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THE UNIVERSAL AND PARTICULAR: GENDER, CLASS AND REPRODUCTION
IN SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS

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THE UNIVERSAL AND PARTICULAR GENDER, CLASS AND REPRODUCTION IN SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS

Kathleen Lynch

The most important factor to bear in mind about the formal educational system is that it is not autonomous. The character of the educational system is strongly influenced by the prevailing system of economic and cultural relations within a society. Ireland's educational system is no exception. The Irish economy is part of a capitalist world system (Wickham 1985). Consequently, the essential feature of the relations of production is accumulation; this takes place by means of extracting surplus value for labour and by exchanging commodities in the world market for profit. The Irish educational system is set squarely within this capitalist economic base. It selects and allocates individuals to the hierarchically organised labour force; it socializes them for their anticipated social, and economic roles. The entire process is legitimated through the ideology of meritocracy; this locates the blame for educational failure on individuals thus exonerating political and social structures from responsibility (cf. Lynch 1985 for a brief critique of meritocracy and Offe 1976 for an extensive critique of the ideology of individual achievement). In so far as the capitalist labour market is a hierarchical one schools are particularistic. That is to say, certain groups will be given separate, and frequently unequal, treatment within it. Apart from the obvious criterion of age the other major determinants of particularistic treatment are gender, social class and so-called 'ability'. The latter is the only one which claims to have scientific legitimacy although that is currently being seriously questioned (Lawlor 1978, Lynch 1985). Before proceeding to discuss the particularistic roles which second-level schools play in the reproduction of class and gender relations in society we must also make some comment on certain universalistic dimensions within it (i.e. those ways in which schools are similar for all groups). Neo-Marxist and feminist writers are wont to emphasize the particularistic aspects of school life. However, if schools were solely particularistic they would face constant crises of legitimation. Such is clearly not the case. While unique features of Irish education might explain this - the moral legitimacy granted to schools by virtue of church involvement, for example, or the lack of formulated critique by the intelligentsia - they do not provide the entire explanation. Second-level schools (and indeed primary schools too) are under state control both in terms of the content of the knowledge they disseminate and in terms of its mode of presentation and evaluation (cf. Department of Education. Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools 1984/85 and Rules and Programme for the Day Vocational Certificate Examinations, V50, 1979/80 for

details). Consequently, certain universalistic practices obtain. Being universalistic, however, does not mean they are non-capitalist. We will begin by providing evidence of these universalistic trends in second-level education: its competitive individualism; the lack of pupil autonomy within it; and the increasingly technical orientation in the formal curriculum. The word 'technical' is used here as a synonym for scientific, commercial and technological.

UNIVERSALISTIC TRENDS

Competitive Individualism (1)

Competitive individualism characterises both the process of learning and the mode of evaluation in schools. The pupil learns on his/her own and is evaluated on individual performance. Accountability is on an individual not a collective basis. Consequently, the whole organisation of learning - with its tests, examinations and prize-giving - facilitates the development of a self-centred rather than other-centred mentality. The pupil is required in school to maximise their individual success. To be "good in school" is to outcompete others. Indeed giving others assistance is negatively sanctioned. It is forbidden de jure in tests and assessments; it is sanctioned de facto in day-to-day work.

In our study of ninety second-level schools there was little evidence to suggest that pupils had an option about being competitive. The organisational practices of school life reinforce competitiveness. Firstly, 76.7% (N=86) of schools operated a system of streaming or banding with some or all classes. Competition is an inevitable correlate of such streaming or banding. Of the 79 schools involved in grouping sixty eight, 86.1%, used either an academic test (usually) or an assessment of the pupil's primary school performance to group the pupils. All such tests and assessments involve pupils competing against each other for favourable places in the higher streams or bands. That stream location results in differential treatment has been shown by Hannan et al. (1983 p 317).

Competition is not confined, however, to the class allocation stage of schooling. It pervades school life. Over 80% of all types of schools in our study (large and small, single sex and co-ed, vocational, secondary and community/comprehensive) gave in-house assessments to all classes at least twice a year. In fact, 31% held in-house examinations three times each year for the non-examination classes. These systems of assessment are complemented by in-class assessment by individual teachers. Almost 84% of schools claimed

(1) cf. Footnote No. 1 on data.

that some (though not all) teachers gave class tests during term. Although most schools allowed teachers autonomy in this area 18.6% (16 schools) claimed that continuous in-class assessments were compulsory for all classes. Prize-giving reinforces individual competitiveness further. While less than half the schools, 43%, award prizes in the curriculum-related sphere almost all the prizes given were for individual accomplishments. Only 21.6% of schools offered prizes for collective academic effort and these only constituted 8.6% of the total prizes rewarded. Even prize-giving in the extra-curricular sphere frequently encourages individual competitiveness. For example, while we found that both team and individual effort are relatively equally awarded in sport this was not true in the non-sporting areas - such as drama, music, art, public speaking and debating. Of the fifty three awards identified for non-sporting accomplishments in the 86 schools forty three (81.1%) were individual awards.

In summary, therefore, we see that pupils in second-levels are required to compete individually throughout their school day. Whether they are male or female is of little consequence. Although we found that all-male secondary schools are more likely to have rigid streaming than female schools (cf. Hannan et al. 1983, p 146 for similar evidence) we found that female schools offset their lack of competition at the class allocation stage by having more continuous assessments and prize-giving for academic work than boys' schools. Further comments will be made on this issue in a later section.

Lack of Autonomy

The relational context within which Irish pupils are socialised is not only characterised by competition between peers; it is also characterised by profoundly hierarchical relations between pupils and school authorities. In neither the school's productive sub-system (i.e. curriculum) or its maintenance sub-system (i.e. organisational procedures pertaining to formal learning) are pupils granted autonomy.

With regard to the school's productive sub-system, for example, we found in our study that pupils were consulted in only 11.7% of schools about the group or stream they wished to enter. Although we found that just over 40% of schools allowed pupils choice of subjects the type and level (higher or ordinary) at which certain subjects could be taken was delimited in these schools by the stream or band to which pupils were allocated in the first place. Furthermore, government regulations and third-level entry

requirements circumscribe real choices of subjects in all schools. Neither do pupils have any autonomy in determining school policies which might affect their formal learning; only two schools out of the 90 in our sample consulted pupils about the adoption or exclusion of subjects from the timetable, while no schools allowed pupils involvement in the appointment of teachers or in their allocation to classes. Even in the 9.3% of schools which publicly displayed test and/or examination results, pupils were not consulted on the matter.

We also examined the extent of pupil autonomy in forming and implementing the rules and regulations of the school, and in determining their own mode of dress. Here we found that, while 62.8% of schools involved pupils in the implementation of rules - via the prefectship system - only one school involved pupils in formulating school policy on discipline. Furthermore, prefects were primarily involved in practice in assisting in the administration of the school not in exercising power. Only 35.7% of the tasks undertaken by prefects involved the exercise of power. Pupils' lack of autonomy in determining the rules which influenced their own lives is also shown by the fact that the schools which were most likely to have prefects and to give them authority (girls' schools and secondary schools) were the least likely to allow pupils a free choice in choosing prefects.

There was little evidence either that pupils exercised choice in their mode of dress as 68.6% of schools required pupils to wear a uniform. Although boys' schools and vocational schools were significantly more likely to have autonomy in this area than girls' schools it must be borne in mind that pupils in the former types of schools are the least likely to want to exercise this autonomy. (One must remember here that 60.7% of pupils in vocational schools are boys, Department of Education Statistical Report 1981/82, p 102). The cultural mores of our society do not encourage boys to express their individuality through dress. Consequently, being granted autonomy in dress is not of great significance for them.

What our data on pupil autonomy suggests, therefore, is that all pupils, male and female, have very little choice in policies which directly affect their learning. The stream or band they belong to, the teachers who teach them, and the subjects on the timetable are almost all determined by school staff without consultation with pupils. When autonomy is granted in the maintenance subsystem, as is the case with dress for example, it is most likely to be granted to pupils who will not exercise much choice, namely boys. In the case of prefects, it is given only when the person exercising power is chosen (at least in part) by the staff.

The Increasingly Technical Orientation of the Formal Curriculum

The third universalistic feature of school life which we will comment upon here is different qualitatively from the other two; it refers to the content of knowledge itself rather than the relational climate of school life.

In 1966, when Investment in Education was published, there were twenty four subjects on the Leaving Certificate programme; of these, ten (41.7%) were in the technical sphere. In 1984/85 there are thirty one recognised subjects for the Leaving Certificate. Five of these are business and commerce subjects - Accounting, Business Organisation, Economics, Economic History and Agricultural Economics - while eleven are either sciences or applied sciences: Maths., Applied Maths., Physics, Chemistry, Physics and Chemistry, Agricultural Science, Biology, Engineering, Construction Studies, Technical Drawing and Home Economics (scientific & social). Therefore, 51.6% of the recognised Leaving Certificate subjects are now technical. The increased representation of technical subjects in the Leaving Certificate programme represents only part of the change which has occurred. Not only has there been an increase in the proportion of technical subjects available to students, there has been an increase in the take-up rate in these subjects, and a related decline in the arts and humanities especially. Table 1 gives some indication of the extent of these changes.

Firstly, it is important to note that the decline in the take-up of the humanities subjects has been great for both boys and girls. Indeed, although girls still exceed boys in the take-up of Art, fewer girls than boys are now taking History and Geography for the Leaving Certificate. French has increased in popularity among both boys and girls from 1972/73 to 1981/82, however, it must be borne in mind that this expansion has come at the cost of the other modern languages namely, Spanish, Italian and German (Department of Education Statistical Reports, 1972/3 and 1981/2 for the relevant statistics). The most notable feature of Table 1 is the high rise in the take-up rate in the sciences for both boys and girls. In 1972/73 only 18% of girls were taking Biology in the Leaving Certificate compared to 62% in 1981/82. The take-up rate for boys in the same subject increased from 21% to 38% over that period. The proportion of girls taking Physics has trebled over the nine year period while the boys' take-up has increased by 50%. One must remember, of course, that the absolute number of girls taking Physics is still relatively small. The proportion of girls taking Chemistry in 1981/82 is almost twice that of 1972/73 though there has been a slight decline in the proportion of boys taking that subject. Technical Drawing is still predominantly a 'male' subject;

boys' take-up rate having increased over threefold in this area since 1972/73. While a few more girls are now taking Technical Drawing it is still <1% of the total female cohort. Home Economics is still a 'female' subject though there has been a great change of focus within the subject itself. The more scientific and less practical subject (Home Economics (Scientific and Social)) is now the most popular option reversing the pattern of 1972/73. While the increased take-up in the business studies subjects has not been commensurate with that in the sciences it is still appreciable. Again, it has occurred among both boys and girls. Although boys exceed girls still in the take-up rate in economics, larger proportions of girls opt for accountancy and business organisation as was the case in 1972/73 as well.

It is not intended to suggest here that male and female take-up rates in technical subjects are now equivalent. Hannan et al. (1983) have shown indeed that this is not the case. What is being suggested, however, is that there is an increasing bias in second-level education towards the dissemination and take-up of technical knowledge among both boys and girls. Only in the analysis of take-up rates over time does this trend become evident.

PARTICULARISM IN SCHOOLS

Preliminary Comments

To argue that schools have universalistic qualities is not to deny their particularistic character. Though second-level schools may be very similar in their competitive, hierarchical and increasingly technical orientation the form of these socialisation processes varies considerably with the pupils' perceived ability, gender and social class. For example, Schooling and Sex Roles shows very clearly that vocational schools are much more likely than secondary schools to offer the more practical type technical subjects - Woodwork, Metalwork, Construction Studies etc. Secondary schools on the other hand tend to have superior provision in the more intellectual technical subjects - Physics, Chemistry and Applied Maths (1983 pp 157 158). Given the greater working class composition of vocational schools and greater middle class composition of the secondary sector (Breen 1984 p 31) what we see here is anticipatory class socialisation within the technical sector itself. Though the substance of the knowledge disseminated through second-level schools may be becoming increasingly biased towards the technical, as we have argued above, the form of the technical distributed varies frequently with the class composition of the school itself.

In discussing the ways in which schools are particularistic (how they treat certain groups of pupils differently) two other related questions, those of stereotyping and relative advantage come into play. Whether a stereotyped education puts a particular group at a disadvantage vis-a-vis others depends on the power bestowed (or lack of it) with the stereotype, and also on one's value frame-of-reference. For example, the fact that Home Economics is rarely available in boys' schools is evidence of how schools reproduce the male stereotype that 'the domestic mode of production is not a male affair.' From a purely materialist perspective (i.e. job or career in this context) boys do not suffer any practical disadvantage from this omission. Home Economics (General), for example, is not a subject which is recognised for entry points by third-level educational institutions. Boys would be regarded as relatively deprived only if one regards it as a deprivation not to be informed on domestic-type issues. Such a perspective is a plausible value-judgement; however, it does not take away from the fact that a male education which omits initiating boys into the domestic mode of production does not place them at any material disadvantage in today's labour market.

A related, though slightly different issue arises, if we analyse the socialisation of upper middle class girls into particular forms of 'cultural capital' (cf. Bourdieu and Passeron 1977 for a full explanation of this term). For example, the extracurricular programmes in upper middle class girls' schools frequently devote time to the teaching of styles of dress, speech, deportment and concepts of entertainment which are not alone gender, but also class, specific. To quote from the prospectus of one such school (the name is, of course, a pseudonym):

"...the curriculum in St. Catherine's ... meets the needs of any girl who wishes to do subjects more usually associated with boys while at the same time not neglecting those areas of study which civilisation itself has implicitly committed to the care and concern of women ... To help her look well, the school runs a self-improvement course for 5th and 6th year girls where they learn the principles and practice of hair care, skin care, deportment and how to present themselves at interviews. To give her further confidence the Home Economics Department gives the girls practice in the cooking, serving and presenting of meals to adult groups".
(St. Catherine's prospectus 1981/82)

While such 'styles' reinforce female stereotypes in certain ways (and indeed frequently assume the subordination of women to men

within class groups) they simultaneously place upper middle class women at an advantage vis-a-vis working class women and men in the labour market. At times of recession when so many are equally competent (in terms of skills) for a given job normative attributes gain increasing pre-eminence. Indeed, as Offe (1975 pp 47-99) points out, normative attributes are frequently the major determinants of occupational recruitment and mobility in white collar employment.

What is being suggested therefore is this: while the socialisation of a given gender group into a highly particularistic culture does reproduce gender differentials and inequalities in society, such reproduction is simultaneously class and gender specific. In a class stratified society such as Ireland gender socialisation is always class-specific. Consequently, while middle class girls may be socialised into cultural attributes in schools which reinforce traditional feminine stereotypes (and even perpetuate patriarchal relations between men and women of the same class) such attributes simultaneously place such women at an advantage vis-a-vis their working class sisters and brothers on the labour market.

Retention + Performance in Schools: Gender and Class

As Breen observes girls' second-level education, particularly in secondary schools (which 73% of girls attend), "tends to be less directly orientated to what are seen as the demands of the labour market and is more general in character" than that of boys. Boys' education, on the other hand, "is more specialised, concentrating on a relatively narrow range of subjects (the Sciences and the Commerce subjects particularly) which are assumed to be of high labour market value." (Breen 1984 p 29). Whether such differences in intellectual orientation result, cumulatively, in girls having a poorer chance than boys of gaining access to those third-level courses and jobs which eventually offer the highest financial rewards in our society, is something which is not yet known. It would require detailed analysis of the relationship between Leaving Certificate grade point averages plus subject options and the selection procedures of third level colleges and employers, to establish the relative advantage of one group vis-a-vis the other. Such an analysis has yet to be done. What we do know, however, is that girls perform as well if not better than boys in public examinations. Greaney and Kellaghan, for example, found that girls tended to do better than boys in the Leaving Certificate examination (1984 p 184). Furthermore, aggregating together the findings of three national surveys on length of stay in school Breen found that girls tend to have higher levels of educational qualification than boys when leaving the second-level system (1984 p 30 Table 3.2). Because level of educational qualification is so directly linked to

employment prospects (at least among recent school leavers) Breen notes than "on average, girls are slightly less likely to be unemployed than boys" on leaving school (1984 p 2). This is not to suggest, of course, that girls' life-time employment (or income) prospects are better than those of boys. As Hannan et al. point out, many of the occupations which girls enter on leaving school have limited career prospects (1983 pp 67-70).

While male:female differentials are very real they must not blind us to the very real differentials which occur within gender groups due to social class. While girls stay on longer in education than boys working class girls tend to have poorer qualifications leaving second-level school and to leave school earlier than middle class girls (Breen 1984 p 32). (Although Breen's analysis here does not give us a breakdown of differences in educational attainment by gender and class together, it is reasonable to assume that the position of working class girls is not radically different to the working class as a whole - working class students as a whole are more likely to leave school early and to be unemployed on leaving school than their middle class contemporaries Breen 1984 pp 32-34). Whether schools themselves play a role in reproducing such class and gender differences in retention and performance is the major question. Given the scope of this article it would be naive to attempt a detailed analysis of the issue here. Preliminary analysis of the author's own data does tentatively suggest, however, that the internal academic climate of different types of second-level schools varies considerably. Whether these differences contribute to differences in outcome is, of course, a separate matter.

Competitive Climate: Differences Between Schools

Table 2 shows the proportion of male, female and co-ed. schools which operate various practices which reflect the emphasis on academic attainment in the schools. As pointed out in the opening section of the paper all schools are fairly competitive in their academic press. Indeed boys' schools are the most likely of all types of schools to stream (Hannan et al 1983 p 146). However, from table 2 we see that girls' schools (all of which are secondary) exercise a slightly more pressurised academic environment as measured by frequency of assessments and prize-giving than boys' schools especially. (All but two of the boys' schools are secondary, two are vocational). While few schools give monthly reports or assessments girls' schools are the most likely to do it. The same is true for compulsory in-class assessments by teachers. Girls' schools are also the most likely to award prizes for school work and to honour pupils who succeed, either in curricular-work or in extracurricular life, at prize-giving ceremonies. (As this table is a composite one, derived from a variety of questions it is not

possible to state the statistical significance of differences for each item at present. The same is true for Table 3).

On Table 3 we see that, not only are there differences between the public schools and secondary schools in the extent of their academic press, there are also quite noticeable differences within each sector itself. Fee-paying secondary schools would seem to be the schools with the strongest academic climate. They are the most likely to have monthly assessments for both exam and non-exam classes; they are also the most likely to award prizes for school work and to hold prize-giving ceremonies. In terms of holding in-house exams three times per year for non-exam classes, they are almost on a par with the leader - vocational schools. Although community-comprehensive schools are the most likely to award prizes for school work and to have compulsory continuous assessments in all classes, fee-paying secondary schools are only marginally behind them. What is interesting in Table 3 as well is the highly competitive profile of community/comprehensive schools. On five of the seven items they show themselves to have a slightly more pressurised academic environment than free-scheme secondary schools. Clearly, therefore, this newly expanding public sector of education is quite distinct from the vocational sector.

What Tables 2 and 3 suggest (though one must be aware that these are only preliminary findings) therefore, is that different types of schools vary in their academic ethos. While girls' schools appear slightly more competitive than boys in the sense of having more frequent and more compulsory assessments and prize-givings, fee-paying secondary schools (three co-ed, two male and three female) seem to exceed even girls' secondary schools in their levels of academic press. Upper middle class girls attending fee-paying secondary schools, therefore, would seem to experience quite a different academic climate to the (predominantly) working class girls in vocational schools.

Time Allocated to Religious Education: Some Differences

While girls' schools seem to have a strong academic climate there is no evidence from our data to suggest that this involves the neglect of other aspects of girls' development. Indeed girls' schools have better extracurricular provision in the aesthetic fields as we will see later below. They also seem to devote more time than boys' schools to the formal teaching of religion. As can be seen from Table 4 below girls' schools are the most likely to allocate a high number of class periods each week to religion while co-ed schools are the least likely to do so: 71.4% of girls' schools gave 4 - 6 class periods to religion each week in the junior cycle and 76.2% gave that number at senior level.

The corresponding figures for boys' schools were 40.1% and 31.6% respectively. Differences arising from gender are statistically significant at the .01 level.

Differences of a similar magnitude emerge when we analyse the allocation of class periods to religion in community/comprehensive, vocational and secondary schools (Table 5).

Here we see that vocational schools allocate the least class time to the teaching of Religion while secondary schools allocate the most. Community and comprehensive schools seem to occupy an intermediary position. When we breakdown school categories further we see interesting differences emerging within the secondary sector also. Almost 43% of fee-paying secondary schools only allocate one or two class periods each week to religion in the senior cycle while no free-scheme secondary school allocates Religion so little time. Fee-paying schools are also less likely to allocate 4 - 6 periods each week to religion especially at senior level.

What Tables 4 - 6 suggest therefore, is that religious socialisation measured in terms of time allocated to the formal teaching of religion each week - is strongest in female secondary schools especially those in the free scheme. While it is weakest in the vocational sector it is interesting to note that fee-paying secondary schools are more likely than community/comprehensive schools to allocate it the minimum time. Fee-paying schools, however, are also more likely than community/comprehensive schools to give it the maximum time.

Given that secondary schools in the free scheme occupy an intermediary position between the predominantly working class cohort in vocational schools and the upper middle (and upper) classes in fee-paying schools, our data suggests that the teaching of religion is strongest for the lower and average middle class groups - especially for females in these classes - attending free-scheme schools.

Extracurricular Programmes and Reproduction

Schools also reproduce gender and class relations through the types of cultural attributes they foster in their extracurricular programmes. Given the limits of space it is only possible to focus on one aspect of extracurricular life here - the arts.

From Table 7 we can see that girls' schools encourage the arts to a far greater extent than boys' schools.

The greater orientation of girls' schools towards the development of pupils' aesthetic sensibilities in the formal curriculum (cf. Hannan et al. 1983) seems to be further reinforced in extracurricular life. Boys in all male schools seem relatively deprived in their aesthetic development.

However, when we examine extracurricular provision for aesthetic interests in fee-paying schools (remembering that two of these in our sample are male, three are co-ed. and three are female) we see that boys in these schools are not deprived. Extracurricular provision in the arts is superior in fee-paying schools in seven of the eight areas listed on Table 8. Neither is this superior provision a function of schools size. While 37.5% of public schools, and 32.6% of free-scheme secondary schools in our sample were small (i.e. <250 pupils) 50% of the public schools were. Indeed only 12.5% of the fee-paying schools were large (i.e. had <501 pupils) compared to 28.3% of schools in the free scheme and 18.8% of public schools.

Whether differences in provision for the arts is more a function of attitudes or finance we cannot say for definite. What we do know however, is that fee-paying secondary schools have superior facilities to all others for a variety of extracurricular activities, though a number of these do not influence provision in the arts (Table 9). Fee paying secondary schools are more likely to have their own playing fields, gymnasium, library, lecture hall, swimming pool and recreation rooms than either public schools or secondary schools in the free scheme. Such differences must be due, in part, to the availability of superior financial resources in fee-paying schools.

While there are differences between male and female schools in the facilities available in each, differences seem to be in kind rather than degree. For example, girls' schools are more likely to have a gym and hard courts while boys' schools have better facilities for field games.

CONCLUSION

There have been two main lines of argument in this paper. Firstly, it has been suggested that second-level schools are simultaneously particularistic and universalistic. That is to say the increasingly technical orientation of the formal curriculum, and the hierarchical and individually competitive character of human relations within schools are fairly universal phenomena. While the form of technical knowledge or competitive relations may change with the gender, perceived ability or social class of the pupil (i.e. may become particular) the essential character of the relations, and of the knowledge presented, will be fairly similar for all pupils. The pervasiveness of capitalist values no doubt, plays a major role in perpetuating hierarchical and competitive relations and in emphasising the primacy of the technical. As Apple (1979 pp 37-38) has observed maximising the development of sophisticated technical knowledge (by an intellectual elite) is central to economic expansion in a capitalist world system. Both functionalist and neo-Marxist writers agree that hierarchical controls and competitive individualism are intrinsic to the capitalist process, and that schools play a major part in reproducing the consciousness which accepts such relations as "natural" (cf. Jackson 1968; Cusick 1873; Dreeben 1976 and Bowles and Gintis 1976). Of course there are unique features in Irish social life which may also perpetuate hierarchical attitudes in particular: the ex-colonial status of the country being one and the degree of control exercised by a strongly hierarchical church in schools being another.

Having shown how gender socialisation is similar, in many ways, for boys and girls of all social classes the second part of the paper was devoted to examining differences in socialisation practices in schools. In this section what we tried to demonstrate was that gender socialisation is always class-specific. In terms of academic ethos we found little difference between male and female schools though the latter tend to be slightly stronger in their academic press, as measured by frequency of assessment and prize-giving. However, a preliminary analysis of our data tentatively suggests that both boys and girls in fee-paying secondary schools experience the strongest competitive climate of all pupils. Pupils in fee-paying secondary schools also experience the best extracurricular provision in the arts, although provision in girls' secondary schools is also high. Boys in free-scheme schools, and boys and girls in vocational schools are therefore the most deprived in terms of the extracurricular provision for the arts in their schools. (Provision in the vocational sector of public schools is even lower than that in boys' schools in music, photography, film, and school magazine production).

Finally, we noted that religious socialisation - measured in terms of time allocated to the teaching of religion - is strongest in female secondary schools especially among those in the free scheme. Pupils attending fee-paying secondary schools were timetabled for considerably fewer religion classes each week than pupils (male or female) in free-scheme schools. While pupils in vocational schools spent the least time attending formal religion classes, community and comprehensive schools occupied an intermediary position (similar in many ways to fee-paying secondary schools) in the time allocated to religion.

While the aesthetic and religious development of girls seems to be given considerably more attention in all-female schools than that of boys in all-male schools, one must remember that there are class differences cutting across these trends. Those upper, and upper middle class pupils (male and female) attending fee-paying schools seem to have better extracurricular provision in the arts than any other type of pupil. Indeed the competitive climate also seems strongest in these schools. On the other hand formal religious education is strongest among the lower and average middle class pupils (girls especially) likely to dominate secondary schools in the free scheme. Girls attending vocational schools are predominantly working class; their world of schooling seems very different from both their middle and upper class sisters in the secondary sector. The competitive climate seems weaker in these schools as is extracurricular provision for the arts. Indeed the facilities for many extracurricular pursuits are minimal within them. Formal religious education is also allocated the least amount of time in the vocational sector.

Footnote 1

All data referred to here was collected by the author in 1981/82. A stratified random sample of 90 second-level schools in the Republic of Ireland was chosen for the study. Principals were interviewed on all basic organisational procedures within their schools. A structured questionnaire was used. The response rate was 95.5% (N=86).

Thirty one per cent (N=27) of the schools were vocational, 63% (N=54) were secondary and 6% (N=5) were either community (N=4) or comprehensive (N=1). Of the fifty four secondary schools twenty one (38.9%) were girls' schools, eighteen (33.3%) were boys' schools and fifteen (27.8%) were co-educational. Ninety three per cent of vocational schools were co-ed. - the remaining two being all-male. All community/comprehensive schools were co-ed.

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TABLE 1

LEAVING CERTIFICATE : CHANGES IN RATE OF SUBJECT TAKE-UP BETWEEN
1972/73 AND 1981/82. (A sample of 16 subjects)*

SUBJECT	GIRLS		BOYS	
	1972/3 %	1981/2 %	1972/3 %	1981/2 %
Irish	98.0	97.0	96.0	96.0
French	58.0	71.0	32.0	50.0
History	55.0	34.0	45.0	38.0
Geography	60.0	37.0	69.0	45.0
Art	29.0	21.0	15.0	11.0
Biology	28.0	62.0	21.0	38.0
Chemistry	8.0	15.0	30.0	28.0
Physics	2.0	6.0	22.0	34.0
Maths	78.0	97.0	97.0	99.0
Technical Drawing	0.0	<0.01	8.0	26.0
Home Economics (General)	51.0	18.0	<0.01	<0.01
Home Economics (Scientific & Social)	3.0	38.0	<0.01	0.02
Accountancy	21.0	24.0	18.0	22.0
Business Organisation	22.0	31.0	19.0	26.0
Economics	12.0	14.0	22.0	26.0

Source: Department of Education Statistical Reports 1972/73 & 1981/82.

* Percentages are given to the nearest decimal point.

TABLE 2

Differences between male, female and co-ed. second-level schools in frequency of assessments, the degree of teacher choice in giving assessments and in the extent of prizegiving

	Proportion of each type of school with a given arrangement (%)			
	Female % N=21	Male % N=20	Co-Ed % N=45	N
Exams for non-exam classes three times per year	33.3	15.0	37.8	86
Monthly assessments are held (apart from end of term exams) for non-exam classes	19.0	20.0	8.9	"
Monthly assessments/reports (apart from end of term exams) are held for exam classes	9.5	5.3	11.1	"
Compulsory continuous assessment for all classes is part of school policy	23.8	10.0	20.0	"
Teachers are <u>not</u> expected to give class tests during term	9.5	20.0	17.8	"
Prizes are awarded for curriculum-related accomplishments	52.4	40.0	40.0	"
Prize-giving ceremonies are held in the school	76.2	30.0	53.3	"

TABLE 3

Differences between public schools (i.e. vocational, community and comprehensive), secondary schools in the free scheme and fee-paying secondary schools in the frequency of assessments, the degree of teacher choice in giving assessments and in the extent of prize-giving

Type of Activity	Proportion of each type of school with a given arrangement (%)				
	Vocational % N=27	Community(4) Comp.(1) % N=5	Free-Scheme % N=46	Fee-Paying % N=8	N
Exams for non-exam classes 3 times per year	40.7	20.0	26.1	37.5	86
Monthly assessments are held (apart from end of term exams) for non-exam classes	0.0	20.0	19.6	25.0	"
Monthly assessments/reports (apart from end of term exams) are held for exam classes	0.0	20.0	17.4	25.0	"
Compulsory continuous assessment for all classes is part of school policy	3.7	40.0	21.7	37.5	"
Teachers are <u>not</u> expected to give class tests during term	22.2	20.0	13.0	12.5	"
Prizes are awarded for curriculum related work	40.7	80.0	34.8	75.0	"
Prize-giving ceremonies are held in the school	63.0	60.0	43.5	75.0	"

TABLE 4

Differences between male, female and co-ed. schools
in the time allotted to Religion classes each week

		Gender Type		
Hours on Timetable	Cycle	All Female N=21	All Male N=20	Co-Ed. N=45
1 or 2 periods per week	Junior	0.0	10.0	48.9
	Senior	0.0	10.5	46.3
3 periods per week	Junior	19.0	35.0	40.0
	Senior	14.3	57.9	43.9
4 - 6 periods per week	Junior	71.4	40.1	11.1
	Senior	76.2	31.6	7.3
Varies for each year	Junior	9.5	15.0	0.0
	Senior	9.5	0.0	2.4
Junior P \leq .01		Senior P \leq .01		

TABLE 5

Differences between vocational, secondary, community/
comprehensive schools in the time allotted to Religion
classes each week

		TYPE OF SCHOOL		
No. of periods per week	Cycle	Vocational N=27	Secondary N=54	Community/ Comprehensive N=5
1 or 2 p.w.	Junior	70.4	7.4	20.0
	Senior	73.9	5.7	20.0
3 p.w.	Junior	22.2	35.2	80.0
	Senior	21.7	43.4	80.0
4 - 6 p.w.	Junior	3.7	50.0	0.0
	Senior	0.0	47.2	0.0
Varies for	Junior	3.7	7.4	0.0
	Senior	4.3	3.8	0.0
Junior P \leq .01		Senior P \leq .01		

TABLE 6

Differences between public, free-scheme secondary and fee-paying schools in the time allotted to religion classes each week.

Hours on timetable	Cycle	Public N=32	Free-Scheme* secondary N=46	Fee-paying* secondary N=8
1 or 2 periods per week	Junior	62.5	2.2	37.5
	Senior	64.3	0.0	42.9
3 periods per week	Junior	31.3	34.8	37.5
	Senior	32.1	47.8	14.3
4 - 6 periods per week	Junior	3.1	54.3	25.0
	Senior	0.0	47.8	42.9
Varies each Year	Junior	3.1	8.7	0.0
	Senior	3.6	4.3	0.0
Junior $P \leq .01$		Senior $P \leq .01$		

* All free-scheme secondary schools are Catholic while six of the eight (75%) of the fee-paying schools are.

TABLE 7

Differences between female, male and co-ed. schools in their extracurricular provision in a selected range of arts.

Activity	School types % offering each activity			
	Female %	Male %	Co-Ed. %	Stat. Sig.
Arts and Crafts	71.4	25.0	37.8	P < .01
Dancing	14.3	0.0	6.7	n.s.
Musical Activities	100.0	55.0	60.0	P < .01
Drama	85.7	40.0	62.2	P < .05
Debating/Public Speaking	100.0	75.0	73.3	P < .05
School Magazine	57.1	50.0	46.7	n.s.
Photography	19.0	20.0	4.4	n.s.
Film Society	4.8	15.0	11.1	n.s.

TABLE 8

Differences between public schools, free scheme secondary schools and fee-paying secondary schools in the provision of extracurricular activities in a selected range of arts.

Activity	School types % offering each activity			
	Public N=32	Free Scheme Secondary N=46	Fee-Paying Secondary N=8	Statistical Significance
Arts and Crafts	34.4	41.3	87.5	$P \leq .05$
Dancing	6.3	6.5	12.5	n.s.
Musical Activities	50.0	76.1	100.0	$P \leq .01$
Drama	53.1	63.0	100.0	n.s.
Debating/ Public Speaking	78.1	80.4	87.5	n.s.
School Magazine	50.0	43.5	87.5	n.s.
Photography	3.1	13.0	37.5	$P \leq .05$
Film Society	12.5	8.7	12.5	n.s.

TABLE 9

Differences between public, fee-paying secondary schools in the availability of certain facilities for extracurricular activities.

Name of Facility	School types % offering each activity			
	Public N=32	Free Scheme Secondary N=46	Fee-Paying Secondary N=8	Statistical Significance
	% with facility	% with faciltiy	% with facility	
Playing fields (of their own)	50.0	71.1	100.0	$P \leq .01$
Hard Courts (of their own)	62.5	78.3	62.5	n.s.
Gym (of their own)	31.3	63.0	87.5	$P \leq .01$
Library (of their own)	53.1	84.4	100.0	$P \leq .01$
General Purpose Hall	21.9	26.1	25.0	n.s.
Lecture Hall	9.4	4.3	12.5	n.s.
Dark Room (for photography)	3.1	4.3	0.0	n.s.
Swimming Pool	0.0	4.3	25.0	$P \leq .05$
Common Room (Recreation Room) for senior pupils	3.1	2.2	25.0	$P \leq .05$



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