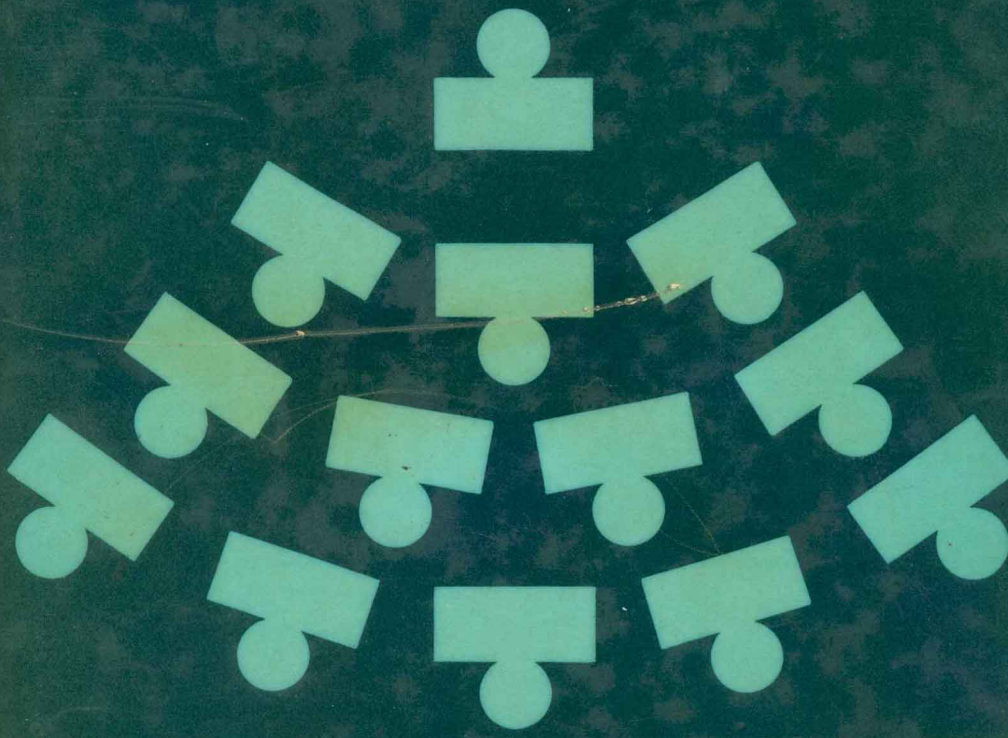
International Handbook of Education Systems



Volume I

Europe and Canada

Edited by

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International Handbook of Education Systems

INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Volume I
Europe and Canada
Edited by Brian Holmes

Volume II
Africa and the Middle East
Edited by John Cameron *and* Paul Hurst

Volume III
Asia, Australia and Latin America
Edited by Robert Cowan *and* Martin McLean

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Preface

The need for this Handbook of Educational Systems was suggested by the success and usefulness of the profiles of educational systems compiled over the last ten years by the British Council, which is the major organisation supported by the British Government to promote the knowledge of British life and culture worldwide through cultural and educational activities.

The main headings under which data have been classified and the sequence in which the headings have been placed are the same in each of the national profiles. Sub-headings in general follow the same pattern in each case but where appropriate the headings have been changed to meet the particular circumstances of the national system described. Diagrams giving a simplified picture of the structure of each educational system have been standardised (and taken from the IBE/Unesco International Yearbook of Education, XXXII, 1980) but simplified diagrams showing how education in each country is administered have not been standardised. Statistics have been drawn from the latest Unesco Statistical Yearbook and standardised to facilitate comparisons; more detailed information about any of the systems can be obtained from the Unesco Yearbook itself. Further more detailed information about the organisation of educational administration can usually be obtained from national Ministries of Education; the address of each Ministry of Education and the address of the national documentation centre are given in the previously mentioned IBE/Unesco International Yearbook of Education, XXXII, Paris, Unesco, 1980.

The Editors of this Handbook have adopted the framework or headings of the British Council profiles for all the profiles included here, as far as the content will allow, and the Editors have drawn upon a variety of sources for information, data and first-hand experience. Although no such Handbook can hope to be entirely comprehensive it is hoped that future editions will include more countries as well as revising and updating the profiles of countries included here.

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in the Handbook, no responsibility is implied

or accepted by the Editors, the British Council or the Publishers for any errors or omissions. The British Council, in particular, is not associated with any opinions or interpretations which may be expressed or implied in the Handbook.

The Editors and Publishers also wish to express their thanks to those who have helped in the compilation of this Handbook:

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Introduction

NATION STATES

The nations of Europe are the product of history. Wars, invasions, political alliances and the free movement of people have changed frontiers, reduced or enlarged territories leaving the present political maps of Europe distinctly different from those drawn in the recent and distant past. The physical features of the land mass with its surrounding seas that we know as Europe remains the same. The great rivers of Europe and its mountains have provided natural barriers and still, in many cases, help us even now to identify sovereign territories. To the north of Italy the Alps form a natural border. The Pyrenees separate France from Spain. The Carpathian mountains serve as a guide to the border between Poland and Czechoslovakia. Less protected boundaries have been the subject of dispute. Thus some of the great rivers of Europe, the Rhine, the Danube and the Oder are both natural boundaries, the object of innumerable disputes, and identification of the location of many great cities.

The Channel as a natural barrier to easy communication has helped to keep the United Kingdom at some distance politically, economically and culturally from the rest of Europe. These and other considerations help us to identify several major regions in Europe. The countries bordering the Mediterranean contain characteristics, so do the Scandinavian nations to the north, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland. The Balkans too represent an identifiable region and the broad plains of northern Europe include nations whose peoples are differentiated less by the difficulties of communicating with each other and more by cultural differences represented by language, religion and genealogy.

From a political perspective some knowledge of the geographical conditions which helped to force people to live together in communities is necessary if we are to examine the diversity which is to be found in many of the nation states of Europe. Cultural diversity has been identified in no fewer than seventeen autonomous sovereign states in Europe. The educational problems

arising from these geo-political influences are matters of present day concern in many European countries.

Geographical conditions influence education in other ways. Temperature extremes, the differences between winter and summer have some bearing on the accessibility of schools to young children, the time at which schools can reasonably begin in the morning and end in the early or late afternoon. Continental climates make a difference to the severity of winters and the heat of summers. Notable comparative educationists have, for example, pointed out that there is a correlation between the age at which children are first expected to attend school and latitude. In the northern latitudes the age at which children first attend school tends to be older than in the southern latitudes. Again, the hard winters in Moscow contrast sharply with those experienced by people living in Edinburgh on the same latitude. It is difficult to see how, even now, young children living in isolated homesteads could easily reach school when snow and ice make inadequate roads impassable.

A further possible influence of latitude may be mentioned. In the far north the days are very short in winter, in summer they are very long. The incentives, particularly in rural areas in the north of Sweden, to learn to read and write, and to acquire self-entertainment skills must still be very great. Certainly there is evidence to justify the view that long winters and short days encouraged among the rural population the growth of adult education and the Folk High School movement in the Scandinavian countries. High noon temperatures, warm evenings and smaller differences between the lengths of day and night in the Mediterranean countries certainly facilitate different lifestyles. A noonday siesta is not only culturally desired but for climatic reasons necessary.

Climatic conditions in most parts of the British Isles undoubtedly make it possible for legislators to insist that all children should attend school from the age of five. In the rural areas of the European parts of the USSR it would not be possible; in the isolated Norwegian villages it would be difficult. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the age at which compulsory attendance commences in the northern European countries is seven, in the southern and central European nations it is six. The UK is unique in expecting children to enter school at five.

Urbanisation, improved communications and the greater involvement of women in industry and commerce have, of course, created pressures, regardless of geographical conditions for nursery schools and other pre-school institutions. In many European countries including the USSR, the earlier access of children to schools has received priority in recent years. The age at which children may attend nursery schools and other institutions, almost always on a voluntary basis, varies from one nation to another: so too does the percentage of children whose parents take advantage of these facilities as Table I shows:

Table I

Country	Year	Pre-school age range	5 year olds %	4 year olds %	3 year olds %
Belgium	1970	$2\frac{1}{2}$ - 6	100	95	90
France	1970			84	55
UK	1970	3 - 5	100	30	3
Greece	1975	$3\frac{1}{2}$ - $5\frac{1}{2}$			
Austria		3 - 6			
Norway	1971	3 - 6		29%	
				Rising	
				14.87% of 3 - 6 year olds	

The fact that pre-school enrolments are rising faster in the urban areas suggests that industrialisation and urban growth have greatly influenced parental pressure for pre-school provision. Climatic conditions, in spite of improvements in communication, may account for slower rates of growth in rural areas.

Physical conditions are also related to density of population. Clearly, people settled in those parts of Europe where living conditions were easier - that is on the plains near or on the rivers. On the other hand mountainous countries, like Japan, may possess very large populations. The area on which houses can be built and industries developed may be densely populated, the mountainous regions sparsely populated. Correlation between topographical features, population density and industrial development point to the geographical aspects of a nation which may have some bearing on educational provision. The educational problems associated with high and increasing density of population are different from those linked with low and declining population density.

Within nation states the geographical features and the distribution of population still influence access to schools and the equality of educational provision. These should, however, be seen in the light of population movements, the growth of urban areas and conurbations and economic differences between the centres of political and economic power and the peripheral regions. A major feature in a national analysis of conditions which bear on educational provision should be a description of urban-rural differences and the physical conditions which have contributed to the growth of large cities and industrial areas. The unplanned movement of people can be explained to a considerable extent by analysing the attraction of living near rivers and on plains rather than in the rugged mountains of, let us say, Montenegro in Yugoslavia or Norway.

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Table II

Country	Date	Area sq. miles	Population	Density of population	Cities over 1,000,000
Austria	1978	32,376	7,508,400	231.9	Vienna
Belgium	1979	11,781	9,855,000	836.5	Greater Brussels
Canada	1981	3,851,809	24,088,500	6.25	Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal
Czechoslovakia	1978	49,400	15,138,188	306.4	Prague
Cyprus	1978	3,572	618,300	173.1	
Denmark	1979	17,000	5,111,534	300.6	Greater Copenhagen
Finland	1979	130,165	4,771,098	36.6	
France	1979	213,000	53,371,000	250.5	Paris
Fed. Rep. of Germany	1979	96,011	61,439,300	639.9	Berlin, Hamburg
Greece	1971	51,182	8,768,641	171.3	Athens
Malta	1979	94.9	314,500	33.1	
Poland	1978	121,000	35,000,000	289.2	Warsaw
Luxembourg	1978	999	355,400	355.7	
Yugoslavia	1979	98,725	22,111,000	223.9	Belgrade
United Kingdom	1978	93,051	55,836,000	600.0	London
Hungary	1980	36,000	19,710,000	547.5	Budapest
Italy	1975	131,000	56,024,000	427.6	Rome, Milan, Naples, Turin

Israel	1981	7,942	3,836,000	479.9	Greater Tel Aviv
Netherlands	1978	13,500	13,897,000	1,029.4	Rotterdam
Norway	1979	154,520	4,078,900	26.4	
Portugal	1977	34,000	9,774,000	287.4	Lisbon, Oporto
Spain	1978	196,700	36,958,000	187.9	Madrid, Barcelona
Sweden	1977	173,436	8,267,116	47.7	Stockholm
Switzerland	1978	15,950	6,298,000	394.0	
Turkey	1979		43,000,000		Istanbul, Ankara
USSR	1979	8,620,822	262,442,000	3.0	Baku, Dnepropetorvsk, Kharkov, Donetsk, Odessa, Gorky, Novosibirsk, Kuibyshev, Sverdlovsk, Omsk, Chelyabinks, Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Tashkent, Tbilisi, Erevan

Natural barriers within nation states also help to maintain and foster group cultural identity, by isolating one group from another and thus reducing social contacts and communication. The maintenance of English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish differences is in part a reflection of geographical conditions. The differences between Croats and Serbs in Yugoslavia and between the peoples of the five Republics are certainly the result of history, but that history has been influenced by the geographical conditions which make Montenegro vastly different from Croatia or Serbia.

Each of the profiles is introduced by a brief account of the topography, climate and population of the nation whose educational system is described. The extent to which these features influence educational provision can be interpreted in terms of some of the suggestions made here. A crucial point, however, is that natural boundaries, mountains and rivers, no longer play the same role as previously in the maintenance of distinctive cultural groups. Moreover, nation states have been created which ignore former natural and historical boundaries. They have incorporated peoples who, once living in relative isolation, are expected to abandon their previous identity to merge into the ethos of the nation state. Two things contribute to make such integration problematic. The geographical isolation of minority groups helps them to maintain unique cultural traits. Secondly the strength of traditions, their economic and political power determine the potential of a minority group to gain concessions from a central government in the provision of education in accordance with its minority group interests.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS

For the purposes of this survey a distinction can be usefully drawn between those periods of European history when, on balance, attempts to unify groups within the geographical boundaries set by the Atlantic seaboard to the west, the Mediterranean to the south, the Arctic circle to the north and the Urals to the east met with success, and those periods in which nationalism and small group interests prevailed.

In brief, what we now know as European civilisation may be said to have had its origins in the south-east, in the days of the Roman Empire which incorporated into its culture much of the Greek spirit and Christianity. Hellenism and Christianity, and the Judaic traditions from which it was derived, indeed constitute the intellectual core round which European systems of education have been erected. Roman institutions spread over the Mediterranean seaboard and to the coasts of the Atlantic. During the Middle Ages Roman influence penetrated central Europe and later at the beginning of the eighteenth century into Russia. The concept of Europe is, however, in the language of diplomacy, a nineteenth century innovation.

1 Religion

Early unifying tendencies were associated not only with the military success achieved by Roman generals but with the spread of Christianity and the power of the Roman Catholic Church. A succession of barbarian invasions ended after the successful raids of Scandinavian warriors who, in the ninth century, ravaged the whole of Western Europe, including northern Germany, Britain, France, Spain and Italy. Permanent settlements were established in England and France. These invasions failed to check the spread of Christianity or the emergence of identifiable kingdoms in the eleventh century. Frequently tribal chiefs, on their conversion to Christianity, took the title of king. Thus Christianity, adopted by political leaders throughout Europe, constituted a powerful unifying force politically and culturally. Europe became Christian and its systems of education were influenced profoundly by its ethos. The initiatives taken by the Christian churches to extend education and their power to control its development explain many of the common elements which can be discerned in modern European schools everywhere. Common organisational features have their origin in Roman and Christian practices; common cultural features stem from Greek and Christian-Judaic philosophies.

During the early period of Roman influence political and clerical power were closely allied. Conflicts between Popes and Emperors during the period of the Holy Roman Empire resulted finally in the emergence of a host of independent princes, dukes and lords whose political relationships with churchmen varied greatly. The growth of secular power served to break down the political unity that had been established in Western Europe by Emperor and Pope. In few countries in North Western Europe, the partial exceptions being Sweden and England, did the close alliance of Church and State survive the Reformation.

The Romans also influenced Eastern Europe where the establishment of Christianity as the official religion was approved by the State. The disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire resulted finally in the division of the Church into its Eastern and Western branches which was finalised officially in 1054. After that the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches went their separate ways, thus dividing Christian Europe. The Eastern Church remained true to its traditional character throughout the Middle Ages. The Western Church was, as mentioned, profoundly influenced by the rise of independent kingdoms. This, followed by the Reformation, gave rise to diversity within the Western Church. Roman Catholic and Protestant churches now command the allegiance of peoples in the different nations of Western Europe. Indeed, the population in some countries such as Italy, Spain, Poland and France are still predominantly Catholic in outlook. Anti-clericalism informs political movements, however. In other countries such as the Scandinavian countries, Protestant beliefs of Luther or Calvin dominate the outlook of most people. In other nations such as the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany, populations are divided more evenly.

Thus in European religious growth there exists diversity among Christians. The Western and Eastern Churches differ in some respects and there are differences of outlook, belief and organisation between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches. In the West these differences have profoundly influenced the provision of education. Everywhere Roman Catholic leaders have insisted that the schools should be controlled by the clergy and that a Catholic ethos should inform all aspects of provision. Where they have not been able directly or vicariously to control publicly maintained schools, as in France, the Roman Catholic authorities have endeavoured to maintain, at great cost and where they have been allowed to do so, a system of instruction from primary through higher education.

National policies relating to religious education vary. Soviet law prohibits religious schools. French law prevents the teaching of religion in State schools and makes provision for circumscribed support for Roman Catholic schools. Under the 1944 Education Act Church schools in England and Wales received all their running costs and a proportion of their capital costs. Under this scheme the Roman Catholic authorities have attempted to provide primary and secondary schools and teacher training colleges for the children of their members. In the Netherlands generous public finance supports the Protestant, Catholic and non-sectarian systems of schooling.

Religious diversity in Europe consequently continues to create problems of policy for national governments. To historical differences between Christians have been added those arising from the movement of Christian and non-Christian parents and their children into Europe since 1945 and particularly during the 1950s and 1960s. Catholic Poles remained in Britain after the Second World War, Catholic Italians and Orthodox Cypriots have also settled there. In addition, Moslems from Pakistan and East Africa have settled in appreciable numbers in parts of Britain as have Hindus from India and Chinese principally from Hong Kong. Into France have moved Moslems from North Africa, and into the Federal Republic of Germany many Turkish workers. This religious diversity has created new problems associated with educational provision. The desire through the schools to maintain religious identity is strong among the leaders of recent arrivals. In a certain sense Europe is no longer Christian and to the diversity created by differences between Catholics and Protestants have been added cultural differences linked with world religions other than Christianity in a great many countries.

Some indication of the religious composition of the populations of European countries is given in Table III. It does not, of course, provide a comprehensive picture either because statistics are not collected or because recent non-Christian arrivals are not clearly identified in national statistics. Some idea of religious diversity can be gained from the brief details given. Particular problems arise in Communist countries where large numbers of Roman Catholics live. The conflict between Communist governments and branches of the Orthodox church seems less serious. Generally speaking religious schools and teaching are prohibited in countries under Communist governments.

Table III
Religion

Austria	The predominant religion is Roman Catholic.
Belgium	Nearly all Belgians are Catholic.
Czechoslovakia	
Denmark	Lutheran (90% officially)
Finland	Lutheran (90%)
France	The majority of French people are Catholics, a strong anti-clericalism informs politics and the small proportion of Huguenots have influenced education considerably.
Fed. Rep. Germany	The balance between Protestants (nearly 30,000,000) and Roman Catholics in the Republic is fairly even. Bavaria's population is heavily Catholic. A small number of Jews remain.
GDR	In old Prussia a high proportion of the population was Protestant.
Greece	Over 97% of the population belongs to the Greek Orthodox church, which is a State religion.
Hungary	About two-thirds of the population are Roman Catholics, most of the rest are Calvinists.
Italy	The majority of the population is Roman Catholic, but politically anti-clericalism is a powerful motivating force.
Netherlands	Roughly a third of the population are Catholic, another third are members of the Dutch Reform Church and a third are humanists.

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