Don Anderson, an Australian researcher, expresses it, the Dutch are fond of saying "we are all minorities here" (Anderson, 1991, p.3). The meaning of pillarisation is that everyone has the right to have his or her perception of the world. But today the strong attachment to ideologies be it religious or non-religious is fading and also more practical aspects play a role in the choice of school like whether it is close by or not, or whether the facilities are nice and modern or not.

According to the official general aims of the Dutch primary education, it must promote the development of the emotions, the intellect and of creativity taking into consideration the fact that pupils are growing up in a multicultural society (Information dossiers on the structures of the education systems in the European Union, 1994, p.42).

Certain subjects must be taught, but the schools are free to decide how much weight each subject should have. In 1993 it was decided, though, that minimum standards for each subject must be met by the pupils by the end of their primary education.

Basisonderwijs (primary education) takes care of children from 4 to about 12 years of age. All children must attend school from the first day of the month following their 5th birthday. However, almost all children attend primary school from the age of 4 (Anderson, 1991, p.293). Full-time education is compulsory until the end of the school year in which the pupil reaches the age of 16 or has completed at least 12 full years of schooling. After full-time compulsory education it is compulsory to attend school at least part-time till the age of 18.

For primary schools the length of teaching periods is not prescribed, but the minimum number of hours of schooling a pupil has to receive is laid down in legislation. For the first two years of schooling the pupils receive minimum 22 hours a week and an average of 25

hours a week in the last years of primary teaching. The school day lasts a maximum of 5.5 hours. The minimum number of school days per year is 200 (*Information dossiers*, Eurydice, 1994, p.29). Primary school teachers are qualified to teach all subjects across the entire age rage. Schools may also have specialist teachers for specific subjects like physical education or religious knowledge. Like in the German schools the Dutch schools are nicely decorated, children have often made paintings on the windows, and the children's birthdays are celebrated with special hats and treats in class.

Parents can choose any school they like, and education is free of charge up to the age of 16. The privately run schools can demand a parental contribution, but such contributions may not constitute an obstacle to the admission of pupils. The diversity and parent choice in the Dutch school system is popular and the political parties dare not go against it, and even many labour party supporters send their children to private schools (Glenn, 1988, p. 37).

The Dutch school system seems like a jungle of different school types and with this in mind one might ask if it is at all possible to talk about one Dutch people? In his article "Choice in Dutch Education" (June, 1988) Charles L. Glenn quotes an American observer for having said about the Dutch school system: "through it the Dutch have built three peoples out of one - quite in contrast to what we have been trying to do [...] building one people out of many"(Reller, 1963, p.188, in Glenn, 1988, p.1). Instead of creating one common school, the Dutch have let there be room for a broad variety of schools. According to Anderson, the English school system in contrast to the Dutch has been very reluctant to finance schools of other faiths (like for the Islamic schools). In the Netherlands virtually any faith which can gather the necessary amount of pupils - also e.g. the Hari Krishna movement - can have financial support. But still, as an observer in the ministry of Education, Culture and Science points out, the differences between schools are limited because of the inspection and the common results the schools have to attain. In this context it is interesting to notice that play and creativity actually explicitly is mentioned in the prescriptions the schools have to fulfil. The educational system wants to develop both the cognitive but also the creative side of the children. The personality of the child is also very much in focus in the ever on-going evaluation of the development of the child, where also the cognitive sides are evaluated.

Comparing the three school systems there are many similarities for example a great pride in the national school systems, but also more concrete aspects such as the curricula. There are, however, also some interesting differences. The French school system is by a respondent compared to "l'Armée Rouge" by the numbers of people working in it, but also

possibly with regard to the rigidity by which it is managed. By a German respondent, the German school system is called a "Supertanker" as he talks about how difficult it is to introduce changes in the system. In spite of some federal autonomy the German school system seems to be relatively centrally controlled too. No such images occur in the Dutch context where there seems to be more freedom for the individual schools. The end exam, the CITO-test, still seems to have a unifying effect on the Dutch schools. So while having ideals of freedom, the practise of this exam actually limits the individual possibilities of the school. Still there seems to be a correlation between the positive evaluation of freedom and responsibility to the children and the degree of decentralisation of the school systems.

The search to create an homelike atmosphere with a concern of the children's well-being, decorations cherishing of creative skills and play seem strongest in Germany and in the Netherlands. The Dutch celebration of birthdays is reinforcing this. In these matters there is a significant difference to the French system where the school seems mainly to be the place where knowledge is transferred. Below salient features of the school systems are sketched:

Country	Salient features of school systems
France	centralised, start at 2/3 years of age all children stay together till they are 16, place of knowledge transfer, learning, long school days
Germany	decentralised, start at 6 years of age, children stay together till they are 10 (12), playful learning, creativity, "home" atmosphere, short school days
the Netherlands	decentralised, consensus system, start at 4 years of age, children stay together till they are 12, "home" atmosphere, play, focus on multi-culturalism, relatively short school days

IV. DISCUSSION OF CORRELATION BETWEEN VALUES AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS

In the above presentation it shows that the three countries in the survey are similar in many respects concerning the upbringing of children: individuality, responsibility and tolerance are important in all three countries and in spite of a more liberal upbringing, good manners

still play a role. In all three countries, children should perform well at school. The reason for the many similarities can be sought in the common European roots: "Western Europe as a meaningful entity was in existence long before the emergence of separate national states" (Mallison quoted in Winther-Jensen, 1996, p. 8). Some European ideas such as religious and political freedom, tolerance, human rights, equality of opportunity and social responsibility go back to the time when the nation states were formed (Winther-Jensen, 1996, p. 6)[3].

Still there are some nation specific ideals and priorities which are worth concluding upon. Even though French parents stress responsibility as an ideal, they do not seem to have confidence in their children. The French do not seem to give high priority to play and creativity at least when children older than 6 years are in question. Children should rather be adapting, than critical. Children should be tolerant and respectful towards others, but at the same time self-achieving.

The most important ideals for the upbringing in Germany seem to be that the children become: self-confident and self-aware, honest, responsible beings with a caring attitude. Creativity is seen as a positive aspect, and play and well-being as a way to obtain the other ideals. That the children are good at school is extremely important, but learning should not take place in an unreflective way. Good manners and a sense of order are also valued.

Dutch children should be free and creative "spelenderwijs stimuliert" (stimulated in a playful way), critical towards the societies in which they live. They should become great personalities, and also - but to a lesser extent and less explicitly than in the two other countries - they should be good at school. The Dutch ideals are less than those of the two other countries focussed on self-achievement goals, but more on tolerance, unselfishness and consideration for others.

The values and world views behind these ideals for upbringing are to some extent reflected in today's school systems in the three countries. Even though for example the curricula seem similar, there are some significant differences. In France, the school is the place where knowledge is transmitted. The child's personality do not seem to be in focus. Children are more treated as adults, and strong ambitions from parents, teachers and the children themselves create a focus on the elite. As the French professor Dominique Bouchet, living

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[3]These qualities are not only European qualities, and in Europe they have in some periods been only ideals, not practice (cf. for example Colonialism and Nazism).

and working in Denmark, describes: "depuis la plus tendre enfance on m'a appris à admirer et à aspirer à l'excellence" (Bouchet, 1989).

The selection for 'lycée' do not happen till the children are 16 years, which is significantly later than in Germany and in the Netherlands, which ideally should give all children an equal chance to continue further educations, but which reality means a production of children who cannot keep up with the successful children and who get lost in the system. As the only place in Europe conformity is growing in the upbringing in France (Ester et al, p.119, 1992). The traditional ways of bringing up is in line with the stiff centralised system where adaptation is necessary. Even the youngest children are most often at school all day, with a long lunchbreak.

In Germany, school is more of a cosy "home" place. Children should learn, but "nicht nur greifen auch begreifen". Play and creativity are seen as means to develop the abilities of the child. The children start later (at 6) than in France (2) or in the Netherlands (4) and they have very short days. The pupils are selected for the 'Gymnasium' when they are 10 years old, and this stresses the interest in the performance of the children from the very beginning. It might appear as a paradox between the urge for creating surroundings of well-being and creativity at the same time as there are strong demands for "Leistung".

The Dutch school system is decentralised. The schools have a lot of freedom from an ideological or religious point of view. It is a fundamental aspect that different world views are accepted and that children are brought up to be tolerant and coping with the multicultural society in which they grow up, and this view is institutionalised in the school system itself. There are many small schools, but they have to conform with some national rules for teaching, for example the children have to pass the same national test at the end of primary school.

The aims of the primary school is to give the children the possibility to develop social, physical and intellectual skills. The well-being is also in focus. In the Dutch system a critical attitude is evaluated specifically, and children are more seen as children and not as unfinished adults as in the French system. Parents play an important role for the schools in full compliance with the constitutional principle of freedom of education (Eurydice, 1997, p.73). Children most often start at school when they are four, and when they are 12 they are oriented towards an academic or non-academic career on the basis of a test of knowledge and skills.

Country	Ideals for upbringing	Salient features of School System
France	being good at school adaption little emphasis on play and creativity	centralised system elitist system play not emphasised in the classroom or in the school yard
Germany	self-awareness play and creativity important well-being individuality	relatively decentralised system room for play and creativity inside and outside the classroom "home" atmosphere
the Netherlands	critical children strong personalities well-being "not one right way of seeing the world"	consensus system room for different ideas "home" atmosphere

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The European background of the countries in the study has left some important marks on both ideals for the upbringing and the school systems of today's Europe. Ideals such as tolerance and respect for other people are examples of qualities that are strong features in all three countries. In general school is to some extent seen as the way of having a good life and avoiding unemployment from the point of view of the parents. However, as demonstrated in the article, the personal qualities and knowledge that are seen as necessary for being a successful adult who is also an advantage for society are not the same - is only knowledge important or is also independence and initiative necessary? The school systems examined in this article are anchored in national traditions and marked by national priorities which can be seen in the way play and creativity are perceived, how the frames of the teaching are set up (formally vs. informally) and how the expectations of the child are dealt with (different levels of explicit ambition on behalf of the child).

Educational policy is an explicit part of the EU[4], but primary and secondary education is mainly a matter of the Member States. As it is written in article 126.1 in the Treaty of Maastricht: "The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organization of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity" (Rudden and Wyatt, 1994). Article 126.1 remains unchanged in the Treaty of Amsterdam. Article 128.4 on culture "The Community shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of this Treaty" from the Maastricht treaty is even extended by "in particular in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures" in the Treaty of Amsterdam (Duff, 1997) .

The Norwegian researcher Anne Smehaugen writes: "national culture and identity in Europe remain distinct and diverse, despite the increased economic and political cooperation. Western Europe at the end of the millennium, in spite of efforts of cultural integration, consists of individual nation states, national identity being the most influential source of European diversity and dissimilarity" (Smehaugen, 1998, p.11). At the same time as she finds that cultural values remain diverse Smehaugen wonders why European School systems change in a similar direction. These parallel processes of standardisation in the field of e.g. education are also described by Beck (1986). From a legal perspective, European school systems do not have to follow the same rules and regulations as mentioned above in the articles from the Maastricht Treaty, but they do in some respects according to Smehaugen. With regard to changes in the curricula towards fuller and more academic curricula, towards an assessment of the children which grows more output oriented with increasing use of quantitative criteria. Moreover in the later phases of education, some measures of standardisation take place, which seem to have some influence on primary education, too. Another concrete example of convergence is the fact that many British universities are changing from the three term system to the semester system thus making student exchange easier. Also the politics of mobility of labour across Member States seem to demand that the educational systems are comparable to some extent.

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[4]Only with regard to vocational training since the Treaties of Rome in 1957, and in 1976 (in the Community Education Action Program) a redefinition of educational aspects of vocational training also to include the terminal phases of education, all higher education and an encouragement of a European dimension in education content in the member states (Winther-Jensen, 1996, p.7).

Thyge Winther-Jensen indicates that the growing convergence within the educational systems is a conscious development. He writes: "[...] the quest for unity is still a conspicuous element in European policy and education is increasingly being involved as a part of it" (Winther-Jensen, 1996, p. 8).

Smehaugen's observations of growing convergence could be seen as a reflection of the more or less explicit "quest for unity" mentioned by Winther-Jensen, but is perhaps more likely a result of an increasing contact between countries (facilitated by the EU exchange programmes Socrates, Lingua and Tempus), an augmented knowledge about the way other national school systems get by, a tendency to compare oneself with the neighbours and a general wish to be competitive. Politicians and practitioners look around to other countries and in some respects they copy what they see. The "quest for unity" is not an explicit part of the European Treaties, but convergence is stimulated by increased knowledge and the necessity for matching structures to enable mobility of labour and other forms of exchange across Member States.

In the perspective of European integration in the sense of convergence of values and school systems of the Member States - at least with regard to socialisation and primary education - the significance of national citizenship and values does not seem to have faded away, and even though the national particularities might in a long term perspective loose importance, because of the ongoing globalisation, internationalisation and Europeanisation, they still seem to be very strong as demonstrated in this article. With respect to pedagogical values, as quoted in the beginning of this article from the European Value Study, there even seems to be a "trend towards divergence" in the European countries. A possible explanation of this growing diversity on the level of upbringing within the family might be a reaction to the fact that in some respects the world is experienced as being globalised, and consciously and unconsciously there might be a withdrawal to what is perceived as one's origin.

At the same time, despite this divergence, other forces seem to be working towards common patterns in, for example, the school systems which do not seem to be a consequence of direct EU politics but rather a result of increased communication across borders (for example through the EU exchange programs). Below I sum up some important possibilities and challenges for convergence of education and pedagogical visions.

Factors supporting convergence	Factors supporting divergence
common values (tolerance, individuality, responsibility) and common focus on school results (in varying intensity)	different views of children (e.g. external versus internal control)
common history and possible identification the European project	different views on learning (e.g. play as a means of learning vs. learning as transfer of content)
Transnational exchange of people and information	national school systems are sources of pride

As a snapshot of the national views on children, I have presented French, German and Dutch perceptions of how a child should be brought up and described salient traits of the school systems. The French seem to want children doing well at school and adapting well to society. The French school system is elitist, focussed on learning of content. The Germans seem to want self-confident and creative children, and the German school system is also quite competitive, but gives some room for creativity and well-being for the children. The Dutch aim for critical children with strong personalities, and the Dutch school system is more of a flexible consensus system than the two others, with emphasis on well-being and playful learning, and more indirect focus on school results.

With regard to the question of growing convergence in Europe regarding ideals for upbringing and school systems, there are factors supporting divergence and factors supporting convergence. On the one hand the ideals for what kind of an adult that should come out of the upbringing differ, having a significant impact on education and making convergence of politics and practice in this area problematic. Also national school systems seem to be sources of pride, closely linked to national identities, making the discussion of changes of school systems in Europe a sensitive issue indeed. On the other hand - even if this is not explicit EU politics - a glide towards convergence is experienced, which can probably be explained by the increased contact among the EU countries and a process of comparison across borders.

As suggestions for further research it would be interesting to examine more closely the development over time in each country - both with regard to pedagogical values and ideals for upbringing and educational systems - to see whether these will become more similar, or whether they will stay different.

Acknowledgments

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