

## *Original Paper*

# The Inspiration of German Civic Education to China's Ideological and Political Education Work

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### ***Abstract***

*German civic education has undergone a complex development process and has a long history. Through the analysis and study of the basic profile of German civic education, it is clear that the characteristics of German civic education: focusing on the democratic nature of education, focusing on the practical experience of the citizens, emphasizing the citizens' sense of rights and responsibilities and strengthening the influence of religious education, has a multifaceted significance for promoting the further development of the theory and practice of ideological and political education in China.*

### ***Keywords***

*Germany, civic education, ideological and political education*

## **1. Introduction**

German civic education has gone through a complex development process, which contains a deep tradition and a long history, and has made indelible contributions to the development of civic education in the world. The political education of citizens has always been the focus of attention for successive rulers, and German civic education has a whole set of management mechanisms, ways and means, and has achieved good results. Since the 18th Party Congress, China's attention to ideological and political education has gradually increased, but China's education in this area is still relatively young, there are many places to be improved, based on this, a serious study of German civic education and learn from the profile and characteristics of the ideological and political education in China is of great significance to strengthen and improve the work of ideological and political education.

## **2. Overview of German Civic Education**

As a new network transmission and communication tool, microblog not only broadens students' communication channels, but more importantly, it also plays a guiding role in the construction of

college students' values and dissemination of ideas. Because of the unique characteristics of microblogging, it makes it more and more popular among young college students. All things have two sides, and microblogging is no exception, it will have a positive effect on the guidance of college students' values, but it will also have a negative influence.

### *2.1 Historical Development of German Civic Education*

Like the history of German countries, the history of civic education has been in constant change. The civic education in different periods has been branded with strong political imprints, forming unique civic education ideas and practice systems, adapting to and serving different political goals and political tasks of the rulers, first of all, in the period of feudal monarchy, its political education has always been to cultivate "tame subjects" as the highest purpose, but such an educational purpose has brought Germany into the World War I. The German civic education has also been in constant change. However, such an educational goal led Germany into the abyss of World War I. Then came the Weimar Republic, which mainly pursued the goals of "moral education", "civic consciousness", "German nationality and national reconciliation". In the Weimar Republic period, the goals of "moral education", "civic awareness", "German nationality and national reconciliation" were pursued, among which the pioneering "Civic Education Committee" laid the foundation for the construction of a democratic political education system in Germany after the World War II; in the Nazi period, when Hitler came to power, the political education system for the authoritarian dictatorship of the fascist government was implemented as "integrated". Next was the Nazi period when Hitler came to power, and the political education system of "integrated" fascist authoritarian dictatorship was implemented, which was completely contrary to the previous educational tradition and political education, and eventually led to the outbreak of the Second World War; and lastly, there was the post-World War II democratic political education, which was affected by the "non-Naziization movement" and the Western democratic education ideology, and the Federal Center for Political Education was established, and the concept of democratic politics was really taken root. The concept of democratic politics really took root.

### *2.2 The Basic Situation of Civic Education in Germany*

Nowadays, civic education in Germany is characterized by a variety of educational forms, rich educational contents and diverse educational paths. Not only are the relevant courses set up in schools throughout the entire education stage, but the contents of education range from social life to attitude of responsibility, providing students with comprehensive quality training and education, and in the social aspect, setting up educational institutions to educate adult citizens. The main manifestations of this are as follows: First, the content of education is rich. It includes political education, moral education, education in the spirit of democracy, environmental protection education, civic cultivation, civic character formation education, etc., and involves various fields such as politics, economy, society, morality, culture and environmental protection, etc. For example, universities pay attention to the cultivation of the students' sense of social responsibility through professional education; the content of elementary school education involves the knowledge of introductory natural sciences, music, art,

foreign languages, etc., and pays attention to the awakening of the students' interests and hobbies, thus promoting the development of the students' personality. In primary schools, the content of education involves introductory knowledge of natural sciences, music, art, foreign languages and so on, with an emphasis on arousing students' interests and hobbies and thus promoting their personality development; in full secondary schools, the curriculum emphasizes comprehensiveness, sociality and practice, with not only core courses in history, foreign languages, German, mathematics and natural sciences, but also increased learning content in informatics, economics, psychology and religion, which is conducive to promoting the all-around development of students' qualities. Civic education is a huge and complex "systematic project", and Germany has established a civic education network that integrates "school, family and society", so that the whole society can participate in the civic education team. For example, the German government publicizes official information through mass media such as television and the Internet, which in turn influences citizens' political inclinations, value orientations and lifestyles. At present, the new media technology in German schools has been widely used in classroom teaching, which not only improves the teaching effect, but also helps to improve the moral cognitive level of students; and then through the society's religious education, Germany's religion class mainly involves the content of human and human common life, which passes on some of the civic education through the religion, that is to say, not only focus on the cultivation of students' religious beliefs, but also focus on the cultivation of human dignity, self-respect and respect for human dignity and respect for human dignity. That is to say, it not only focuses on cultivating students' religious beliefs, but also focuses on cultivating human dignity, self-restraint, sense of responsibility, sense of truth, goodness and beauty, and helping others. Family education is also another important way of civic education. It is the general consensus of German parents to pay attention to their children's moral and civilized cultivation, i.e., the cultivation of good qualities such as politeness, honesty, trustworthiness and punctuality.

### **3. Characteristics of German Civic Education**

#### *3.1 Focus on the Democratic Nature of Education*

Traditional indoctrination has faded out of the German classroom, replaced by a democratic, open and controversial democratic classroom. As clearly emphasized in the Botesbach Consensus, the prohibition of indoctrination means that teachers are not allowed to indoctrinate students by any means, as this will prevent students from forming independent judgments. In civic education classes, civic education is provided to students through the exploration of popular social topics, and the educational methods vary for different educational targets, such as children and youth, whose political education is mainly provided through games, school trips, exhibitions, and other indirect educational methods, so as to stimulate their intrinsic initiative by subconsciously influencing the educational targets. Civic education for adults takes the form of organizing thematic seminars or lectures, etc., so that they can receive civic education in an atmosphere of democratic talk. It can be seen that even though there is a difference in the way of education, all of them embody the characteristics of democracy.

### *3.2 Emphasizing the Practical Experience of Citizens*

“Cultivating useful citizens with national consciousness” is the core concept of Kaixin Steiner’s theory of civic education, in which “useful citizens” means having “justice”, “lawfulness” and “justice”, The “useful citizen” refers to a person who possesses the three virtues of “justice,” “lawfulness,” and “labor” and who dedicates himself to the nation. Based on this core concept, for the German “memory, not practice” education, Kaixin Steiner proposed that the only way to achieve civic education is to implement labor education, in other words, he emphasized the adoption of experiential method of labor education for students. For example, he encourages primary school students to make things with their own hands and experience the joy of making things and laboring; he lets secondary school students visit factories on site and experience the joy that work brings to people or he asks students to go to old people’s homes and welfare institutions to perform social services in order to cultivate their labor concepts and labor habits, etc. In short, he creates a real situation in which students can learn to work. In short, creating real situations allows students to apply the theoretical knowledge they have acquired in practice, realizing that they come from practice to practice.

### *3.3 Emphasizing the Sense of Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens*

Although there is no uniform provision for the goal of education in Germany, it can be seen from the content of the state constitutions that the goal of German civic education is to give students the national spirit and awareness of rights and responsibilities. In his ideas on civic education, Kärchensteiner puts forward the idea of “educating citizens about their rights and duties”, “educating them about collective concepts”, “educating them about the sense of authority” and “educating them about the sense of nationhood”. The four aspects of “education for a sense of nationhood” are reflected in the “Education Laws” and “Syllabi” of the German states, such as the requirement that schools “make students aware of their rights and duties as citizens of the country”, “a sense of responsibility”, “a sense of responsibility”, “a sense of responsibility”, “a sense of responsibility”, “a sense of responsibility”, “a sense of responsibility”, “a sense of responsibility”, “a sense of responsibility”, “a sense of responsibility”, “a sense of responsibility”, “a sense of responsibility”, “a sense of responsibility”, “a sense of responsibility”, “a sense of responsibility”. They are required, for example, to “make students aware of their rights and duties as citizens of the country”, to “have a sense of responsibility”, to “reduce their needs for the benefit of the community”, and to learn to “live in harmony with the community”, and so on. It can be seen that, in addition to imparting knowledge, skills and techniques, and cultivating students’ understanding and transfer of knowledge, the most important aspect of school teaching is to teach students social behavioral styles and traits, that is, to enable students to learn to understand themselves, develop their own strengths, and assume their responsibilities to society through reflection on the history, present and future of society.

### *3.4 Strengthening the Influence of Religious Education*

German schools and schools in other European countries, are evolved from the church, although Germany is a secular state, but attaches great importance to religious education, school education in Germany and religious education in the goals of education, content, form of mutual infiltration, close

cooperation, can form a synergy that German school education and religion has been closely linked. In 1990, after the unification of East and West Germany with the state and political system of West Germany, religion classes were still compulsory subjects in primary and secondary schools and were fully underwritten by the church. The fundamental aim of moral education is to cultivate spirituality and character with religion at its root. In addition to fostering religious beliefs in students, it also emphasizes the cultivation of human dignity, self-restraint, sense of responsibility, democratic spirit, patriotism, and the Germanic spirit. As far as the content of religious education is concerned, different denominations have different doctrines, of which Catholicism and Protestantism are the two main ones.

#### **4. On the Ideological and Political Education in China's Enlightenment**

"Ideological and political education" and "civic education" although the name is different, but from the point of view of the nature of the two have a close logical relationship, China's "ideological and political education" and Germany's "civic education" have many similarities. China's "ideological and political education" and Germany's "civic education" have a lot of similarities, and there is a deep significance to learn from each other.

##### *4.1 Innovate the Teaching Method of Civic and Political Education to Stimulate Students' Interest*

In the past, students' interest in Civics was not high because the education mode of Civics was rigid and educators neglected students' interest in classroom teaching. In terms of the enrichment and innovation of education mode, Chinese ideological and political educators can learn from the democratic, developmental and innovative nature of German education. German schools are not limited to traditional classroom teaching, but have added many practical courses to enrich the form of education. Such as the establishment of cooking rooms, sewing rooms and laboratories, etc., for daily teaching to provide more practical places, encourage teachers to get rid of the traditional classroom teaching form of constraints at the same time also advocate that students out of the traditional classroom, pay attention to exercise the hands-on ability of students and practical ability. In the process of Civics teaching, ideological and political educators need to reform and innovate in the form of education, to take a variety of teaching forms, so that the Civics class "alive", in addition to the traditional classroom teaching, educators can also utilize the media and other new technologies, new modes of Civics teaching. With the development of the information age, in the post-epidemic era, combined with the integration of media technology for the teaching practice of civic and political science class for civic and political science teachers is the call of the times. For example, teachers of civics courses use online platforms such as Jitterbug, Learning Channel, microblogging, and Tencent conference to teach civics courses, stimulate students' interest in learning, and teachers can also use these platforms as a link for communication and interaction between teachers and students, sharing and discussing course-related content with students, bringing teachers and students closer together, and improving students' stereotypical impression of civics courses.

#### *4.2 Enhance the Experiential Nature of the Teaching of Civic and Political Classes and Emphasize the Combination of Theory and Practice*

China's ideological and political education for students must grasp the practicality and realize the combination of theoretical education and practical education. Kaixin Steiner's theory of civic education is based on the opposition to the education status quo of "memorization, light practice", which advocates the education of labor to improve the practical ability of citizens. At present, the main method and way to carry out ideological and political education in schools is through classroom lectures, such as the morality and rule of law classes in primary and secondary schools or the Ideological Morality and the Rule of Law classes in colleges and universities, which contain the main content of civic education, which aims at cultivating qualified members of society, and which plays an important role in cultivating the moral quality and legal awareness of those who have been educated. However, to carry out ideological and political education is often not enough to rely solely on classroom lectures, but also need to improve and strengthen the comprehensive quality of students through practical social activities, such as high school ideological and political courses emphasize the importance of insisting on the combination of education with production and social practice, focusing on the real life and long-term development of students, so that theoretical perspectives are organically combined with life experience and labor experience, so that the students can train themselves in practice, test themselves in practice, perfect themselves in practice, independently discern and think about the power of truth, and consciously practice socialist core values.

#### *4.3 Improve the Professional Level of Teachers of Civics Courses and Promote the Connotative Development of Civics Courses*

The key to teaching a good civics class is the teacher. Kaixin Steiner's idea of civic education focuses on the construction and improvement of the teacher team, and he believes that there are specialties, and schools need to have professional theoretical teachers and technical teachers. Therefore, our country should also cultivate a high-quality and specialized civic education teacher team, strengthen the full-time civic education teachers in schools and colleges, and actively mobilize teachers with excellent political quality to serve as civic education teachers in colleges and universities; we should reasonably formulate the cultivation of civic education teachers and carry out academic exchanges and practical training activities for civic education teachers; we should comprehensively improve the theoretical skills and comprehensive quality of civic education teachers, and effectively accelerate the construction of civic education teachers and the construction of the civic education team. To comprehensively improve the theoretical skills and comprehensive quality of teachers of Civics and Politics, to speed up the construction of Civics and Politics teachers, to improve the professionalism and theoretical level of Civics and Politics teachers, and to build a Civics and Politics teacher team with strong politics, deep feelings, new thinking, wide vision, strict self-discipline and correct personality. Moreover, Kähnsteiner also emphasized that the content of civic education should be infiltrated in the teaching of various traditional disciplines, and its spirit should be carried out in the teaching of other disciplines. In other

words, ideological and political education is not only the business of teachers of Civics and Politics courses, but also the business of teachers of all courses, as General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized, “Good ideological and political work should be like salt, but you can’t just eat the salt, the best way is to dissolve the salt into all kinds of food to be absorbed naturally.” Every course has the function of educating people, and the resources of ideological and political education contained in other courses must be explored in depth to give full play to the educating function of all courses and realize the connotative development of ideological and political courses.

#### *4.4 Cultivate Young People’s Awareness of Rights and Responsibilities, and Improve and Increase Legal Regulation*

The development of correct values is an important part of civic education, but the development of values is not a quick fix, and the improvement of national quality is not something that can be accomplished overnight, but requires the efforts of generations of educators to constantly and consciously guide students to form the correct values and quality of will. However, in the cultivation of consciousness at the same time, the regulation and supervision of the law is needed, so as to further improve the citizens’ self-restraint consciousness. At the same time, ideological and political education must be carried out in a democratic atmosphere and context, and an open system focusing on communication, dialogue and practical activities needs to be created, so that students can develop their practical abilities in a relaxed and open environment, increase their identification with the individual, the nation and the state, and be willing to contribute their talents to the development of the country and to the development of the country. Focusing on cultivating students’ sense of commitment, at the micro level, to make students dare to take responsibility and dedication in their daily life and work, and to enhance their sense of ownership; at the macro level, to make students realize their mission in the development of the new era, and that they need to lick the bricks and mortar to contribute to the development of the motherland. Strengthening the regulation of the law is not to increase the punishment, but in order to use the rules to better constrain the behavior of citizens, strengthen the regulation of the law is conducive to the maintenance of good social order at the same time is more conducive to consolidate the civic literacy of the students in the school to develop.

## **5. Conclusion**

Compared with other developed countries, China’s ideological and political education started late, so we still have a lot of room for improvement in the development of ideological and political education. China’s ideological and political education is a long way to go, can be combined with the actual situation of the country, drawing on the basis of Germany’s advanced experience, and then improve the effectiveness of ideological and political education in China.

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