Zehavit Gross *Editor*

Reimagining the Landscape of Religious Education

Challenges and Opportunities

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Chapter 1
Introduction: Changing Perspectives and Themes of the Landscape of Religious Education

Zehavit Gross

A Landscape

Carl Dennis- 1939-

This painting of a barn and barnyard near sundown

May be enough to suggest we don't have to turn

From the visible world to the invisible

In order to grasp the truth of things

We don't always have to distrust appearances

Not if we're patient. Not if we're willing

To wait for the sun to reach the angle

When whatever it touches, however retiring,

Feels invited to step forward

Into a moment that might seem to us

Familiar if we gave ourselves more often

To the task of witnessing. Now to witness

A barn and barnyard on a day of rest

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When the usual veil of dust and smoke

Is lifted a moment and things appear

To resemble closely what in fact they are

https://poets.org/poem/landscape.

1.1 Aim and Scope

This book brings together new thinking and research on religious education's complex and evolving role in the multicultural, diverse post-modern era. Religious education occupies a contested space whether in different contexts around the world, at different levels of education, and from different theoretical lenses. The book analyzes data from five continents: Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, and America and from three different religious perspectives: Christian, Muslim, and Jewish. The ongoing, changing nature of the world due to increasing secularization, rapid technological change, mass immigration, globalization processes, conflict, and challenging security issues, from inter to intra state levels, and with shifting geopolitical power balances, generates the need to reconceptualize where religious education is positioned (Gross & Rutland, 2014). Claims that religious education on its own can be an agent of moral, social, and spiritual transformation are disputed (Miedema, 2017; Moore, 2007; Saada & Gross, 2017; Waghid, 2011). There is significant controversy about whether special religious education, that is in-faith education, still has a role within the post-modern world (Gross & Rutland, 2015, 2021). This collection will facilitate new understandings from empirical and reflective accounts in a variety of countries and political contexts, as well as provide innovative methodological approaches to the study of education and religion.

Initiatives in religious education, interfaith education, and social cohesion are not only linked to the historical and social contexts, but also to issues of civic and moral education (Gross, 2013). Studying education's role in religious and interfaith encounters is often justified by the need to help secure the future against further exclusions, xenophobia, and violations of human rights, whether based on ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. At a time when many societies are more diverse than ever before, legitimate concerns about religion, nationalism, and xenophobia underscore the importance of an inquiry into whether religious, multicultural sensitivity, and critical interfaith education can function together to develop mutual understanding and shared goals (Barnes, 2014; Selçuk, 2017; Valk, 2010, 2017; Valk et al., 2017).

This volume focuses on the challenges and opportunities that the new global, political, social, and religious milieu, promoted through social media and modern education, poses for religious education through four themes. First, it raises the question of how one can create an inclusive, religious worldview in the face of growing tribalism and xenophobia. This has increased with the minority problems in Europe

and the United States, as well as in Australia and China, the second theme. In the face of these contemporary challenges, it aims to investigate how religious education can develop critical thinking, facilitate social justice, and respond to totalitarian rule with a more liberal approach, which is explored through the third theme. Finally, this book investigates issues relating to spirituality, prayer, and affective learning, which can respond to the need for emotion among young people in the contemporary world.

The object of this book is to delineate the contours of the topography of religious education and the emergent landscape, from the contemporary research perspective of religious education in various geographical and cultural contexts. In so doing, this book provides a multi-layered, inclusive picture of Religious Education which reflects the Zeitgeist and the new challenges education, religion, and religious education face today.

1.2 The Need to Provide a Conceptual Mosaic

An in-depth study of the cumulative research in this book shows that in the post-modern world it is impossible to offer a one-dimensional, coherent, closed, and cohesive picture of religious education (Barnes, 2014; Gross, 2013; Jackson, 1997; Selçuk, 2017; Ziebertz, 2011). Instead, in the present challenging era, with its vast range of options and questions, researchers strive to examine questions that push the boundaries, with the aim of presenting the unique qualities of various regions around the world, which create a conceptual mosaic and make it possible to raise both new and old questions (Gross, 2022).

We are living in a post-modern world that advocates cultural, moral, and scientific pluralism and strives for equality in every sphere of life and every discipline, out of the belief that stratification in society and knowledge is an outgrowth of power relations. Thus, as the world becomes more modern and even post-modern, there are competing narratives that challenge the legitimacy of past beliefs, intensify the dimensions of relativity and criticism, undermine traditional hierarchies and authorities, and break down the great narratives into sub-narratives that relate different stories of different communities in different voices. In response to these developments, in 1992, Steve Tesich became aware of a new phenomenon that he called a world of post-truth, which is dominated by post-truth politics and post-factual politics, where a large portion of public discourse is based on emotions and personal opinions that shape public opinion instead of on facts and rational thinking (Schindler, 2020). Joshua Forstenzer (2018) argues that "Oxford Dictionaries proclaimed 'post-truth' its 2016 word of the year, noting a 2,000-% increase in its usage over the previous year and defining it as 'relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief'" (p. 5).

It is possible that the suppression of objective positivist epistemologies made it possible to give too much legitimacy to the constructivist epistemology that sanctifies the subjective and personal knowledge, and this may have constituted fertile ground for the creation of the consciousness of post-fact and post-truth. These developments

impact the shaping of the consciousness of the individual and society, and this in turn has a decisive effect on the design of education in general and religious education in particular. It seems that it is impossible to talk about one single post-modernism but rather about multiple patterns of post-modernism and multiple patterns of post-truth (Gross, 2012). These radical changes impact the shaping of religious consciousness in different cultural and social contexts.

1.3 The Collapse of Traditional Categories and Definitions

An in-depth perusal of the book's chapters shows that the old categorization of religious and secular is no longer relevant, because in our post-modern world we have different expressions and patterns when it comes to defining religious and secular (Gross, 2011; Gross & Gamal, 2014). Pluralization and differentiation of definitions alter both the perspective and the commonly accepted categories that we customarily addressed in the type of discourse that previously existed in the world. With the demographic changes resulting from mass migration and mobility leading to the blurring of the Christian and Muslim worlds, the definitional dichotomy has intensified and has become unclear in many places (Panjwani, 2012). A more thorough perusal of the book's chapters and various phenomena of religiosity and religious education around the world leads to the conclusion that in the new world we live in, with its political, social, and religious extremism, it is possible that reality should be examined through the prism of both liberal and conservative concepts. Thus, it may be possible to identify liberal religiosity and secular conservative fundamentalism, and this new categorization challenges religious discourse and opens up the possibility of new in-depth questions in religious education in the various geographical regions around the globe.

1.4 Mapping the Religious Ecological Landscape

The attempt to map the religious ecological landscape where the educational act takes place shows that there is religious extremism in some parts of the world, and secular extremism in other parts, along with a constant increase in the number of those who define themselves as non-religious, particularly in the Western world. The major questions that concern many researchers are whether religion is growing weaker or growing stronger in the world we live in (Casanova, 1994; Davie, 2000; Hervieu-Leger, 2000), whether governments around the globe are managing to achieve a balance between secular and religious interests, and the impact of these processes on religious education in state and private schools in different countries.

In the 1960s, a secular thesis developed that argued that the more modern the world, the more secular it would become (Bruce, 2002; Martin, 1987), but the exact opposite happened (Berger, 1999). The events of September 11 in the US, the rise of

radical Islam, and current conflicts such as the war in Yemen between the Saudi-led Sunnis and the Iran-led Shiites in Yemen further emphasize the central role of religion as a major player around the globe and challenged the secular discourse. Many governments around the globe are coping with the question of the role of religion, with the main question of interest to numerous researchers being the balance between the right to equality and freedom of religion. In fact, the most prominent phenomenon in different parts of the globe is that of a religion becoming identified with the political right (O'brien & Abdelhadi, 2020). In the United States, for example, Christianity was a cornerstone of the American identity and shaped the old American society. Now it has become a bone of contention between the Christian right and the secular left, which are fighting in order to shape the identity of the new America. President Trump understood the electoral power of both religion and Christianity, which constitute an electoral component that was important to his success. He adopted a number of extrinsic Christian customs and enhanced the position of religion in the public sphere. For example, Trump gave Christmas considerable visibility in the public sphere in his public appearances with a Christmas tree, he appointed a conservative judge to the Supreme Court, he fought the abortion law, and he permitted priests to talk about politics in church. He strengthened ties with the Jewish right in the United States and also with Israel, by stressing the religious aspect of the relationship between the countries and consolidating and establishing the status of political theology in America. This transition of religion to the right has not only occurred in the United States but is a global phenomenon. For example, Turkey under Erdogan has become more religious and conservative and since the rise of the Islamic Party, clearly Islamic politics can be identified there.

Thus, in many places in the world religion is associated with right-wing parties that are often also nationalistic, racist, and violent. For example, the ruling party in India is the nationalist religious BJP party. Charismatic, right-wing, Hindu leader Narendra Modi is challenging the secular left and threatening to turn India into a single-party state, while imposing racist laws. In the Buddhist country of Myanmar, ethnic cleansing against the Muslim Rohingya minority is currently underway. The connection between the right and religion is a topic for a complex analysis that extends far beyond the boundaries of this introduction.

1.5 The Challenges of Religion in a Globalized Alienated World

Globalization is blurring boundaries and fostering alienation between human beings who are thrown into an amorphous transnational geographical space and are seeking an anchor, meaning, and roots to hold on to. While religion confers an identity and sense of belonging, the liberal left focuses on the concept of rights and freedom that usually loosen the reins and boundaries. As a result, modern man becomes dissociated and often seeks what Fromm (1994) called an "escape from freedom",

toward more clearly defined boundaries. Religion confers order, clear content, and meaning and therefore serves as a refuge from the unlimited freedom and liberty that liberalism has to offer. Surprisingly, religion is gaining strength in places where it was forbidden for many years, such as China, Russia, and post-secular countries. In effect, religion strengthens the particularistic, local dimension, mainly because it sanctifies time and place. For this reason, various social institutions and many political institutions find themselves struggling with the dilemma between religious particularism and secular humanist universalism. The conflict and contrast between religiosity and secularism are especially pronounced in Europe. Christianity developed in Europe, and Europe is now the most secular continent. On the one hand, churches in Europe are empty and are being turned into places of entertainment, museums, or even makeshift mosques for the hordes of Muslim immigrants. On the other hand, in Europe today, there is overwhelming religious visibility in the public sphere. This religious visibility threatens to supplant the traditional *laicité* and turn Europe into another religious continent which, under certain conditions, is liable to become fundamentalist (Ziebertz, 2011). Europe is finding it difficult to handle the waves of religious Muslim immigration. Thus, one can see in Europe two opposing trends. On the one hand, the enactment of anti-religious laws restricting ritual slaughtering, religious attire, circumcision, and the construction of mosques, as well as many Muslims attempting to integrate into the European secular space in order to enjoy the fruits of emancipation and enlightenment, breaking free of the shackles of burdensome and oppressive tradition. On the other hand, some Christians are converting to Islam and churches are being converted into mosques.

The questions currently arising in Europe and other parts of the globe are whether liberalism can contain non-liberal groups (Kymlicka, 1995) and whether, on the other hand, secularism can completely disregard its own religious tradition (Gross, 2010, 2013; Gross & Rutland, 2021). Specifically, with regard to Europe, the question is whether Europe will remain Europe without a significant Christian identity. To some extent, these questions also are matters of concern in countries in other geographical regions. In Australia, the various faith groups wish to retain half an hour of in-faith religious studies for members of the various religions in state schools with many parents choosing classes for their children even if they, themselves, are not religious, because they believe that religion gives students identity, meaning, and content. On the other hand, leftist and liberal groups are fighting a bitter war against these religious frameworks, perceiving them as fanatical frameworks of a fundamentalist nature and background that employ outdated methods of religious indoctrination.

Thus, the relationship between religion and secularization around the globe is multi-layered and complex. Many countries in the Middle East, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, do not perceive themselves as secular countries although they do perceive themselves as modern countries, despite maintaining traditional cultural norms. On the one hand, many countries around the globe approve of same-sex marriage and their public space is becoming more secular. At the same time, the liberal, multicultural approach facilitates the dissemination of religious beliefs and practices providing them with greater external visibility in the public sphere and challenging the secular discourse (Gross, 2010, 2013; Selçuk, 2017). These diverse

approaches to religious beliefs and practices in each geographical context impacts the different pedagogies and methodologies that are employed within the framework of religious education in different parts of the world. Therefore, in view of the dramatic changes taking place around the globe in the religious and secular context, this book's mission of delineating the contemporary landscape of religious education is timely and important.

1.6 Four Major Current Debates in Religious Education Scholarship: The Scope and Structure of the Book

As it is reflected in the current professional literature in the field, the topography of Religious Education moves between tradition and modernity, particularism and universalism, locality and transnationality and includes four major themes which reflect major theoretical challenges in the contemporary field of Religious Education which are discussed in the four parts in this book. They are the concept of worldviews; meeting the needs of refugees and minorities; developing critical thinking especially in relation to social justice and creating enlightened autocracies; and finally issues of spirituality, prayer, and affective learning (Fig. 1.1).

The combination of these four themes helps to reimagine the contemporary landscape of Religious Education as demonstrated in the diagram above. While there are other themes that could be explored, these are the timely and burning issues currently being faced in Religious Education scholarship.

Now I will elaborate each of the sections of the book, which deal with these four themes, outlining the different chapters that are included in each section and demonstrating the issues of debate and challenge in Religious Education relating to each theme.

Part 1: The ongoing debate: enhancement of worldviews and life orientation in religious education

The first part of the book deals with the ongoing debate, particularly in the Western world, as to whether to talk about Religious Education or Worldview education, which seeks to include the concept of secularization as a form of belief. These can coexist but, in many locations, they are contested concepts, with each challenging the other, representing the conflict between religion and secularism. While they may sometimes overlap, the Worldview approach can represent a form of secularization that threatens the existence of religious Education.

Robert Jackson deals with this dilemma in his contribution, entitled "The Study of Religious and Worldview Diversity in Public Schools: Contributions from the Council of Europe". In this chapter, he outlines some issues relating to incorporating the study of religions, together with non-religious worldviews, into the curricula of publicly funded schools in Western democratic states. Attention is given to examples from work on this topic conducted within the Council of Europe since 2002, with a

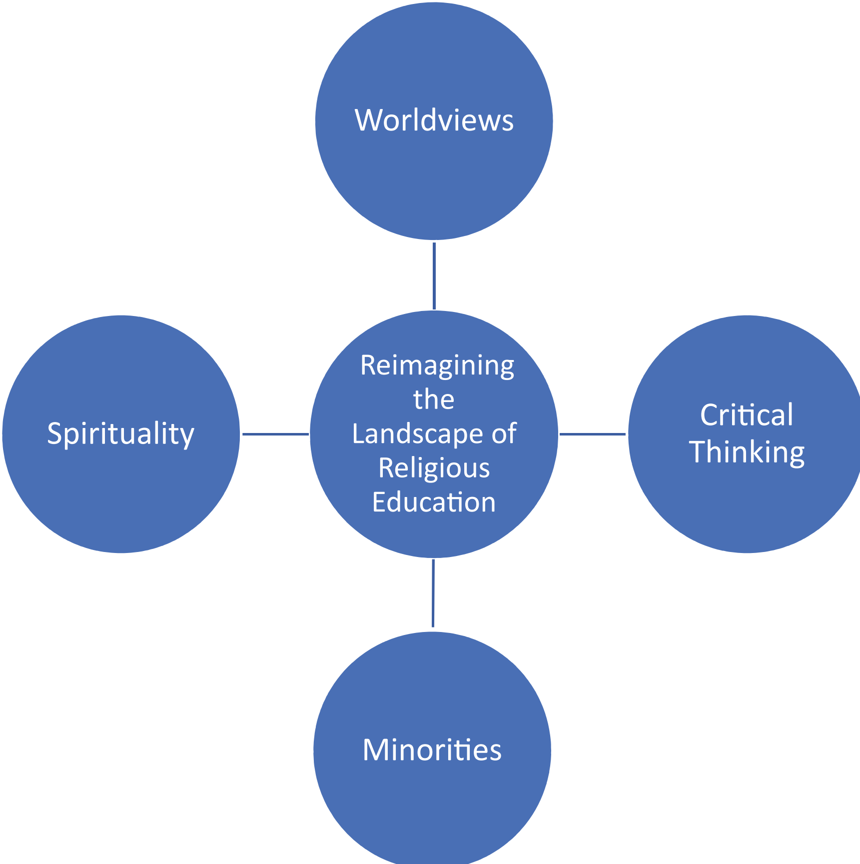

Fig. 1.1 The conceptual structure of the book

particular focus on *Signposts: Policy and Practice for Teaching about Religions and Nonreligious Worldviews in Intercultural Education*, a text published by the Council of Europe in 2014. *Signposts* is designed to assist policymakers and practitioners in interpreting and applying ideas from the 2008 Recommendation from the Committee of Ministers (the Foreign Ministers of the 47 member states) dealing with education about religions and non-religious convictions. Various issues raised by the *Signposts* document are considered. Toward the end of the article, recent UK and Council of Europe policies which emphasizes the study of religions and beliefs as a means to counter extremism, and which have appeared since the publication of *Signposts*, are summarized and discussed critically. Jackson also draws attention to the dangers of certain policies, and also to the plurality of aims which studies of religions and non-religious worldviews need to have in providing a balanced educational program. Finally, the work of the *Signposts* International Research Network is introduced.

Adding another perspective is provided by K. H. (Ina) ter Avest in her contribution entitled "Playful authentic identity development: An exploration of the role of 'life orientation' in a plural world". ter Avest argues that in these days of secularization, and of loosely dropped "alternative facts", a pivotal quality in the process of the development of an authentic life orientation is critical reading and an attitude of not letting yourself be misled by firmly stated opinions or truth claims. In this contribution, she shows how in different cultural and religious educational contexts teachers in their pedagogical aims and by way of didactical strategies facilitate and stimulate their students' critical and contextual reading of holy scriptures—of their own as well as of others' tradition(s). After the presentation of her interpretation of secularization, three examples of "good practice" are presented: from South Korea, from the Netherlands, and from Scotland. Different rationales of teachers show up in the development of their lessons and in their core activities facilitating and stimulating students' religious identity development. More research is needed on the development of RE teachers' rationales in the context of the society they prepare their students for, to critically participate in and contribute to society as responsible citizens with an own authentic life orientation.

Following these two broader chapters, Saila Poulterand and Vesa Åhs contribution focuses on Finland and is entitled "Worldview identity discourses in partially integrative Finnish religious and worldview education". The aim of their study is to analyze worldview discourses that legitimize different hegemonic and disadvantaged positions and identities of individuals and groups in a Finnish school context. A high degree of secularization and diversity among those formally belonging to the Evangelical-Lutheran Church represents the majority's worldview in Finland today. However, the number of refugees and migrants is growing, and the emergence of new minorities is challenging the traditional understanding of one's identity in relation to religions and worldviews. The study illustrates how in classrooms containing diverse worldviews, the normativity of the "secular-Lutheran" worldview causes blindness toward its own position and exclusion of those with different norms. Moreover, the concepts employed in education bolster these positions, causing dislocation in the education process. They argue that school knowledge representing an "official" picture of religion with traits that point to the world religion paradigm often excludes lived and practiced forms of religions or relegates them to curiosities, thus constricting what it means to be "religious". The findings of this study show that it is vital to challenge and problematize discourses which essentialize and categorize worldview identities resulting in different power positions and othering practices in school.

Yune Kim Tran and Amy Lynn Dee are entitled: "Teacher identity in a post-modern world: Who am I and do I think it matters?" They argue that teacher identity is complex, dynamic, ongoing, and worthy of examination in a post-modern era in which subjectivity reigns. This study examined the perceptions of preservice teachers' personal identity (e.g. gender, race, religious background, etc.) and how they influence preservice teachers' professional identity as a subject, pedagogical, and professional expert. The participants ($N = 81$) were preservice teachers from two different Christian-based institutions, one in Canada and one in the United

States, who were completing the requirements for initial licensure. Findings from a survey measured the preservice teachers' perceptions based on two scales examining personal and professional identity. The results suggested that preservice teachers did not perceive race as impacting their personal identity as a teacher, nor did they perceive religion as an influence on their professional identity, even though they had chosen Christian institutions. However, preservice teachers did perceive teacher preparation as impacting their understanding of professionalism as they transitioned from learner to teacher in the field.

Finally, in this section, Theodore F. Cockle, Perry L. Glanzer, Elijah G. Jeong, and Britney N. Graber argue in their chapter, entitled: "The Outrageous Idea of Christian Student Affairs: How Christian Chief Student Affairs Officers Envision Their Practice", that despite a growing body of literature depicting specific aspects of a Christian approach to student affairs, a discipline-wide theological vision for Christian student life professionals does not exist. This paper reports on the first stage of a larger research project that attempts to meet this need by investigating how the Christian intellectual tradition animates the practice of student affairs professionals at Christian colleges and universities. They used Benne's (2001) typology to identify 192 "Orthodox" and "Critical Mass" institutions of higher education in the Christian Protestant tradition. They then sent a mixed-methods survey to their chief student affairs officers (CSAOs) and received 69 responses, capturing their initial reflections on what makes their institution's student life practice(s) distinctively Christian. Their findings reveal that some of the participants' responses included language and practices common to non-Christian student affairs, but most referred to words, theological concepts, and practices selectively borrowed from the Christian tradition. The latter distinctively shaped the aims and methods of Christian student affairs.

Thus, the five chapters reflect different aspects of the debate regarding the concepts of Religious Education as compared with Worldview Education. The first two chapters focus on issues relating to Worldview education, with the first taking a Euro-Centric approach and the second more of a comparative approach across continents. The chapter by Saila Poulterand and Vesa Åhs shines a light on Finland, highlighting the tension between the established Finnish population, which supports a Worldview approach, compared with those of the new migrants, who come from a more religious background and oppose some of the secular approaches. The final two chapters focus on teacher education in Christian institutions and how they impact their students' religious identity and pedagogic approaches. Together, these chapters reveal the complex, multi-layered issues relating to Worldview as opposed to Religious Education. Embedded in these tensions is the more religious approach of many of the refugees, particularly those arriving in Europe, and the secular European society.

Part 2: Minorities, Education, and Alienation

Another contested area relates to conflicts between the majority population and minorities in terms of religious practices and education. This is a major global phenomenon that challenges and sometimes changes the landscape of Religious Education. It manifests itself in Europe with the significant demographic changes

occurring in the aftermath of the major influx of Muslim refugees, but also with growing religious nationalism and power struggles which lead to attacks on minority religions and their educational structures. This is seen in Erdogan's move to the religious right, undermining the secular education structures developed from the time of Atatürk in the 1920s and further affected by the huge influx of refugees from Syria and other Middle East conflicts to the Hindu attacks on Islam in India, the Buddhist attacks on the Rohingyas in Myanmar, and Communist China's aim of "re-educating" the Muslim Uyghurs. Some of these specific challenges are analyzed in the chapters in this section.

Aybiçe Tosun focuses on the refugee challenges in Turkey, with her contribution entitled "Multicultural Learning Environments in Turkey: A New Challenge about Refugee Education". Tosun argues that social and cultural aspects of societies have changed dramatically in the last decades because of globalization, migration movements, refugee crises, and global media. These developments, creating new multicultural societies, have a significant effect on daily life, culture, and education by bringing new perspectives about being local and universal. Including refugees in the school system creates a new learning environment for local students. Living together with different cultures reveals different challenges for every part of the society. These societal changes affect the school environment as can be seen in Turkish schools with the diversity in faith, religious beliefs, and worldviews among students. This new situation requires reconsidering the educational contents and curricula. The inclusion of diverse points of view in the curricula will transform students' thoughts and attitudes toward others, especially refugees, and help them to understand the importance of living peacefully together. Apart from all other courses in the Turkish educational system, the compulsory religious education should undertake the role of peace-making in the society with its content and approach. Focusing on cultural similarities and differences in an educational setting could bring a new context that society might use in dealing with conflicts.

An opposing approach, trying to impose unity in education is discussed in Dilmurat Mahmut's contribution entitled "Anti-religious education or preventing religious extremism?—An examination of the re-education camps in China's Uyghur region". Currently, it is estimated that between one to three million Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims are held involuntarily in "Education and Transformation Training Centers" or "Counter-extremism Training Schools" in Xinjiang, China (Greitens et al., 2020; Zenz, 2019). With such a background, this study tries to explore the nature of these centers through multiple lenses, such as Orientalism (Said, 1978), Internal Orientalism (Schein, 1997), critical race theory, and post-colonialism—putting the inquiry into both local and global pictures. The data is from the interviews conducted by various reporters and scholars who visited some of these centers, the testimonies given by some former detainees, as well some accessible government documents. The findings suggest that religion and extremism are largely conflated in those educational contexts. Moreover, religion or Islam is depicted as a polar opposite to science as well as communist ideology. Chinese authorities have conveniently and opportunistically benefited from the global rise of Islamophobia and racialization of Muslims to legitimize their anti-religious educational project in the

Uyghur region. Meanwhile, within these camps, mastering Mandarin Chinese is seen as an important sign of progress while the use of the Uyghur mother tongue is strongly discouraged as an indication of backwardness, reflecting but also possibly going beyond the long-existing discourse of Internal Orientalism (Schein, 1997). For the Chinese government, Uyghur Islamic identity can pose threat to the integrity as well as the future prosperity of the Chinese state. Therefore, these infamous re-education camps, as a state-enforced mass pedagogical, assimilative, anti-Islamic project, are deemed necessary in the Chinese government's eyes. This is a form of cultural genocide which reflects the legacy of the shameful and destructive colonial past of humanity.

Terence Lovat's contribution entitled "The Integral Link between Islamic Education and Religious Education: A Bonhoeffer Reflection on the Urgent Task of Countering Jihadist Pedagogy" sheds light on a different issue relating to Islamic education. The chapter begins with Dietrich Bonhoeffer's reflections on the integration between religion and life that he discerned in Islam and then explores this notion in relation to the consequential integral link to be found between Islamic education and religious education. It examines both old and new Islamic scholarship and makes the point that all Islamic education is religious education in the important sense that its ultimate goal is the pupil's holistic wellbeing and intellectual, moral, and spiritual development. The chapter then addresses the urgent task for contemporary Islamic religious education to return to its original charter of holistic wellbeing by countering the ease with which Jihadist pedagogy has been able to draw young people to its counter-wellbeing agenda and so tarnish Islam's reputation.

Ursula McKenna and Leslie J. Francis contribution entitled "Testing the contact hypothesis in interfaith encounters: Personal friendships with Sikhs countering anti-Sikh attitudes?" deals with a different religious minority and examines whether regular contact with Sikhs can reduce intolerance to them. Drawing on data provided by 5,811 students from schools in England, Wales, and London who self-identified as either "no religion" or as Christian, their study explored the effect of the contact hypothesis (having friends who are Sikhs) on scores recorded on the five-item Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude (SASA), after controlling for type of school (with or without a religious character), location (England, Wales, and London), personal factors (sex and age), psychological factors (extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism), and religious factors (self-assigned affiliation as Christian, worship attendance, and belief in God). The data demonstrated the positive effect of having friends who are Sikhs on lowering anti-Sikh attitudes.

Stephanie Lovett takes a broader approach with her contribution entitled "Disgust and the Limits of Reason: Countering the Fear of Contamination and Resistance to Education in a Post-Modern Climate". She argues that in times of rising nationalism and partisan tensions, the natural response of conscientious educators is to want more people to have more information, assuming that more knowledge will counter the ignorance that is considered to be at the root of hate and fear. Yet, we can easily see that information does not create acceptance, and a number of neurological studies have shone a light on this irrational intransigence. In these studies, researchers discovered an overwhelming correlation between subjects' high disgust response and

their political and social conservativism. Examining this subconscious knowledge of the danger of what is "wrong" and "unclean" gives educators valuable perspective on the desperately personal, gut-level knowing, driving students who feel existentially threatened by "unnatural" people, ideas, values, and practices. The post-truth era has widened this gap between intellectual knowing and gut-level knowing into a canyon where all knowledge is equally true and equally suspect. As a result, resistant students have less reason than ever to accept contradictions to their innate worldview and more reason than ever to trust their own worldview, which feels reliable and natural since it does not come from suspect outside sources. This is a very real pedagogical problem for education, with its traditional commitment to the irresistibility of reason and the impartiality of information, and educators must respond with different tactics to create a place of safety and inquiry, so that students naturally prone to policing boundaries can be helped to expand their own sense of what is natural and normal for humanity.

These various chapters, therefore, shed light on the challenges of creating an inclusive form of religious education that can assist minority groups and refugees and create a cohesive society. In some of the case studies, a positive approach is showcased in the face of this challenge, with the case of the Uyghurs demonstrating a totally unacceptable approach of forcing cohesion through re-education camps.

Part 3: Critical Thinking, Social Justice, and Modern Autocracy

Developing critical thinking is another major challenge to religious education because the traditional approach stresses unquestioning acceptance and religious leadership often feels threatened by the concept of critical thinking.

The first contribution in this section by Najwan Saada, entitled "Teaching about the religious and non-religious Other: Three paradigms and an Islamic perspective", aims to explain the three different paradigms in religious education—exclusivist, inclusivist, and critical—within a theoretical framework. He discusses their possible implications for teaching about the religious Other and non-religious Other in religious education in Islamic schools in western and democratic societies. It is assumed that religions in faith-based schools play a dominant role in interpreting and giving meaning to the world around students as they organize their experiences and guide them to action. Accordingly, teachers of religious education in these schools are responsible for developing students' religious, civic, and autonomous/personal identities. The application of the exclusivist, inclusivist, and critical paradigms in religious education achieves these goals, respectively, if approached within the framework of a child's maturation. Saada proposes that the exclusivist paradigm is appropriate for the elementary level, the inclusivist for middle, and critical for high school levels. The religious Others are defined here as believers of different traditions within one's religion and believers of religions other than one's own. Also, the Other includes agnostics, atheists, and secular citizens. The application of the exclusivist paradigm in elementary schooling achieves the religious and communitarian purpose of religious education. The inclusivist paradigm at the middle school level achieves the civic purpose of religious education and the critical paradigm at the high school level

achieves the educational and liberal purpose of religious education. In his chapter, he provides examples from an Islamic perspective.

Yusef Waghid provides a different perspective in his contribution entitled “Muslim Education and Claims of Justice in a Global Post-truth World”. He argues that Muslim education has been conceived in at least three ways over the past fifty years: *tarbiyyah* (education as socialization), *ta'lim* (education as initiation), and *ta'dib* (education as goodness). These different understandings of education focus on the cultivation of a Muslim community in the pursuit of moral, social, economic, environmental, and political justice. In this contribution, he extends the underlying underpinnings of education constituted in socialization, initiation, and goodness by focusing on an enlarged concept of education as enunciated in the Quran, namely, *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) and its concomitant link with claims of justice (*'adl*). An analysis of justice commensurate with human actions such as reasonableness, responsibility, and cosmopolitanism is pursued. Based on such an analysis, it is argued that education as associational knowing devoid of reasonableness, responsibility, and cosmopolitanism does not contribute toward plausible forms of human action. The argument for *ta'arruf* as a living theory of Muslim education is proffered as an approach that endorses pluralism, differences, and otherness.

In Liam Francis Gearon’s contribution, entitled “The Totalitarian Imagination Revisited: State Religious Education at the ‘Worldviews’ Watershed”, he argues that totalitarian “Imagination Revisited” examines the origins and ends of religion in education at the “worldviews” watershed. It does so against a personal academic life journey which has assessed state religious education in the light of modern autocracy, dictatorship, and totalitarianism. Drawing on the specific context of developments in the United Kingdom, the chapter shows this watershed’s epistemological and linguistic shift—from a subject defined by the study of religious traditions to the designation of that of teaching and learning about “worldviews”, a putatively inclusive approach framed in its thinking to incorporate religious and secular outlooks—through an etiology which has its pathogenic roots in a range religiously skeptical, secular epistemologies. This epistemological-philosophical trajectory, with its modern beginnings in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and the revolutions of that period, is, it is shown, rooted in an outplaying of a centuries-long, specific historical-political context which has now made itself manifest in the contemporary approach to state religious education.

These three chapters, therefore, provide different perspectives on conflicting approaches to traditional religious education, seeking to argue for the need for developing critical thinking and to foster social justice, both of which are within the framework of post-modern educational theory. However, this produces challenges as discussed by Gearon where the liberal view can end up imposing a modern form of autocracy by being intolerant of more traditional religious education and insisting on imposing a “worldview” approach.

Part 4: Spirituality, Prayer, and Affective Learning

Spirituality is still a major constituent in the field of Religious Education but sometimes it can be a challenging and competing component within the field of Religious

Education because it represents a less religious stance. The chapters in this section explore this conundrum.

In Julian Stern and Eli Kohn's contribution entitled "Prayer in Schools: In Search of a New Paradigm" they argue that prayer and schools have an uncomfortable history together. Prayer is therefore a useful "test" of various aspects of schooling. Empirical research on prayer in schools is used here to develop a new paradigm—a new way of understanding prayer in school, in terms of particular theories of spirituality, and a new way of understanding schooling, in terms of prayer and spirituality. The paradigm that they present reflects the views of young people studied in various recent research projects and also reflects well-established religious and philosophical positions. Their chapter proposes a model of "mundane" spirituality inspired by the work of various Jewish and Christian scholars, notably Kook, Buber, Macmurray, and Hay. This is exemplified by research with young people in Israel and the UK. The implications of this work for schools are described, noting the value of uncertainty and the as-yet unknown, the plural, the open. The chapter does not reject education—or religion—as a search for "truth"; rather it recognizes that truth is still emergent and that there is room for the mysterious, the ineffable.

Gross Zehavit contribution, entitled "The Holocaust as a Source for Religious Education and Reflection among Adolescents in Israel", seeks to examine how students attending a religious Zionist girls' high school in Israel interpret—in religious terms—the Holocaust, an event that constitutes a Jewish national trauma. The study focuses on how an examination of aspects of the Holocaust as a Jewish historical event, which constitutes a reality-changing event, can form a basis of religious education. This study was conducted among 24 eleventh graders at a religious girls' high school in Israel. The data was analyzed according to the constant comparative method (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1997). The study examines the issue through the implementation and use of an innovative six-stage structured pedagogical technique called Reflective Culture of Holocaust Remembrance (RCoHR). First, the author explains the theoretical background of the topic, then she describes the research process and findings, and she concludes with an analysis of the pedagogical implications of this method for religious education and how Holocaust education could constitute a reflective means of enrichment for religious education.

Finally, Richard S. Kitchen in his contribution, entitled "Religious education for the Mexican immigrant community in Albuquerque: The vital role of compassion", argues that in the United States, students of color and low-income students have historically been denied access to high-quality educational opportunities in public schools. As a result, he was moved to initiate and direct Escuela Luz del Mundo (ELM), a progressive Christian middle school that served a high poverty, Mexican immigrant community in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. ELM had a unique mission: to glorify God by providing a culturally relevant and affirming, college-preparatory education for the children of first-generation Mexican immigrants. In his chapter, the research literature is reviewed that illustrates the historic legacy in the United States of low-income students and students of color being denied access to high-quality educational opportunities. Qualitative research methodologies, both self-study and narrative inquiry, are used to demonstrate some of the distinguishing

features that made ELM a unique school for the first-generation Mexican immigrants that it served. An extended discussion is provided about lessons learned at ELM, such as the vital role that compassion should play in making schools places where every student is valued.

As can be seen in the outline of the aims and scope of this book, it raises basic fundamental questions which perceive the field of religious education as a quest for new and innovative contexts and landscapes which will enable new insights, research replications, and hopefully provide a source of inspiration for educators across the globe. It does this through the themes discussed above, elaborating on them from a diverse multicultural point of view, and from different geographical settings.

Thus, this book presents studies demonstrating how in different political and cultural contexts, diverse educational systems cope with the current challenges to religion and religious education within contemporary society. Coping strategies are influenced by the different economic, social, and political variables, with the various authors discussing creative solutions to these challenges to enable a meaningful religious education in our contemporary era. The various educational situations discussed in the book are complex and require creative thinking and the implementation of innovative pedagogies to meet the new challenges that religion and religious education face in today's societies. The chapters in this book examine this issue within the framework of the four major themes which together provide a holistic picture of new trends and innovative understandings of how Religious Education can move forward into the future.

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Part I
The Ongoing Debate: Enhancement of Worldviews and Life Orientation in Religious Education

Chapter 2
The Study of Religious and Worldview Diversity in Public Schools: Contributions from the Council of Europe

Robert Jackson

Abstract This chapter outlines some issues in incorporating the study of religions, together with non-religious worldviews, into the curricula of publicly funded schools in Western democratic states. Attention is given to examples from work on this topic conducted within the Council of Europe since 2002, with a particular focus on *Signposts: Policy and Practice for Teaching about Religions and Nonreligious Worldviews in Intercultural Education*, a text published by the Council of Europe in 2014. *Signposts* is designed to assist policymakers and practitioners in interpreting and applying ideas from the 2008 Recommendation from the Committee of Ministers (the Foreign Ministers of the 47 member states) dealing with education about religions and non-religious convictions. Various issues raised by the *Signposts* document are considered. Towards the end of the article, recent UK and Council of Europe policies which emphasise the study of religions and beliefs as a means to counter-extremism, and which have appeared since the publication of *Signposts*, are summarised and discussed critically. Attention is drawn to the dangers of certain policies and also to the plurality of aims that studies of religions and non-religious worldviews need to have in providing a balanced educational programme. Finally, the work of the *Signposts* International Research Network is introduced.

Keywords Signposts · Religious education · Intercultural education · Council of Europe · Public schools · Secularisation · Pluralisation

2.1 Introduction

The factors of secularisation, pluralisation, and globalisation have precipitated discussion about the place of religion in publicly funded schools, leading to developments in educational policy in the political systems of various European countries.

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Books on religious education in Western Europe (Rothgangel et al., 2014), Northern Europe (Rothgangel et al., 2014) and Central Europe (Rothgangel et al., 2015) illustrate the variety of education systems and approaches to religious education in various different parts of the continent, but all show the influence of religious diversity upon policy. A further influence for change results from the debate about the place of religion in the public sphere in democracies (e.g., Habermas, 2006), which brought about a change in Council of Europe policy, resulting in new work on the study of religion in public education from 2002 (Council of Europe, 2004, 2008a; Keast, 2007). A 2014 Council of Europe publication, *Signposts: Policy and Practice for Teaching about Religions and Nonreligious Worldviews in Intercultural Education* (Jackson, 2014a), acknowledges these changes and considers issues in developing policy and practice in this field as part of public education across Europe. A special issue of the journal *Intercultural Education*, published online in 2018, reports a series of research studies by members of the *Signposts* International Research Network which were prompted by topics identified in *Signposts* as requiring further research (Bråten & Everington, 2018; Britton & Jørgensen, 2018; Flensner & Lippe, 2018; Johannessen & Skeie, 2018; see also O'Grady & Jackson, 2019). In parallel with this activity, a team of European teachers and teacher educators, co-ordinated by the Council of Europe's European Wergeland Centre, produced a freely available teacher training module based on *Signposts* European Wergeland Centre, 2019.

With regard to secularisation, in England, for example, it was reflected in changing attitudes of young people in schools, and research carried out in the 1960s showed that traditional Biblical studies were considered by many older secondary school students to have limited relevance to their personal lives (Loukes, 1965) or sometimes included a form of Christian nurture which lacked breadth and opportunities for critical discussion (Cox, 1967).

Pluralisation through migration, especially since the 1960s, led many educators to change the focus of studies of religion in fully state-funded schools from a form of single faith religious teaching to a 'non-confessional', inclusive, multi-faith approach, including learning *about* the religions of relatively newly established minorities such as Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims as well as about Christianity and Judaism (Jackson, 2019a, 2019b).

Theory and methodology from university-based Religious Studies, which drew upon the phenomenology of religion to offer an impartial and objective approach which acknowledged increasing secularity and plurality, were influential from the early 1970s. A key source in the early stages of change was the global perspective of Ninian Smart (e.g., Smart, 1968, 1969) and the project on religious education that he led at the University of Lancaster (Schools Council, 1971). However, the relationship between Smart's theory and methodology to policy and to general practice in schools is difficult to determine (Bråten, 2013). More 'bottom-up' developments reflecting the increasingly multi-religious and multicultural nature of British society, as experienced by students and teachers in schools, also helped to bring about change in schools (Cole, 1972; Jackson, 2019b). With regard to fully state-funded schools

(as distinct from schools with a religious affiliation that received state funding), the changes that appeared 'bottom-up' during the 1960s and 1970s were recognised in law in the 1988 Education Reform Act (Dinham & Jackson, 2012; Gates & Jackson, 2014).

2.2 The Council of Europe

While policymakers and educators in various individual states have addressed similar issues in their own contexts, some international institutions have become increasingly concerned with teaching and learning about religions and non-religious worldviews internationally, regarding this educational activity as highly desirable within schools in democratic societies. For example, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) produced the *Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools* (Jackson, 2008; Organisation for security and Co-operation in Europe, 2007). Another initiative is the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations programme, which encourages education about religions and beliefs globally through its Education about Religions and Beliefs website (http://erb.unaoc.org).

More extensive than the work of the OSCE and the UN in this field is that of the Council of Europe. Since 2002, the Council of Europe has given attention to education about religions (and also, since 2008, non-religious convictions) in public schools across Europe. The earlier view of excluding the study of religions in public education—because religion was felt to belong only to the private sphere—was reconsidered. The events of September 11, 2001 in the USA were an impetus for change (Jackson, 2010, 2019a, 2019b).

The Council of Europe was established in 1949, about a year after the publication of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Based in Strasbourg, France, the Council of Europe aims to protect human rights, pluralist democracy, and the rule of law and to seek solutions to social problems, such as xenophobia and discrimination against minorities. It also aims to promote awareness and development of Europe's cultural identity and diversity. Thus, there is an intention to develop across Europe a common commitment to the values expressed in the human rights codes—especially the value of human dignity—while at the same time respecting and valuing Europe's cultural and religious diversity as well as the traditions of each member state. There is a creative tension between a common approach to human rights and an acknowledgement of European diversity.

The Council of Europe integrates political activity with projects undertaken within the Council's directorates. Educational projects are conducted within the Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation, which is part of the Directorate General (DGII) of Democracy. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe consists of members of the national parliaments of member states, not members of the European Parliament. The Committee of Ministers is made up of the Foreign Ministers of

the member states. Periodically, the Committee of Ministers makes Recommendations to member states based on Council of Europe projects. These Recommendations are not legally binding in member states, but are intended as tools for use in policy development at a national level.

The Council of Europe's educational work at the school level focuses on the related areas of human rights education, education for democratic citizenship, and intercultural education. Cutting across these are themes such as language, history, and now religion and belief. Thus, the basic rationale for including religion in the Council of Europe's educational work relates to human rights, citizenship, and intercultural education. However, aims related to the personal development of students and to the intrinsic value of a broadly based liberal education are also included. The term 'religious education' is not used in the Council of Europe documents, mainly because of its ambiguity. It can be used to describe forms of initiation into what we might call '*religious understanding*', through learning and religious practice. Sometimes the terms 'religious instruction' and 'religious nurture' are used for these processes. However, 'religious education' often refers to the promotion of an inclusive, general public understanding of religion or religions—what might be termed '*understanding religion(s)*'. Terms such as 'inclusive religious education' (Jackson, 2014b) or 'integrative religious education' (Alberts, 2007) are used in this way. The American Academy of Religion uses the term 'religion education' to refer to an inclusive education about religions (American Academy of Religion, 2010). The Council of Europe documents prefer to use expressions such as 'the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue' or 'the dimension of religions within intercultural education', in order to avoid ambiguity. This usage has no intention to *reduce* religion to culture.

2.3 Towards the 2008 Council of Europe Recommendation

In 2002, the Council of Europe launched a major project on the study of religions as part of intercultural education, entitled 'The Challenge of Intercultural Education Today: Religious Diversity and Dialogue in Europe'. There were several outputs, including a book based on the papers from a conference held in Oslo (Council of Europe, 2004) and a reference book for schools across Europe (Keast, 2007). The project influenced the Year of Intercultural Dialogue and the *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* (Council of Europe, 2008b). However, most importantly, the Committee of Ministers—the Foreign Ministers of all 47 member states—agreed, in 2008, a policy recommendation on the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education. The Recommendation (Council of Europe, 2008a) was circulated to all member states.

The Recommendation provides guidance on education about religions and 'non-religious convictions' in the context of intercultural education. This form of education is different from types of religious education which aim *specifically* to nurture children and young people in a particular faith tradition. However, the form of 'open'

intercultural education suggested in the Recommendation is, in principle, complementary to many forms of outward-looking faith-based education (Jackson, 2014b). The Recommendation acknowledges diversity at local, regional, and international levels and encourages connections to be made between 'local' and 'global', the exploration of issues concerning religion and identity, and the development of positive relations with parents and religious communities, as well as organisations related to non-religious philosophies such as secular humanism. The intention is to introduce young people to a variety of positions in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance, within the 'safe space' of the classroom.

The selection of specific subject content needs to relate to context. There is an emphasis on competence for understanding a variety of religions and worldviews, including well-selected information, plus the development of skills and attitudes to facilitate intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. The aim is to provide knowledge as well as encourage reciprocity, sensitivity, and empathy and to combat prejudice, intolerance, bigotry, and racism. Students are encouraged to engage in dialogue and discussion managed by teachers equipped with specialist knowledge and skills. Teaching and learning methods are recommended. Illustrative examples include interpretive (Jackson, 1997, 2004, 2009, 2011b, 2011c, 2019a, 2019b; Miller et al., 2013) and dialogical approaches (Ipgrave, 2013; Leganger-Krogstad, 2011), which are 'open', 'inclusive', and 'impartial' and which acknowledge the varied backgrounds of participants. The Recommendation acknowledges that such provision needs to be supported by high-quality teacher training, good-quality resources, and on-going research and evaluation.

While having clear goals, sensitivity is expressed to the educational systems and practices in operation in member states. The Recommendation is offered as an adaptable discussion text, noting that different approaches would be needed with young people of different ages, taking 'into account the age and maturity of pupils to whom it is addressed'.

2.4 The Development of *Signposts*

To maximise discussion and action in member states in relation to the Council of Europe Recommendation, the Council of Europe and the European Wergeland Centre established a joint committee in 2009 to work on ways of helping policymakers and practitioners in member states to discuss and apply ideas in their own national setting. The committee included specialists in religious education and in religion in the context of intercultural education from a variety of European countries. They were not representing specific states, but they offered a variety of expertise which could be pooled. The committee designed and distributed a questionnaire to members of the Education Committee of the Council of Europe, based in each of the 47 member states, asking respondents to identify difficulties they felt they would have in applying the Council of Europe Recommendation in their own specific national settings.

An analysis of the questionnaire responses identified various issues which were common to many member states. These included the following:

- ambiguity and lack of clarity in terminology associated with teaching about religions and beliefs;
- a need to understand the component elements of ‘competence’ for understanding religions;
- how to make the classroom a ‘safe space’ for discussion and dialogue by students;
- how to help students to analyse representations of religions in the media;
- how to integrate a study of non-religious convictions and worldviews with the study of religions;
- how to tackle human rights issues in relation to religion and belief in schools and classrooms;
- and how to link schools to wider communities and organisations, with the goal of increasing students’ knowledge about and understanding of religions and non-religious philosophies, such as secular humanism.

After much deliberation by the joint committee, it was decided to produce a book, written primarily for policymakers and practitioners, which would explore aspects of the Recommendation in relation to the issues identified above raised by respondents to the questionnaire. The present author was given the task of writing the book on behalf of the committee, drawing on relevant European and other international research, as well as giving concrete examples of the experience of dealing with some of the issues in various education systems (Jackson, 2014a).

2.5 Using REDCo Research

Various research reports from the ‘Religion, Education, Dialogue, and Conflict’ Project (REDCo), sponsored by the European Commission, were very useful in illustrating topics such as facilitating civil dialogue in the classroom, establishing classrooms as ‘safe spaces’ for dialogue, and helping young people to analyse media representations of religions (Knauth et al., 2008; Avest et al., 2009; Valk et al., 2009).

With regard to linking personal concerns and social issues, REDCo research with 14–16-year olds in eight European countries (England, Estonia, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, the Russian Federation, and Spain) showed support from young people for education about religious diversity. The research demonstrates that studies of religious diversity are not erosive of students’ own commitments, but can help to develop a culture of ‘living together’. The majority of 14–16-year-old young people surveyed wanted opportunities to learn about and from one another’s religious perspectives in the ‘safe space’ of the classroom, with teachers providing knowledge and understanding as well as facilitating dialogue (Jackson, 2012; Knauth et al., 2008; Avest et al., 2009; Valk et al., 2009). Thus, studies of religions can contribute

to broader fields such as intercultural education and education for democratic citizenship, as well as contribute to students' personal development and their religious literacy.

The REDCo research shows young people who want an opportunity to learn and talk about religion in schools. They see the classroom (not family or peer group) as the only likely potential 'safe space' for this to happen, and they appreciate teachers with skills *both* to provide accurate information and to manage discussions which include differences in viewpoint. For example, Fedor Kozyrev, working in St Petersburg schools, highlights the importance of the teacher's adaptability in addressing issues of conflict through dialogue, emphasising the importance of the relationship between teacher and students, established over time (Kozyrev, 2009). Marie von der Lippe's research in Norwegian schools shows how conflict can be generated by some media representations of religious material, and she suggests ways of dealing with this in class (Lippe, 2009, 2010). Drawing on research in Hamburg schools, Thorsten Knauth demonstrates the importance of the teacher's awareness of the dynamics of classroom interaction between conservative Muslim students and more liberal Muslim peers influenced by values and attitudes from general youth culture. Knauth discusses how such conflicts can be addressed, illustrating how well-managed classroom dialogue provided an opportunity for pupils to test and challenge their ideas (Knauth, 2009). These examples illustrate that it is possible to provide a 'safe space' for civil exchange in which issues can be discussed and in which the expression and acceptance of difference are accommodated. Olga Schihalejev, in reporting her classroom interaction research in Estonia notes that 'If the student recognises that security is available and trust has been built up, he or she will risk entering into conflict or vulnerable areas rather than avoiding them or utilising uncontrolled ways to deal with them' (Schihalejev, 2010, p. 177). All of this research shows that moderated, civil dialogue on topics concerned with religion, including issues of conflict, can be conducted effectively in classrooms.

In addition to REDCo studies, other European research used in *Signposts* illustrates a number of themes, such as providing examples of how schools can build educational links with religious and other communities, including the organisation of visits to religious buildings, and the role of members of religious and belief groups in giving moderated talks about their communities in schools, in which the role of the speaker is to inform (often through personal stories) and not to proselytise.

2.6 *Signposts* as a Discussion Tool

Signposts is a discussion document, written to assist practitioners and policymakers from member states (or indeed other countries) in their thinking and action in relation to their own historical and cultural context. It is concerned with increasing 'religious literacy' for the whole population—increasing tolerance, and opening up the possibility of showing respect towards others' views. The Council of Europe's specific view of 'religious literacy' implies a general understanding of religious language

and practice, open to everyone, which can result from learning about religions (see also American Academy of Religion, 2010; Moore, 2007).

Signposts acknowledges and advocates the importance of learning about the internal diversity of religions, as well as gaining a sense of religions as distinct phenomena. It is concerned with helping learners to understand religions, but recognises that this needs to be developed in some very different educational contexts. It is clear that, in order to achieve the goals set out in *Signposts*, specialist teachers are needed who could also assist with the training and professional development of other teachers. The next section of the chapter considers a selection of issues covered in or raised by *Signposts.*

2.7 Representing Religious and Cultural Plurality

Signposts takes the view that representing religions as entirely homogeneous systems of belief tends to produce oversimplified, stereotypical accounts which often do not correspond to the experience of believers and practitioners (e.g., Flood, 1999; Jackson, 1997). The internal diversity of religions is acknowledged, and they can be pictured organically, for example, in terms of a relationship between individuals, particular groups, and wider religious traditions. It is acknowledged that the study of individuals, in relation to the various groups with which they are associated, can inform an emerging understanding of a particular religion. At the same time, key concepts from a particular religion can be exemplified and enlivened through the consideration of particular examples of religious faith and practice. This does not imply that religions cannot be thought of, in some contexts, as 'wholes'. Looking at the interplay between individuals, groups, and broad traditions shows the complexity of representing religions, as well as bringing them to life, and also demonstrates how individuals relate to or fit into particular groups and specific religions. This approach also can help students and teachers to understand why a religion, as practised, for example, by a student in a class, might be different in various ways from the generic representation of that religion in a school textbook.

Signposts acknowledges terminological issues and provides ideas for addressing them. With regard to issues relating to cultural plurality, there has been much debate around terms such as 'multicultural' and 'intercultural'. Some writing in the field of religions and education has worked with sophisticated formulations of multiculturalist theory, drawing on empirical research dealing with the interaction of what Gerd Baumann called 'dominant' and 'demotic' discourses (Baumann, 1999). 'Dominant discourse' assumes the existence of distinct and separate cultures living side-by-side, often perceived as closed systems, with a fixed understanding of ethnicity. 'Demotic discourse', however, recognises 'internal diversity' of cultures (sometimes giving rise to conflict), the reality and significance of cultural fusion, the formation of a new culture, inter-generational differences, and the emergence of new fundamentalisms (Jackson, 2004). Baumann's empirical research detected *both* forms of discourse in different contexts.

However, the rejection of multiculturalism through its identification *only* with 'dominant' discourse has been common among European politicians (e.g., Cameron, 2011; replied to in Jackson, 2011a). This view of multiculturalism, with its emphasis on discrete cultures, allows 'other cultures' to be perceived as rivals to the national culture. Such a one-sided representation has resulted in derogatory uses of the term 'multicultural' and avoidance of the term in some official documents, such as the final report of the UK Commission on Integration and Cohesion (Commission on Integration & Cohesion, 2007). The Council of Europe prefers to use the term 'intercultural', with its connotations of cultural interaction and dialogue (e.g., Barrett, 2013), and regards inclusive education about religions and non-religious convictions as a subset of intercultural education (Council of Europe, 2008a; Jackson, 2014a, 2019a, 2019b). Some writers prefer to use the term 'diversity', rather than multiculturalism. For example, in his work on 'super-diversity' Steven Vertovec analyses the complexity and changing character of cultural and religious diversity in the light of global, regional, and local factors and their relationship over time (Vertovec, 2006). This, of course, includes the emergence of so-called 'radicalised' Islam in various European contexts.

2.8 Religions and Non-religious Convictions

With regard to 'pluralisation', there is an argument that an inclusive school subject should cover non-religious philosophies as well as religions. This view was taken by the Council of Europe in its Recommendation of 2008 (Jackson, 2014a) and by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe in its *Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools* (Organisation for security and Co-operation in Europe, 2007). In both cases, the argument for extending the range of 'inclusive education about religions' relates to the human rights principle of freedom of religion and belief ('belief' encompassing non-religious convictions). *Signposts* acknowledges the importance of debate on the topic within member states. In clarifying the ground to be discussed, *Signposts* makes a distinction between *organised* worldviews, such as religions and secular humanism, and *personal* worldviews of individuals. Research shows the latter often to be unconventional (e.g., Wallis, 2014). Personal worldviews might mirror particular religions or secular humanism, but are often more eclectic, for example, combining elements of more than one religion, or features of one or more religions and Humanism (Jackson, 2014a). Some would argue that the school should provide opportunities for the exploration of personal as well as organised worldviews.

Signposts includes discussions of various other matters, such as human rights issues, and analysing media representations of religions, and invites readers to use the document in order to further discussion and action with regard to policy and practice in their own contexts.

2.9 Education and Extremism

As noted above, the events of September 11, 2001 in the United States were a *catalyst* for the Council of Europe's inclusion of studies of religions in intercultural education, but did not provide the total rationale for developments in the field. However, the climate has been changing for some time, and now a key political issue for many European democracies is the 'radicalisation', and the extreme acts, of a small minority of people—including some young people—who, often, have been born and have grown up in those countries. For example, these might be individuals who have been prepared to commit acts of extreme violence on the basis of far right political views, as in the Breivik case in Norway (Anker & Lippe, 2015), or might be from a small minority of young Muslims prepared to adopt an extremist position, supporting or committing acts of violence in their own country, or leaving home to join an extremist group in another country. The dreadful atrocities committed in Paris on November 13, 2015 and March 15, 2019, in Christchurch, New Zealand, are vivid examples of such extremism. Thus, political attention to education, especially education concerning religions, has tended to become more immediately focused on countering extremism than on wider goals.

To take one example, in the United Kingdom, extremist activity led to the 'Prevent' strategy, which was initiated under the Labour Government, was revamped by the Coalition Government in 2011, as part of its overall counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST), and continues as part of present Conservative Government policy at the time of writing (April 2019). 'Prevent' focuses on responding to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat from those who promote it; preventing people from being drawn into terrorism and ensuring that they are given appropriate advice and support; and working with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that need to be addressed (retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-strategy-2011).

New legislation was introduced in 2015 through the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015). The introduction of Part 5 of this Act gives the 'Prevent' strategy legal status in schools and colleges in England and Wales, which are now obliged by statute 'to have due regard' to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Non-statutory advice to schools, published by the Department for Education in July 2015 (UK Government, 2015), explains the counter-extremism requirements, in relation to primary and secondary, state and independent schools, and includes warnings against 'non-violent extremism', and a requirement for staff to report concerns, normally through the school's safeguarding procedures; however, the option of contacting local police in order to discuss concerns is also available (UK Government, 2015). Research in the UK illustrating the negative impact of the Prevent policy on classroom religious education is reported by Anna Lockley Scott (Lockley-Scott, 2018).

2.10 Council of Europe Declaration and Action Plan

At a European level, to take another example, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, in May 2015, issued a Declaration against Violent Extremism and Radicalisation Leading to Terrorism (Council of Europe, 2015a) together with an associated Action Plan (Council of Europe, 2015b). In these documents, guiding principles on how to combat terrorism while respecting the rule of law and fundamental freedoms are provided by the European Convention on Human Rights and the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. The Action Plan includes strategies to prevent and fight radicalisation, including in schools and on the Internet. The emphasis in educational policy is on developing competences required for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue. The work already done within the Council of Europe on education about religious diversity, intercultural education, human rights, and citizenship education is deemed highly relevant to the Action Plan. There will be an emphasis on 'initiatives to combat stereotyping and discrimination, to support inclusion strategies at the local level, to build trust among citizens across social and cultural differences, and to support intercultural communication and skills' (Council of Europe, 2015b).

The Council of Europe's approach to dealing with extremism in an educational context refers to democracy and human rights values, referring back to the human rights codes rather than associating such values with particular national traditions. The Council of Europe Declaration states:

> We are in particular convinced that education for democracy and the building of more inclusive societies are vital components of the democratic response that we must give to the upsurge in violent extremism. Restoring trust and promoting 'better living together' are challenges vital to the future of our societies. (Council of Europe, 2015a)

There is a positive emphasis on learning to live together within societies that are inclusive, rather than a preoccupation with identifying remarks and actions that could be considered as potentially extremist. *Signposts* is specifically mentioned as being highly relevant to helping to develop appropriate educational strategies, with the goal of 'Building Inclusive Societies': 'The Council of Europe publication *Signposts*, based on Recommendation CM/Rec (2008) 12, will be widely disseminated' (Council of Europe, 2015b).

Two issues, in particular, emerge from the policy developments outlined above that have particular relevance to religious and worldview education. The first is that there is a tendency for anti-extremism to become the main aim for studying religions, thereby excessively influencing the selection of content. The second is a view of anti-extremism which potentially, and inadvertently, undermines the 'democratic' justification that it claims to uphold.

With regard to addressing the first issue, it is important to combine liberal education with instrumental personal and social reasons for learning about religions. Such a broadly based representation of religions, which acknowledges their different

dimensions and their internal diversity, should encourage and inform civil classroom dialogue based on agreed ground rules, rather than focusing on extremism. This approach is consistent with the Council of Europe Action Plan.

With regard to the second issue, there is inevitably some degree of tension between democratic or human rights principles and some religious (and related cultural) positions. In current UK policy, which uses so-called 'British values' to support national and international security, there is a danger of slippage towards authoritarianism, and of inappropriate and potentially counter-productive actions and interpretations of policies. An appropriate way forward would be to support a more nuanced form of 'dialogical liberalism', which seeks a greater degree of dialogue between values as expressed in the human rights codes, and values that are rooted in particular religious and cultural contexts, than is to be found in some of the rhetoric of the UK Government (discussed in Jackson, 2019a).

Given the increasing need for close political attention to anti-extremism, it is important, from an educational point of view, to remember that 'social instrumental' aims provide only one set of reasons for studying religions and beliefs in schools, and that anti-extremism is but one of a variety of social arguments for such study. As noted earlier, there is also a strong case for including religions and beliefs as an intrinsic element of liberal education, and for regarding education about religions and beliefs as also highly relevant to students' personal development. For example, a political focus on questions of extremism should not stultify the study of and reflection on the spiritual dimension of religions as one means to understanding and appreciating the life views of religious people (see, for example, Gent, 2005, 2013). Equally, policies which inhibit the kind of moderated classroom dialogue, favoured by so many young people who participated in the European Commission REDCo project, and supported enequivocally by the Council of Europe 2008 Recommendation, should be held up to close critical scrutiny.

It is worth reporting a number of recurring views which have been expressed in discussions of *Signposts* with teachers, teacher education students, teacher trainers, academics, and policymakers in various European countries, and which reflect their knowledge and experience:

- The provision of accurate, nuanced knowledge about the religions is a necessary condition for religious literacy; thus, university courses in religious studies that provide this, together with skills for extending knowledge and understanding of religions, and for inter-religious and intercultural dialogue, are important for the preparation of specialist teachers;
- Findings of relevant empirical research concerned with teaching about religions and non-religious convictions need to be translated into information that is available to and usable by teachers, policymakers, and other professionals;
- Accounts of religious belief and non-belief need to reflect the diversity of personal worldviews 'on the ground', in addition to descriptions of 'organised' worldviews;
- Specialists in this field need to be enabled to support non-specialists and to participate in interdisciplinary approaches;

- Teachers need skills to initiate and facilitate moderated dialogue and exchange between students, based on agreed ground rules, in addition to having access to high-quality information;
- Whole-school policies and practices are needed to support and sustain the general approach recommended in *Signposts*;
- Adequate financial resources are needed to implement the approach recommended in *Signposts*.

2.11 Signposts International Research Network (SIRN)

Issues identified in *Signposts* requiring further research have been taken up by members of the *Signposts* International Research Network (SIRN). This is a group of European researchers and curriculum developers concerned to improve the quality of religious and worldview education in schools, who are engaging in independent research projects, but whose work also addresses issues identified by education ministries in Council of Europe member states, and reported in *Signposts* (Jackson, 2014a, 2014b) (http://www.theewc.org/Content/What-we-do/Other-ongoing-projects/Signposts-International-Research-Network-SIRN). SIRN currently includes researchers from the UK, Sweden, and Norway who are conducting school-based research projects on classroom religious and worldview education and others who are engaged in curriculum development related to such research. The curriculum developers include colleagues based at the European Wergeland Centre in Oslo who have produced a teacher training module.

Members of the Network have produced a special issue of the journal *Intercultural Education*, reporting research studies following up issues identified by European respondents to a questionnaire distributed across Council of Europe member states. These include topics such as the relationship between religious education and intercultural education (Johannessen & Skeie, 2018); the integration of religious education and worldviews education (Bråten & Everington, 2018); creating 'safe space' for dialogue in the classroom (Flensner & Lippe, 2018); the various ways in which religions are represented during field visits (Britton & Jørgensen, 2018); and the relationship between Islamic nurture and religious education about Islam (Berglund & Gent, 2018). Research by members of the network is continuing, including collaborative research with teachers on their own practice of religious education (e.g., O'Grady & Jackson, 2019). Research findings from members of SIRN will continue to be disseminated to serving teachers. Thus, although the Council of Europe, at the time of writing, does not have a project relating specifically to religions and education, publications developing its earlier work continue to appear.

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Chapter 3
'Playful Searching Truth': An Exploration of the Role of 'Life Orientation' in a Plural World

K. H. Ina ter Avest

Abstract In these days of secularisation, and of loosely dropped 'alternative facts', a pivotal quality in the process of authentic life orientation development is the capacity of critical reading and an attitude of not letting oneself be taken for a ride by firmly stated opinions or truth claims. In this contribution, we show how teachers in different (cultural and religious) educational contexts facilitate and stimulate their students' critical and contextual reading of sacred scriptures—both from their own and others' tradition(s)—through their pedagogical objectives and didactical strategies. After presenting our interpretation of secularisation, three examples of 'good practice' are introduced: originating from South Korea, the Netherlands, and Scotland. Teachers exhibit different rationales in their development of lessons and core activities that facilitate and stimulate students' religious identity development. More research is needed on the development of RE teachers' rationales in the context of the society they prepare their students for, aiming at their critical contribution and participation as responsible citizens with their own authentic life orientation.

Keywords Identity development · Authenticity · Critical reading · Teacher rationales · RE classes

3.1 Introduction

In her publication *'Het best verkochte boek ooit (met deze titel)'* ('The Best-Selling Book Ever (With This Title)'), the Dutch journalist Blauw (2019) gives a few hints and tips on what to do and what not to do in a world dominated by news that casts doubts on the news itself (Blauw, 2019). The subtitle of her book—'how figures lead, seduce and mislead us'—betrays her profession: Blauw is an econometrist, in love with figures and even more so with the world behind figures. Do not trust them these figures, this fake news! In a sweeping argumentation, she convinces her readers to, instead of focusing on figures, practice the competence of critical thinking and focus

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on their own positionality regarding the topics at stake. Do not trust them, these figures, and distrust them in a systematic way, is her advice, which she presents in six hints. To begin with, always check who vouches for the figures—if no account is given, forget the article, do not read it at all, let alone put any faith in what is written (in case you could not resist reading it!). Imagine a politician quoting statistics that so and so many people witnessed the historic moment of his inauguration, and thereby signalled their agreement with his policy: then promptly look for additional information about this 'historic' moment, the number of people in the crowd, and the interpretation of their presence as a sign of agreement with the politician's policy. Explore your own feelings when reading these figures—do they make you happy, angry, or sad? Notice your emotions, and search for news about the issue at stake that takes different perspectives. What sort of moral choices did the researchers make by measuring 'agreement'? Look for articles that measure 'agreement' in a different way. How were the data underlying the statistics constructed in the first place? Were there any leading questions in the questionnaire? Or any questions that pressed for socially acceptable answers? In case the group of respondents was sampled from a very specific group of people (college students, members of the Republican Party, members of an orthodox Christian community), then be aware that the research findings are only valid for the population segment that participated. In case the figures show a causal relationship, check whether other factors might be influencing the result, for instance, whether it is not simply a matter of chance, and last but not least, check whether the causality might also run the other way around. In conclusion, Blauw's advice is: do not allow yourself to be taken for a ride by a make-belief sense of certainty created by figures!

While all these hints play an important role in teaching and learning 'critical thinking', especially those related to critically weighing statistics in the (fake) news, one of the hints Blauw gives refers to the exploration of one's feelings, especially gut feelings; gut feelings, which sneakily may be(come) an essential but subconscious part of one's positioning in life, one's life orientation.

The subject of this contribution is authentic autonomous (religious or secular) life orientation development in an era that Taylor (2007) coined 'a secular age', and Bauman (2000) characterised as 'liquid times'. An era that, in the future, might also be referred to as an age in which the concept of ultimate truth is under fire and contested (see also Astley et al., 2011).

In our first paragraph, we start with a description of the secularisation process, a process that involves the growth of a plurality of (sub-)cultures—and subsequently a diversity of religious and non-religious life orientations—as well as the phenomenon that truth claims become unsettled, 'in the air'. Then, in our second paragraph, we sketch different pedagogical strategies for teaching and learning 'life orientation', in a world, in schools and classrooms characterised by plurality. The classroom as a safe space is preconditional for these education processes.

This is followed by a third paragraph in which three examples of 'good practice' are introduced: in these, the need for a dialogue with theology, the perspective of orthodox Christian schools, and the perspective of students in a plural context are outlined. These examples represent different ways in which scholars in (religious)

worldview/life orientation education are searching for innovative teaching methods, to respond to a situation of secularisation and plurality in an era in which all ultimate truth claims are under fire. These examples are reflected in a fourth paragraph, in which we draw on the hints provided by Blauw. We ask the question: how does RE in the given examples contribute to students' critical thinking and, by doing so, prevents them from being led astray by figures quoted in (fake) news—in this era when everything is put into perspective? We conclude our contribution in a fifth paragraph, which contains recommendations for the improvement of teaching and learning in diversity—for 'a playful searching for truth'.

3.2 Secularisation

Secularisation, in the history of religions, is very often interpreted as an ongoing process of decline in active participation in religious communities, and in church/mosque/temple attendance (Paul, 2017; Taylor, 2007, p. 505 ff). Scholars in sociology of religion refer in particular to the decline of the influence of institutionalised religion in the public domain. However, secularisation does not only refer to the decrease in people that attend the church/mosque/temple—which is the focus of quantitative research in sociology of religion—nor does it merely mean that religious symbols—as an expression of the strong relationship between institutionalised religion and the public domain—disappear (cf. Berger, 1967).

Since the publication of Berger (1967) 'The Sacred Canopy', 'secularisation' has become an evaluative concept. For some people, secularisation has become associated with a highly valued liberation of modern men and women from the paternalistic power of religion in regard to a person's positioning in the world. In Berger's view, secularisation is related to all aspects of a culture—and to all cultures, not just western cultures. In 1967, Berger was of the firm opinion that religions all over the world would become shaped by processes of secularisation, polarisation and subjectification, and by which religious institutions would (have to) respond to these processes (ibid., p. 189; see also Taylor, 2003a, 2003b).

In 2007, forty years after Berger published his sociological perspective on the development of the Christian religious tradition in Western countries, Charles Taylor presented his own view in 'A Secular Age'. Taylor's focus is not on institutionalised religion and its decline—as in Berger's 'The Sacred Canopy'—but on religious experiences in modern people's lives. In a previously published booklet of only about a hundred pages, *'Wat betekent religie vandaag?'* ('What Is the Meaning of Religion Today?'), he acknowledges that the language people use to express their religious experience is necessarily one that is embedded in a linguistic (religious) community (Taylor, 2003a, 2003b, p. 11). At the same time, it is the individual's own way of thinking that is the starting point for religious experience (ibid., p. 12). Taylor points to the 'phenomenon of a collective religious life, which is not only the result of (individual) religious relations, but to a certain extent is constitutive for individual religious experience' (ibid., p. 37) and subsequently for a shared language.

The development of individual religiosity cannot take place without a minimum of accepted and verbally and non-verbally expressed forms of religiosity in a faith community, and in society (cf. Wright, 2006). After all, 'There is *something* people have faith in, there is *something* people pin their hopes on' (Taylor, 2003a, 2003b, p. 39). Religious communities provide narratives, symbols, rituals and ceremonies for the expression of such profound and moving experiences. According to Taylor, the decline of religion in its institutionalised form as a guaranteed order of the truth in the public domain—Taylor even speaks of religion as 'the soul of society' (Taylor, 2003a, 2003b, p. 15; see also Vroom, 1996)—is accompanied by the risk that the antipole in the dichotomy of 'good and evil' will disappear, which opens a clear field for evil. The rise of moralism, in his view, can be seen as a defence mechanism against the omnipresence of evil in modern times (Taylor, 2003a, 2003b, p. 49). The same holds for the rise of radical populism, as a way out of the inconvenient plurality of beliefs in a secularised world.

These days, religion is not a given anymore, but a choice; a development called 'the subjective turn' (Heelas et al., 2005). People have to find their way in a plurality of truth claims, instead of walking the beaten track as provided by a religious community or a religious or political authority. People finding their own way results in new forms of religiosity, balancing between solitude and solidarity, between believing in an institutionalised context and believing unrelated to religious practices. 'Bricolage' (Levi-Straus, 1962), 'believing without belonging' (Davie, 1994) and 'multiple religious belonging' (Kalsky & Pruim, 2014) are but a few of the concepts describing people's innovative ways to fulfill their need for belonging (Taylor, 2003a, 2003b, pp. 86, 90). Prayer—and in their adapted forms meditation and mindfulness—can be seen as new expressions of spiritual discipline.

Encounters in a plural society between people who adhere to different 'strong evaluations', or organise their lives according to different truth claims, may result in disruptive moments (Ter Avest & McDougall, 2014) that put a finger on the problem of the fragility of a person's self-constructed worldview identity and their personal vulnerability. Taylor points to different strategies people employ in responding to the vulnerability of the new 'post-truth' situation. Some people try to create an alternative safe space—or: alternatives in plural—to the once 'one and only' 'sacred canopy'; 'paradise lost'. Pop festivals, football matches and sports activities seem to be a satisfactory substitute for what religion offered in earlier days.

Underneath the varieties of religious experiences, is the demanding requirement today to be authentic, to be self-directed. That is, to be the architect of your own life and to concretise your humanness in your own way, to make your own moral choices regarding the dilemmas that come with the realisation of a good life. Bauman (2000) coins our era as an age of liquid modernity; an age that moves away from the solid certainties of centuries past. The safe space of the communities people were born in, changed in what Bauman coins as the metaphor of the 'cloak room' communities. This appealing metaphor refers to the cloak room of a theatre: people attend a play, dress accordingly, they enjoy the play, laugh together, join in communal applause. Crucially, at the end of the evening, they leave the theatre, collect their coats from the

cloak room, and the community of theatre-goers disperses (cf Huijer, in: Bauman & Leoncini, 2018, p. 19).

The 'subjective turn' with its focus on self-fulfilment and self-realisation, is high on the agenda in the western world. Self-directedness and the urge to be authentic are often confused with being independent of any authority whatsoever. Becoming, and being yourself, is then interpreted as developing yourself in defiance of all rules and moralities, which are regarded as given from the outside, not responding to one's inner voice. Never, Bauman states, have young people had so little to hold on to in regard to identity and moral development. While in earlier days, positionality in line with the pronouncements of religious communities and the duties of traditional values regarding others dominated a person's identity development; nowadays, tradition is no longer a building block that can be relied on for identity construction. Young people must build their own identity, and develop their own ideas about 'the good life'. Bauman speaks of the 'turistification' of life, a metaphor that ties in with his earlier mentioned metaphor of the 'cloak room' community: people can join in, enjoy, and leave again without any obligations. This entails a severe neglect of the importance of the presence of the other, as the philosopher Beate Rössler points out. In her view, the concept of autonomy must be preceded by the adjective 'relational'—she speaks precisely of relational autonomy in her essay on autonomy (Rössler, 2017).

According to the psychiatrist De Wachter, we live in a 'wow-culture' (2014, p. 22). Every day, we have to live 'in paradise', because we only live once. But, De Wachter argues, in doing so we become estranged from our deepest inner self, our desire for belonging. In his opinion, 'enjoying yourself' has almost become a sacred duty these days. By responding to this societal obligation, we move further and further away from our hearts and run away from our souls (ibid., p. 22). By fulfilling the duty 'to enjoy themselves', people neglect *'la jouissance'*, their ability to have a good time with something small, something invisible, something that goes without saying (De Wachter, 2014, p. 100). To engage in *'jouissance'*, according to De Wachter, an interruption in the stream of everyday commotion is required: silence. A silence that is more than the absence of noise. Such silence, according to De Wachter, is a way to experience and embrace the good life (ibid., p. 86). Silence as a part of religious literacy.

Where Taylor describes secularisation as an inevitable and ongoing process, a surprisingly different perspective is taken by the Dutch historian Herman Paul. Paul (2017) is of the opinion that secularisation is not an inescapable process, but an interpretive framework. In his publication *'Secularisatie, een kleine geschiedenis van een groot verhaal'* ('Secularisation, a Brief History of a Grand Narrative'), he points to the fact that we should make a clear distinction between 'secularisation' and 'secularism'—with the latter understood by Paul as a closed, unconscious conviction that is in conflict with religious traditions. Whereas in Berger's and Taylor's view, secularisation is a process in itself, involving people while leaving them unable to resist, in Paul's view, it is the other way around. Things happen to happen in history and people—in need of a frame of reference—constructed the discourse of secularisation in response. According to Paul, people 'invented' the secularisation thesis for their own relief, in need 'of a script' (Paul, 2017, p. 18). 'Secularisation is

not a fact but a frame of interpretation', he states (ibid., p. 23). Secularisation is not the fact of a decline in visitors to church ceremonies, but a narrative people tell each other to make this fact understandable and acceptable. Paul is of the opinion that fact and narrative are closely related here. Looking back, (grand) narratives serve as justification; thinking ahead they serve as an inspiration and motivation. In the following paragraphs, we explore how narratives from religious traditions motivate people to face the newest technological developments, and the resulting ethical and moral dilemmas in plural societies, in a post-truth era. But first, we describe how (re)presentation of religious traditions takes place in different ways in RE.

3.3 Teaching and Learning Life Orientation in the Plural Classroom

In the 1980s, Grimmit (1987) presented his views on RE in the publication *'Religious Education and Human Development: The Relationship Between Studying Religions and Personal, Social and Moral Education'*. In this publication, he introduced the concepts of 'teaching and learning in', 'about' and 'from' religion. In the following years, 'teaching and learning in' was understood by religious educators as the educational process of socialisation in a religious tradition. 'Teaching and learning about' has become a concept referring to the transmission of knowledge/facts about religion(s). In referring to 'teaching and learning from', Grimmitt points to a transformation process, a process that facilitates students to compare traditions, to come to a better understanding of their own and others' religions, and possibly enables them to incorporate aspects of other religion(s) into their own religious understanding. While these concepts were initially interpreted as separated from each other, in later years scholars became convinced of their interrelatedness. In the socialisation process, in the family and at home, a certain degree of (experiential) knowledge about the respective tradition is of vital importance. The same holds for the concept of 'teaching and learning from', a process that is impossible without knowing about facts and phenomena of different traditions. In *'Godsdienstpedagogiek'* (Alii, 2009), a handbook for religious educators in the Netherlands, the concept of 'teaching and learning for' religion has been introduced. With this concept, the authors point to the precondition of opening up for 'the other', for 'wonder', for 'being surprised' by something new (Alii, 2009; Ter Avest & McDougal, 2014). This aspect of 'opening up' to the symbolic power of language, is also mentioned as part of the rationale of RE teachers in Dutch secondary education (Den Ouden, 2020, pp. 271–272; see also Den Ouden & Jansen, 2016).

Recently, Roebben (2012), a German theologian, added to these concepts the concept of 'teaching and learning in the presence of the other'. With this concept, he articulates the need for a dialogue with the other, who adheres to a different kind of life orientation. Referring to the plural classroom population, this concept is also called 'inclusive education' (Bartz & Bartz, 2019). Preconditional here is

the classroom as a safe space for all the participants—pupils/students as well as the teacher—to speak out, and to be listened to. A space in which what is called 'deep democracy' can be practiced (Lewis, 2018).

Below we present three RE practices, which take different approaches towards the 'good life'—and the truth claims that go with it—into account.

3.4 Examples of 'Good Practice'

3.4.1 Medical Truths in Dialogue with Theology

The overwhelming technical possibilities developed in the medical sciences to cure and even prevent illnesses altogether, are the starting point for the South Korean theologians Soo-Young Kwon, Nam Hoon Cho and Moon Son to develop what they call 'convergence education of medicine and theology' (CEMT). In a highly interesting article, they discuss a recently developed new type of gene-driven system and the social and ethical problems that come with these kinds of innovative developments (Kwon et al., 2019, pp. 102–118). Their plea is for a moratorium, to create time to reflect on the consequences of this gene-driven technique—and other life-changing developments—from an ethical and religious perspective; a time for reflection created in CEMT.

The approach of Soo-Young Kwon and his colleagues is rooted in the work of the natural sciences and theology scholar Alister E. McGrath, who reflects on the finely tuned nature of the universe from a natural theology perspective (McGrath, 2009, p. ix). As an illustration of his line of thought, McGrath states that the 'existence of stars rests on several delicate balances between the different forces in nature' and so serves as evidence of the fine-tuning of the universe (ibid., p. 103). Although, according to McGrath, there is a close relationship between processes in the universe and the beginning of human life, he does not regard the universe as evidence for the Christian belief in God. In his opinion 'human beings long to make sense of things,' meaning that they desire to understand the structure of nature, find the causes of what happens around them, and 'reflect on the meaning of their lives' (ibid., p. 103). The exploration of nature in the natural sciences can be understood from a theological perspective as a human quest for meaning.

Bearing in mind all the diversity in nature, the physicist Freeman Dyson follows a similar line of thought when he states that apparently 'God loves diversity' (Dyson, 2004, p. xiii, in: Kwon et al., 2019, p. 104). For Dyson, God's work is manifest in the Bible and in nature, albeit in a different way. He not only acknowledges the different perspectives of natural science and theology, but also states that these sciences, although working from a different perspective, explore and describe aspects of the same universe. The Dutch psychologist of religion Hans Alma refers to this as a dynamic process characterised by a multiplicity of agencies beyond our reach (Alma, 2018, p. 69). Dyson, on his side, is of the opinion that God can be known

from the study of nature, whereby he seeks to bridge the gap between the different scientific approaches of the natural sciences and theology by means of analogies and metaphors. Alma, for his part, proceeds with caution regarding the possibility of knowing God. It is her view that narratives open up for 'something' named as 'God'—the orientation of our longing to experience one-ness with all of creation, and the basis for a relationship with the world—animate and inanimate—anchored in trust (ibid., p. 89). Following Alma's line of thought, employing contrasting perspectives (from theology and the natural sciences) might be a very useful and stimulating instrument in the search for meaning; with meaningfulness being given, constructed and experienced as the essence of the quest for meaning. The unruliness of nature, according to Alma, can be a source of surprise and joy for us.

In their innovative approach, Soo-Young Kwon et al. elaborate on the possibility of a dialogue in the study of 'the unruliness of nature', with a focus on studying the complexities of the human physical condition/molecular medicine, and theology. At the heart of CEMT are two perspectives on human growth. On the one hand, there is a Christian theological perspective, according to which human beings have a 'divine image and likeness' (Gen. 1:26), and human growth is seen as the perfection or realisation of the wholeness of the human character. The latter process is understood in the first place as socially directed and achieved by 'loving thy neighbour', by acting on the maxim 'what you do to a less valued person, you do for me', and as culminating in the individual's 'deification'—that is, by the transformation which occurs through God's 'will' and 'energy', in the participatory unity of the individual with God (Meyendorff, 1983, pp. 67, 71, 77, in: Kwon et al., 2019, p. 106). On the other hand, there is a medical sciences perspective, in which human growth is seen as a decrease in contracted illnesses, resulting in the everlasting improvement of an individual's physical wellbeing. In CEMT, the task of educators is perceived as facilitating students' reflection on their worldview-in-development—i.e., their beliefs, feelings and attitudes in regard to life as practiced every day—in a context of near endless medical-technical possibilities; leading to conflicting disruptive perspectives. According to the educational perspective of CEMT, the Christian tradition offers a range of narrative resources that enable us to respond to dilemmas that arise as disruptive moments out of the achievements of medical sciences, their financial consequences and their accompanying ethical and moral questions. This approach shows similarities with the pedagogy of 'Moral and Christian Education' as shaped in Namibia (Isaak, 2019, pp. 205–218).

CEMT is characterised by a hermeneutical dialogue between medicine and theology. Topics dialogically elaborated upon are 'life and birth', 'disease and suffering' and 'death and resurrection'. These aspects of life are approached as possible new symbols and invitations to acquire new images of God. In CEMT, an awareness is created that in responding to ethical and moral dilemmas, there is no single truth to be found, neither in medicine nor in theology. In dialogue with narratives from religious tradition, surprising new positions may be discovered, which enable the development of a (more) just answer in an unjust world. Preconditional for CEMT dialogue is a certain level of religious literacy—an aspect that is central to the confessional rationale of RE teachers and their pedagogical strategies, characterised

by a thorough hermeneutic reading of religious texts (den Ouden, 2020, pp. 270–271). This aspect of religious literacy is further explored in the next paragraph.

3.4.2 Orthodox Christian Truth in Dialogue with Society

The primacy of theology in the dialogue with a secular context, and in the ongoing discussion about RE in a highly secularised era—where secularisation affects both the religiosity of individuals and institutionalised religion—is researched by Exalto & Bertram-Troost (2019). Exalto and Bertram-Troost describe the position of orthodox religious schools in Dutch society and argue for their need in the education process of Dutch pupils and students. Education is understood in two ways. In the first interpretation, education refers to the whole of actions, or the refraining therefrom, to reach the goal of education—becoming an adult, as this is understood in the culture the pupil/student lives in. This is education in its broad sense (close to the concept of 'upbringing' in English). In the second interpretation, the focus in education is on rules and regulations regarding expected adequate and sustainable behaviour, with an emphasis on knowing the rules and regulations, being able to follow them, and the preparedness to behave accordingly. This is education in a restricted understanding (close to the concept of 'disciplining') (Steutel & De Ruyter, 2019, pp. 53–77). In the ethos of orthodox Christian schools, these two distinguished aspects of education merge.

The Dutch pillarised education system is based on Article 23 of the Dutch constitution, stipulating the freedom of education. This freedom is concretised in the freedom of foundation, orientation and organisation of schools. Schools can be founded by individuals or private organisations, if the expected population reaches at least 200 students. In addition, a school's orientation must be founded on one of the recognised religions in the Netherlands. Last but not least, schools are free to organise themselves in line with their life orientation (Menken et al. n.d.). If these requirements are met, schools will be fully financed by the government. But what if some of the school's ideas are at odds with those in the surrounding context? This is, for example, the case with orthodox Christian schools regarding beliefs about the position of women and homosexuality. Exalto and Bertram-Troost follow McMullen in arguing that 'it is better if a 'provisional identity' within a particular primary culture is nurtured in the early years of life' (MacMullan in: Exalto & Bertram-Troost, 2019, p. 55). Such a 'provisional identity'—or in other words 'religious literacy'—as the objective of education in its broad and restricted understanding, empowers pupils at a primary age to enter into a dialogue with 'the other' in later years. According to MacMullen, it is particularly in the early years of primary school that a close connection between religious socialisation in the family and RE in the school is beneficial for the development of an autonomous religious identity. Exalto and Bertram-Troost refer to Strike when they articulate the necessary aspects of orthodox Christian schools in the sense that—in line with the family's expectations—they teach their pupils according to a broad understanding of education. In the first place, schools should be aware of

the need for pupils to 'achieve competencies in a primary moral language and in the public moral language'. In order to enable pupils to enter into dialogue with others, it is 'of foremost importance that children become cognisant of their own life conceptions'. (Exalto & Bertram-Troost, 2019, p. 61) They must become literate in their own tradition and acquire the ability to have conversations with people who hold various conceptions of the good life. In a dialogue, pupils become (more) aware of their own position in the plurality of religious and secular worldviews, and they learn to understand the life orientations of others by putting themselves in other people's shoes. Possibly, they will come to include aspects of the religion of others in their own religious positioning (cf. heterodox beliefs; cf. Wright, 2008, p. 7). Learning to listen to the other—including the criticisms of the other—and keeping an open mind might be preconditional for the embedding of orthodox Christian RE in a plural society like the Netherlands. The aspects listed above as characteristics of orthodox Christian schools (aspects holding for other orthodox religious schools as well, like Islamic schools for example) strengthen their pupils' resilience regarding opposing, conflicting and fake statements.

Exalto and Bertram-Troost recommend to Dutch orthodox Christian schools to clearly express their life orientation as founded in their understanding of the Bible and the Christian tradition, and to stipulate how it relates to their ideas about living together in a context of diverse life orientations. As such, these schools represent a confessional-theological rationale in combination with a pedagogical socialisation strategy in a diverse context, practicing respect towards adherents of other faith traditions (Den Ouden, 2020, pp. 271–272). For the appreciation of orthodox Christian schools, and the legitimisation thereof, being financially supported by the state, such schools need to provide insight into the way their education efforts—understood in the broad and restricted sense—contribute to their students' development as future citizens of the Dutch society.

However, not all pupils and students attend orthodox religious schools. In the next paragraph, we pay attention to the all-encompassing 'subjective turn', and how one might respond to this aspect of the contemporary cultural climate.

3.4.3 Narratives Bridging the Truth of 'I' and 'You' into a 'We'

The so-called 'subjective turn' (Heelas et al., 2005), with its focus on 'I', is described by Yusuf Öğretici, a Turkish Ph.D. student in Glasgow. He explores the consequences for morality when an individual's community-related beliefs disappear, change or evolve into an individual spiritual experience. Öğretici follows Thomas in the statement that it follows from the increasing focus of western societies on the importance of individual subjective experience, and the quality of that experience, 'that spiritualities focused on 'the truth within' are more likely to thrive than those premised on moral codes emanating from a higher being' (Thomas, 2011, p. 559, in: Öğretici,

2019, p. 170). The culture of subjective religious/spiritual experiences is strongly related to processes of 'individualisation', and a large number of young people have rejected values and regulations as prescribed by religious institutions. This is recognisable in the spiritually oriented rationales of RE teachers, accompanied by pedagogical strategies which aim at personal wellbeing and happiness (den Ouden, 2020, pp. 272–273). Churches in western societies have suffered because many people are simply no longer willing to submit to churches' presentation of religious roles, duties and expectations (Heelas et al., 2005, p. 112; Hoge & Roozen, 1979; Öğretici, 2019, p. 170). It seems as if self-directed spirituality and externally validated religion are opposing positions—'and never the twain shall meet'.

In regard to moral dilemmas, the Church in earlier days had clear answers for moving from evil to good/God. People adhering to 'belief without belonging' (Davie, 1994), who draw their faith from different belief systems, who feel touched by new spiritualities, have to find their own orientation in ethical and moral dilemmas. According to Öğretici, traditional RE—teaching 'in' and 'about' religion—cannot respond to this challenge in an adequate way. Consequently, he is of the opinion that students end up 'lost in translation', without a solid foundation for their morality. As a possible way out for the students' individual 'I' to meet a 'you', resulting in a new 'we' (Wright, 2008), the Flemish pedagogue Agten (2019) describes what he calls 'biblio-drama'.

The word 'biblio-drama', Agten explains, refers to the Greek *biblio*, which means 'book'. For Agten, the word 'book' includes all the books in which religious and secular traditions are laid down—like the holy scriptures of Christianity and Islam, but also myths and fairy tales for example. *Drama* literally means 'action' or 'what happens'. The word 'drama' brings to mind theatre and other theatrical forms of expression, like play-acting. In bibliodrama, Agten brings together a biblical, Qur'anic or mythical narrative with narratives told by the participants, together with the participants' biography-related contributions. The participants proceed to act as 'actors' in a play. This approach is based on psychodrama as developed by Moreno (1987).

Bibliodrama is not about literal role-playing of biblical or Qur'anic narratives according to a given interpretation of that story. Nor is bibliodrama about performing a well-designed script, like in a theatre play. The participants' 'performance' is not evaluated in terms of 'good' or 'bad' staging, but is reflected upon and explored in terms of its contribution to a better understanding of the participants' own positionality with respect to existential questions and ethical and moral dilemmas, and its possible connection with religion. Religion(s) are seen as a social fact in the surrounding culture a person is socialised in. Bibliodrama takes it as a given that each and every person's (religious or secular) positioning is derived from, and dependent upon, collective life orientation images. Bibliodrama could very well be included in the pedagogical strategies of RE teachers' multi-confessional rationale (Den Ouden, 2020, pp. 274–275).

Bibliodrama opens a space for natural improvisation, a spontaneous exchange between a traditional narrative and the participants' own interpretations and associations with the story's character(s). The staging of participants may include parts of

the narrative, but may just as well at the same time—unconsciously and intuitively—incorporate aspects of their own biography. Bibliodrama aims at exploring existential issues in a creative and playful way, by incorporating contextual information from the participants' own lives—and the societal context in which they are embedded—into their performance of the story (De Laat, 2005). In course of a Bibliodrama session, participants role-play a character from a selected narrative and 'stage' this character according to the way this character's position has become/is becoming a 'voice' in their 'society of mind' (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010; Verhofstadt-Denève, 2003). Through their staging, the participants 'walk in the shoes of the other' and open themselves up to that other's experiences, experiences of transcendency. Bibliodrama connects contemporary real-world experiences of 'realistic transcendence' (Alma, 2018) with age-old stories, and through such a process, contemporary youth no longer find themselves 'lost in translation', but meet and connect with other young people's need to 'believe' and 'belong'. Engaging in Bibliodrama stimulates the participants' own autonomous connection with traditional wisdom that offers human beings an orientation in ethical and moral dilemmas.

3.5 Reflection on the Examples—In Search of Truth in a Plural World

Above we described three examples of scholarly research that explore innovative and playful ways of responding to the diversity of truth claims in a plural world. In this paragraph, we reflect on these examples from the perspective of the concepts provided by Blauw regarding 'critical thinking', and the perspective of teaching and learning as developed by Grimmit and scholars inspired by his concepts.

In the Korean CEMT module, 'teaching and learning *about*' seems pivotal and preconditional for a dialogue. Only through knowledge of the other's position can 'teaching and learning *from*' take place. The overall aim seems to be to enable students to substantiate their point of view as rooted in the Christian religious tradition. This didactic method can form a part of what Den Ouden (2020) coins as the confessional rationale.

In the Dutch plea for the need filled by orthodox Christian schools, 'teaching and learning *about'* is important, aiming at the integration of this knowledge into a personal religious identity. The overall aim seems to be to strengthen pupils' and young people's religious identity development in order to empower them and enable them to stand up for their beliefs in the encounter with people who adhere to other (Christian, Islamic, secular) traditions. This corresponds with the confessional-theological rationale of Den Ouden (2020).

In the Flemish Bibliodrama description, 'teaching and learning' takes place through active physical and psychological participation in the 'staging' of narratives. The overall aim is to stimulate the development of the participants' (religious or secular) authentic and autonomous life orientation, in close relationship with

others. This playful pedagogical strategy corresponds with the multi-confessional rationale of Den Ouden (2020).

In each of these examples, biblical, Qur'anic or mythical stories seem to function as counter-narratives. These narratives act as a bridge between the advancing medical sciences and the complexities of a plural society and open up a safe space for further exploration. Their overall aim may be expressed as 'teaching and learning through disruptive moments'— disruptive moments intentionally created in CEMT, in orthodox Christian schools and in Bibliodrama. These disruptive moments prompt 'second thoughts', which induce 'critical thinking' in plural societies.

3.6 RE in an Era of Plurality of Truth Claims

In order to develop an authentic autonomous (religious or secular) life orientation in what Taylor (2007) coined as 'a secular age', and Bauman (2007) called 'liquid times', the psychologist of religion Hans Alma offers a playful model. She defines the teaching and learning of life orientation (in Dutch: *levensbeschouwen*, life-orienting (as an active verb!) as 'a practice of existential and identity-constructing re-orientation' in a plural world, which includes 'an active, dialogical exploration for reaching understanding beyond the boundaries of difference' (Alma, 2018, pp. 96–97). This practice aims at a meaningful life, nourished and imbued by social/cultural/religious imaginaries of ultimate truth and the good life (ibid., p. 64).

Based on the characterisation of the 'secular age' and 'liquid times' we live in, given above, and drawing on the examples of practices that respond to the variety of truth claims in plural societies, we recommend further research on life orientation teaching and learning processes. For such an exploration, Alma's playful model—which she presents as a 'cycle of imagination' in a 'democratic play'—is a promising start, beginning with close observation and paying attention to the issue(s) at stake. This is followed by time for reflection and the development of associative and counter-thoughts that feed critical thinking. The next steps are of considerable importance: the exploration of innovative experiments through imagination and anticipation, and the expressing and sharing of these ideas with others. Reflection completes the process and creates space for consideration of new topics that emerge in course of the entire process (ibid., pp. 166–175). This then forms the start for a new playful 'cycle of imagination' and so on and so further. In her Ph.D. thesis, Den Ouden arrives at a similar recommendation for RE teachers and the (further) development of their respective rationales. In her recommendations, she offers a three-step strategy for individual RE teachers: gaining awareness of the issues at stake in the so-called 'disruptive moments' in class, acquisition of new knowledge and experiences, and implementation in classroom practices (Den Ouden, 2020, pp. 226–229). In addition to an individual approach, Den Ouden describes a 5-step strategy for teams of RE teachers: shared reflection on individual rationales, mutual observation in classroom practices, description of core didactical actions, a Delphi-lead reflection on the core didactical actions, and implementation in their own classes (Den Ouden,

2020, pp. 230–232). This contributes to teachers' own 'active, dialogical exploration for reaching understanding beyond the boundaries of difference' (ibid., pp. 96–97). However, more research is needed on the development of RE teachers' rationales—not only in the context of their schools, but even more so in the context of the society, they prepare their students for, aiming at their critical contribution and participation as responsible citizens with their own authentic life orientation.

Both Alma and Den Ouden are of the opinion that teachers themselves—as well as all educators—must be prepared to walk the path they offer to young people/students on their journey through life. A pivotal process, a never-ending story in education at the turning point of plural societies.

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Chapter 4
Worldview Identity Discourses in Finnish Religious and Worldview Education: Mechanisms of Inclusion and Exclusion

Saila Poulter and Vesa Åhs

Abstract The aim of this study is to analyse worldview discourses that legitimize different hegemonic and disadvantaged positions and identities of individuals and groups in a Finnish school context. A high degree of secularization and diversity among those formally belonging to the Evangelical-Lutheran Church represents the majority's worldview in Finland today. The growing number of migrants and new minorities are challenging the traditional understanding of one's identity in relation to religions and other worldviews. The study illustrates how in classrooms, containing diverse worldviews, the normativity of the 'secular Lutheran' worldview causes blindness towards its own position and exclusion towards those different from the norm. Moreover, the concepts employed in education bolster these positions. School knowledge representing an 'official' picture of religion with traits that point to the world religion paradigm often excludes lived and practised forms of religions or relegates them to curiosities, thus constricting what it means to be 'religious'. The findings of this study show that it is vital to challenge and problematize discourses that essentialize and categorize worldview identities resulting in different power positions and othering practices in school.

4.1 Introduction

Finnish society has undergone tremendous societal changes over the last few decades and today it is **a society with a multitude of languages, cultures, religions and other worldviews, even though statistically the numbers for minorities are fairly**

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low.[1] In Finnish comprehensive school, religions and other worldviews (henceforth WE, worldview education) are taught in accordance with the "pupil's own religion" with a secular alternative subject (secular Ethics) for pupils with a non-religious background. Although Finnish WE has a non-confessional status, the model means the physical separation of pupils on the basis of their belonging to a religious denomination. The model has been sustained on the grounds of supporting children's right to their own religion and by claims that the model promotes the integration of minorities into Finnish society (Poulter et al., 2017). As Finland becomes more diverse and the need for common understanding and dialogue between different worldviews increases, these arguments have been challenged. In fact, it is argued that the current separative model may increase the risk of marginalizing ethnic minorities, as these individuals feel alienated from the majority (Zilliacus & Holm, 2013). Also, since children below the age of 18 cannot independently make a choice regarding their belonging or not belonging to a religious denomination, it can be debated whether or not the current model respects children's right to their own religion or worldview.

During the time of the data gathering for this study, 7th grade pupils in two target schools had been studying religions and secular ethics in a mostly integrative manner, in the same classroom space.[2] As previous studies show (Åhs et al., 2016, 2019b) the experiences of these classes have been mostly positive, yet many challenges remain, not least legal issues. As these new pedagogical arrangements create possibilities for overcoming structural worldview boundaries in teaching and learning in a shared classroom, this also raises interesting questions about identity negotiations between majority and minorities, between religious and secular identities, and the power operating in-between these negotiations.

The aim of this study is to analyse school discourses that legitimize different religious and worldview positions of individuals and groups and produce certain types of subjectivities that are available for both majority and minority pupils. The special focus of the analysis is on discursive social practices that are both constructs of social reality and also have the power in producing social reality (Kimanen & Poulter, 2018). This connects with the question of asymmetries and power imbalance of the construction of the self and the other that is discussed in postcolonial, poststructural and feminist theories (Riitaoja & Dervin, 2014). Contextualizing this study to the Finnish school and integrated WE classroom, this article aims at providing an interesting case study concerning linguistic social practices of diversity, otherness, and prevailing power hegemonies.

[1] The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (66.5% of the population in 2022) together with the Finnish Orthodox Church (1% of the population) have a special legal and cultural position as national churches, enjoying a certain privileged status compared to the minority religions (Sorsa, 2018).

[2] For legislative reasons, every pupil still follows the curriculum of her own religion or secular ethics, and thus this is not a new school subject but rather a pedagogical innovation in finding elements of learning together despite worldview differences (see Åhs et al., 2016). In 2017, 88.8% of students in Finland took part in Lutheran RE; 1.5% in Orthodox RE; 2.1% in Islamic RE, 6.3% in secular ethics; and 0.5% in other minority RE classes (Education Statistics Finland, 2017).

In a broad sense, this study offers a critical look at studies on intercultural education where themes relating to religion and worldviews have been widely absent (Poulter et al., 2015; Rissanen, 2019). The discussion on how the notion of religion and worldview as social categories may contribute to the process of othering is very much lacking (Riitaoja & Dervin, 2014). The concepts of culture and identity are currently much disputed as they seem to enhance essentialist, othering and static views, putting people into dichotomous and fixed categories which have led many scholars to avoid the use of these concepts (Zilliacus et al., 2017). Here, culture and identity, like any other social category are understood in a non-essentializing way as useful *tools-for-thinking* (Andreotti, 2014), acknowledging that each individual can belong, and identify, with many different cultural and social groups simultaneously (Hahl & Löfström, 2016).

This paper explores the types of categories of difference that are produced through language when looking at the inclusive educational ideal of schooling and the inclusive educational ethos of the teacher. The analysis will focus on the social practices and discursive techniques that both construct and deconstruct these categorizations. Secondly, the study will analyse these linguistic categorizations of 'normal' or desired worldview identity and critically reflect on the resulting otherness in terms of worldviews. Perhaps not surprisingly, the religious and ethnic Other in the Finnish context is most often a Muslim (Kimanen, 2018), but as this study will demonstrate, the othering practices are very context sensitive. As our research interest lies in recognizing the representations of religious and non-religious identities in the language (both spoken and written) used in the context of integrated WE, the research questions are as follows:

(1) What type of identity discourses related to religions and other worldviews are produced in the context of Finnish integrative worldview education?
(2) What worldviews, identities and positions are constructed as normal, desirable and included and who are different, otherized and excluded?

Kimanen and Poulter (2018) have analysed teacher discourses on Finnish religious and worldview education from the perspective of belonging and distancing language. The Swedish study by von Brömssen (2003) shows how Muslim pupils talked about religion as something one was born into, which led them to assume that their ethnic Swedish peers were Christian. Religion by the Swedish pupils was seen as something that restricted their immigrant friends' lives and that they were not particularly interested in (von Brömssen, 2003). Also, in Sjöborg's (2015) study, young people connect religion with otherness, distant cultures and past times. For religious young people, however, religion stood for an alternative way of living in a secular society. In Sjöborg's (2015) and Kittelman Flensner's (2015) studies, Christianity was strongly connected to national culture. For this study, understanding "Lutheranism" is a critical task as it is easily used as an all-encompassing explanation that constructs a collective Finnish identity that excludes Others (Poulter et al., 2019, p. 219). As Nasser (2019) notes, mass education has been a vehicle to produce a certain type of civic identity in order to develop a distinctive sense of collective identity through the

exclusion of Others. We need to see how this political socialization is taking place in the plural coexistence of diverse worldviews in Finnish society today.

4.2 Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

Religions and other worldviews are typically categorized as monolithic, all-encompassing systems of meanings, but this rarely matches the reality of the complex and dynamic social world (Valk et al., 2017). Even though in our social worlds, we tend to put people into simplified categories of religions and worldviews, and from a researcher's point of view, certain discourses can be identified as "religious discourses", nevertheless social categories are never fixed, uniform or harmonious but are instead context-dependent, intersectional and in constant transition. Also, what social categories are considered normal, desirable or peripheral depends very much on the context in which they are created and maintained (Dhamoon, 2009).

Postcolonial philosophy of religion problematizes the dominant concept of religion because it is the product of the culturally specific discursive processes of Christian history in the West and it indicates more or less a closed system or community (King, 2009; Mignolo, 2009; Pfändtner, 2010). In the Study of Religion, religion is currently understood as a continuously changing and internally diverse and complex concept, mixing traditional elements with new religious movements and contemporary secular philosophies (Cush, 2013, p. 121). As Fitzgerald (2000) and Masuzawa (2005) have pointed out, while the so-called 'world religions' approach aims to include different religions, it "instead remodelled them according to liberal Western Protestant Christian values … emphasizing theological categories" (Owens, 2011, p. 258). While the study of religion in universities has long since taken to account critical approaches to the concept of religion, in schools, religion is still largely framed through the concept of world religions (Owens, 2011). Lived and practised forms of religions are often excluded or relegated to curiosities, thus constricting what it means to be 'religious'. The 'official' religion of the clergy or religious specialists is thus enshrined as the correct form of religion. This, however, does not fit the empirical evidence of how religion is practised and lived around the world. Such an approach creates and reinforces essentialist categories, sharpens the divide between religious and non-religious positions and creates discourses of othering by removing religion from the everyday lives of people and making it something special and 'extranormal' when compared to other aspects of life. In real life, religious life is 'often messy, idiosyncratic and differently articulated' (Geaves, 2005).

This study holds the view that looking at the intersections of 'religious' and 'secular' rather than the dichotomy between them is an urgent and fundamental task in the world of polarized political debate on religion and other worldviews. Our worldview or religious identity can never be fixed and is instead always in the state of 'becoming', which again is full of tensions as we negotiate different possibilities for ourselves (MacNaughton, 2004, p. 126). As noted by sociologists of religion, religious and secular attitudes can no longer be considered opposing concepts that

are mutually exclusive. Rather, what seems to characterize the worldviews of individuals better is a plurality of spiritual practices or ideas and secular values (Nynäs et al., 2015). For this reason, this study also adopts a concept of a worldview which is understood here as a particular religious and/or non-religious ontological, epistemological and ethical orientation to the world. A worldview refers not only to personal and group beliefs, but also to wider systems of knowledge within which different subjectivities are constructed (Riitaoja et al., 2016). Importantly, from the worldview perspective, religion is not seen as a rigidly imposed belief system that determines one's private life; rather, it presents a vision and a way of life for all areas of a person's existence (Selçuk & Valk, 2012).

In this study, educational ethnography (e.g., Lappalainen, 2007) stands for a method for thinking 'otherwise', where the focus is to deconstruct the social practices at school and to pinpoint how power operates in producing and maintaining structures, positions, identities, agencies, narratives and so on that are unequal towards certain individuals, groups or people. Thus, the ethnographic approach used here connects closely to feminist theory, and to postcolonial and poststructural theories of interculturality. The research material consists of material collected from two lower-secondary schools in Helsinki during the academic years 2013–2015.[3] The ethnographic data consists of observations of WE classes and other incidents at school in the form of the first researcher's field notes and a research diary by the first author, and one-to-one semi-structured interviews of the pupils and teachers (N = 44) that were jointly conducted by both authors.[4] For this article, we have selected excerpts that best illustrate the discourses of normalcy, otherness and inclusion. The original language of the data excerpts is Finnish. We refer to all pupils and teachers using letter-number-codes (R = researcher, P = pupil, T = teacher) to ensure the anonymity of the informants. The data was analysed using two different methodological approaches: theory-driven content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was combined with cultural and critical classroom discourse analysis (MacNaughton, 2004; Shi-xu, 2005). For the data analysis, this means that, in the identifying, grouping and naming of discourses, a systematic categorization was created in order to systemize the validity of interpretations.

Understood in the Foucauldian sense, power exists as appearance and emergence, as relations and technologies (Foucault, 1991). The poststructuralist approach challenges the Enlightenment notion of the rational and coherent individual, identity and society and instead poses the possibility of individuals, their identity and society as multi-layered, context-dependent, complex products of power and procedures of power (MacNaughton, 2004, p. 4). Discourses are understood as systems of thoughts that organize what it is possible to think, say and do in a specific context (Foucault,

[3] The two lower-secondary schools of this study were the only schools in Helsinki piloting integrative WE at the time of conducting this research. These schools are rather multicultural and academically high-profiled schools compared to the average Finnish school and there are some differences in the way WE is put into practice, yet there are enough similarities to treat them as exemplars of the same phenomenon of Finnish integrative WE.

[4] The first author analysed the data and the second author was later called in "a critical friend" to help with the clarification of the results and theoretical congruence.

1980). It is central to understand discourse not just as an utterance of self-identity, but also to understand it "as a way of forging, maintaining and transforming both Self and Other, both identity and relationship" (Shi-xu, 2005, p. 31).

It is important to note that this study will not be in favour of any specific WE model, nor will it evaluate the quality of education or style of teaching. In other words, the aim is not to point out how wrong or right individual acts are or to show the 'truth', as truth itself is always produced (Foucault, 1980, 1991), but rather to demonstrate how power operates through educational discourses. For Foucault, power relationships involve a struggle over how we use truths and build discourses about our production of normality. As argued by Shi-xu (2005, p. 29), we should "understand discourse in terms of not simply description of the world, but social action, hence power and ideology, then we shall become wary in encountering discourses that appear to describe or tell the truth". According to Kumaravadivelu (1999), discourse is a field or domain produced in and through social practices, institutions and actions. In this domain, language designates the entire conceptual territory on which knowledge is produced and reproduced. Power/knowledge is expressed in terms of regimes of truth, which are sets of rules, statements and understandings that define what is true or real at any given time (Kumaravadivelu, 1999). Thus, this paper is an analysis of that struggle or negotiation within and between worldviews through which different positions and identities as individuals and groups are produced.

Using cultural discourse analysis (Shi-xu, 2005) together with critical classroom discourse analysis (Lahlali, 2007) as methodological tools, the making of desired worldview identities will be deconstructed and reconstructed. The cultural discourse method advocates an in-between cultural strategy for reconceptualizing a culturally inclusive, pluralist and dynamic theory of discourse (Shi-xu, 2005). In theory formation, one should make ethno-historic-specificity explicit and take seriously the social categories used, such as ethnicity, 'race', culture and religion. Because of the complexities of cultural traditions, cultural discourses are dynamic and diversified. Consequently, categories of discourse are always contentious and motivated by interests of power (Shi-xu, 2005, p. 135).

4.3 Results

The analysis resulted in three dominant discourses with seven sub-discourses. The first discourse is titled 'Hegemonic Normal', which refers to language and expressions used in explaining cultural and collective identity and what is considered normal and 'us'. This discourse was often based on hegemonic Lutheranism or a preference for secularity but importantly, these were most often intertwined: 'secular-Lutheranism' (Riitaoja et al., 2010; Rissanen, 2019) was the dominant worldview position in the classroom from which other worldviews were regarded as different, strange or less normal.

The second discourse 'Similar, same and different Others' engages in language that is used to either emphasize the difference or similarity of worldviews. Both

Table 4.1 Three dominant worldview identity discourses and sub-discourses

Dominant worldview discourse 1			Dominant worldview discourse 2		Dominant worldview discourse 3	
Hegemonic 'Normal'			Similar and different Others		Organized view or own voice	
Lutheran neutrality	Secular neutrality	Secular-lutheran normal	Universal difference	Universal similarity	Assumed group identity	Personal identity

the emphasis on similarity and difference between identities were used for diverse purposes with different social consequences. The diversity ideal that the schools were supposed to promote proved to be the use of linguistic practices that either distanced or brought closer worldviews which meant that worldviews were treated either through the lenses of similarity, sameness or difference. The element of difference resulting in conflicting views was a visible theme in the data, although in general, the frequency of this discourse was small.

The third dominant discourse is called 'Organized view or own voice' which refers to the linguistic practices that either take worldview identities as fixed, pre-given or defined outside or try to make sense of the voice of individual identifications and personal meanings. In the integrative WE classroom, both types of discourses were identifiable in constructing the identification of 'us' and 'them'. The heterogeneity of individual identities became especially visible in those moments when pupils revealed their personal stances and let each other see their 'real' identities. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.1.

4.3.1 Discourse 1: Hegemonic, 'Normal'

When pupils were interviewed about the equal space of worldviews in the classroom, they most often replied that religions or religious identities were not that visible there. What they considered a normal worldview was often Lutheran, which was not recognized as a specific religious position but rather as providing a shared cultural background. But perhaps even more than Lutheran, the prevailing attitude towards religion and worldviews was sometimes characterized by a somewhat irrelevant or secular outlook towards religion, where religion was often seen as something that is not characteristic of young people:

> P18: At least I don't remember (referring to possible arguments in the classroom)… yeah. It's a bit more like… I feel that religion is not so important for young people.
>
> I: Do you recall a situation where someone told you about their own (religious) background?
>
> P14: No. We haven't that much… 14 year olds rarely do that anyway…

Many pupils in the integrative WE classroom were aware of the prevailing power dynamics when someone came "from another religion": they were thinking of the difficulties that one might have to face if one does not belong to the most recognized worldview groups of Lutheran, Orthodox or non-religious but is "something else". As noted by Moberg and others (2015), in the Finnish context, much of the discourse relating to religion remains deeply connected to Christian themes and concepts, even when this is not explicit (Moberg et al., 2015, p. 62). According to some of the pupils, the normal Lutheran worldview is all-pervasive, not visible and there was nothing new to learn from it:

R: …How did you feel in the joint classes? Was anyone's background or religion visible there?

P10: Well, no…It was kind of neutral.

R: Did you learn from other pupils' worldviews or religions?

P10: I don't know. It was kind of Lutheran.

R: So that you learnt from that [Lutheranism]?

P10: I don't know if I learnt, because it is like, it's so strong, it's there, it's dominant anyway…

As Rissanen (2019) argues, naturalizing the identity of the dominant group maintains its privileges and legitimizes inequalities, and can be seen as a form of racism. The example above offers assumedly a neutral platform for identity recognition, as it remains non-critical and blind towards its own particular position. According to the pupil interviewed below, the difference is something outside non-religion and Lutheranism is "a basic religion" which continues to serve as the official collective narrative (Nasser, 2019):

R: So do you feel safe in those [integrative] classes?

P8: Yes, I think it's safe there because in our class there's no one who comes from a different religion or would be different; we have only non-believers who are those from secular ethics and then there's that basic religion…that Lutheranism, so only those two.

Neutrality was often used as a term to describe the majority's worldview position and thus, it resulted in the invisibility of secular Lutheran identities. Non-reflected, 'zero-point' worldview discourse caused blindness towards the majority's own worldview position in relation to other positions that were regarded as Other. However, teachers attempted to challenge the blindness of othering practices, especially when attached to Finnishness, as the following excerpt illustrates:

P36: [asks about the assignment] What does 'ethnic' mean?

T2: Related to nationality, in this assignment related to being Indian. But just like a week ago you met this woman from the Krishna movement [she visited the school], she is Finnish. So, there are exceptions. (Field notes, 27.3.2014)

Nasser (2019) argues that a distinctive sense of collective identity is constructed through the exclusion of Others. Here, the teacher aims at creating an image that a

Finnish person with a religious identity might not just be Lutheran by highlighting the fact that “there are exceptions”. However, to argue her inclusive point by referring to an “exception” becomes a way of reinforcing the non-articulated norm of the national (Lutheran) identity.

Normality-talk related to secular positions was particularly present in those pupils’ views who came from a secular ethics background. As addressed in a study by Åhs et al. (2016), pupils identifying themselves as non-religious sometimes had difficulties in recognizing themselves as having a particular worldview and at times showed little interest in getting to know more about religious views. Things related to religion were not ‘real’ compared to ‘real’ (secular) matters:

> R: So what would you like, things [in this integrative WE] that you would like to study in the future?
>
> P3: Well those life matters like in secular ethics, all real things, not teaching about religions.

The secular versus religious dichotomy was often adopted by secular ethics pupils when they wanted to distance their identity from those with assumed religious ones. In an interview, one pupil described how religious people needed knowledge about other religions but excluded himself (as a non-religious person) from needing knowledge relating to religion. As discussed by Riitaoja and Dervin (2014, p. 8), the secularist bias is located in the belief that a secular-liberal subject is able to ‘step outside’ of his own framework and that religious people are not free to choose or to think independently. However, a secular position is not just the absence of religion. Viewing a secular position in society or in the personal worldview of the individual as neutral hides the fact that it also provides certain ontological, epistemological and ethical grounds. As pointed out by Fitzgerald (2000, p. 6), the “neutral, factual sphere, the secular” is an ideological construct and the sharp distinction between the religious and the secular not only “distorts Western understanding of the rest of the world but also Western self-understanding” (ibid. 43).

It is important to note that a pupil’s ability to speak or get her voice heard depends on many issues, for a pupil’s social status, gender and language may affect how much space is available. There are also limits to what knowledge can be approved in a classroom context and what is considered to belong to the spheres of religious institutions, home and school. Religious views in the classroom can be judged as wrong or not appropriate resulting in the marginalization of religious voices, as this excerpt illustrates:

> The class is analysing different pictures and views about Jesus. The teacher has created three-dimensional categories of ‘1 Christianity/ the Bible’, ‘2 Islam/ the Quran’ and ‘3 Historians’ according to each different interpretative tradition. The teacher asks what could the pupils say about the question of the activity/agency of Jesus according to the Christian viewpoint.
>
> P8: He died for people’s sins.
>
> The teacher ignores the pupil’s suggestion and writes on the whiteboard: ‘carpenter, fighting for injustice, miracles’. (Field notes, 26.3.2014)

The action of the teacher emphasizes the scientific or historical perspective of Jesus while dismissing the pupils' more religious interpretation. As Kimanen and Poulter (2018) show, Finnish teachers use different discursive techniques, and teachers might also employ a secular scientific approach to religion to maintain neutrality in a classroom where there are many worldviews. Teachers clearly paid attention to keeping impartial about all opinions and aimed at balancing between different viewpoints, which sometimes made them prefer secular worldviews and dismiss religious worldviews. Some pupils openly admitted in the interviews that they have difficulties in understanding religious views and positions:

> R: So you're saying that in this integrative model you have come to understand better why someone thinks differently from you?
>
> P20: Yes, but I have a problem or that I don't understand…that people who believe in something that I just don't understand, how someone can believe in something so much, something that hasn't even been proven to be true or anything—like they worship in that religion, they pray on that carpet…they like become … a kind of ecstasy in worshipping some god. I think it's weird, I just can't understand that.

Pupils considered learning about religions as learning about radically different religions. For instance, pupils remained quite blind to diverse Christian identities, such as Catholic or Pentecostal Christianity. As Rissanen (2019) argues, both the invisibility of Muslim identity in situations where it is relevant and could be positively recognized, can cause hurt, but especially the 'over-visibility' of Muslim identity sometimes violates feelings of belonging and the ability to participate, which is a leading theme in the next main discourse.

4.3.2 Discourse 2: Similar and Different Others

Aiming for inclusivity in their classrooms, the teachers tended to emphasize similarity while also recognizing the difference between individuals and worldview groups. In the name of inclusion, teachers underlined similarity as the following excerpt illustrates:

> The teacher is talking about 1054 as a significant year in Church history. The teacher says that the two churches which came out of that separation are actually not that different. She aims at connecting this fact to the life experiences of the pupils:
>
> T4: Despite this we can be similar, be together. Some of you thinks that God certainly exists; some of you think that he might not exist…nevertheless, we can share the same space like we do when we study together. (Field notes, 19.11.2013)

Teachers in their interviews said that the value of being inclusive about all worldviews is an important element for them in integrative WE. Clearly, this attempt at inclusiveness was also pedagogically used to challenge pupils' critical thinking of assumed differences about the origin of worldviews:

P15: Hey teacher, in this Confucianism there is the same stuff as in Christianity!

T3: And that's what?

P15: This Golden Rule.

T3: True, it's just the other way round: 'do not do'. Do you see, that came already 500 years before Jesus?

P15: Mmm…true. (Field notes, 27.2.2014)

Some of the pupils also used a discourse of similarity when referring to the perceived goals of integrative education in relation to worldviews:

P9: Well when they (the majority and the minority) are in the same place learning things, then the opinions might also start to converge. Be a bit more similar.

P12: It could be that, if someone has, for example, a racist point of view, then you could… you could teach that everyone is basically similar, looks the same and really does not differ from one another that much. So that one could accept everyone like that.

Nasser (2019) argues how identity is reinforced through the dialectic between similarity and difference, which leaves little space to imagine alternatives. As noted by Rissanen (2019), emphasizing similarity and the creation of a new common 'we' are sometimes conducive to the development of social cohesion, but they might hamper the recognition of bias and discrimination, and therefore, link to issues of marginalization. To emphasize the common, similar or identical features of religions or people can be seen as blind universalism of hegemonic and privileged identities to apply a neutral, equal or empty space when encountering worldviews. Maldonado-Torres (2004) warns that "We are all the same" as a discourse locates universalism into a 'spaceless' realm which in fact is based on the privileged epistemologically neutral subject who speaks about Europe/the West as a privileged epistemic status and is blind to other perspectives.

As the number of minority pupils was small in all classes, the teachers had to make an effort 'bring minorities in', which often resulted in unintentional attention being paid to the representatives of minority groups. Although different Christian denominations such as Orthodox Christianity remain quite distant for many Finnish people, they are not considered as worldview others in a similar sense as Islam, which is constructed against the white, middle class and secular-Lutheran, 'normal' subject of schooling. Although teachers consciously worked against building a dichotomous and stereotypical 'Christian vs. Islamic' worldview, for pupils, Islam was considered 'the Religion'. Presence—or paradoxically most often the absence—of Islam in the classroom neutralized the values attached to the majority's worldviews and brought the difference into the classroom that supposedly had not been as diverse before, as the following quote reveals:

R: Okay, so were they…did you learn from other pupils' worldviews or perspectives?

P2: Well they were…we don't have any Muslims in our class…so I don't know. So everyone was Christian or Atheist. I did not [learn] much.

Difference was often welcomed as interesting, new, exotic and oriental in the data—an exception that was not necessarily spoken out loud due to negative connotations. Similar to von Brömssen's (2003) study, 'Others' were sometimes described as more spiritual, authentic or natural. Thomas Popkewitz (2008) argues that these good intentions involve double gestures of both inclusion and exclusion. Subordination can also be constructed through positive attributes that are operating in the double gesture of inclusion/exclusion (Ideland & Malmberg, 2014). Diversity is often created and maintained by placing people as objects: diverse people are compared to the norm or the majority, which represents the normal or desirable subject (Mignolo, 2009):

> The class is watching a video on the healing rituals of native people living in the Amazon. Pupils laugh and imitate the ritual dance movements. They anxiously wait for a discussion about Voodoo religion and want to see the teacher's voodoo doll 'to pinch it' [in pupils words]. The video is followed by another video about an African tribal ritual where a person falls into a trance because evil spirits possess him [the person shakes a lot].
>
> P19: [says aloud] Does he feel…would be nice to know how you feel when you go cuckoo like that!
>
> The teacher does not make any comment. (Field notes, 20.11.2013)

Discourse that was recognizable yet not very common in the data involved pupils talking about different worldviews in relation to tensions and conflicts. Even though pupils and teachers brought up views in the classroom discussion in which they took a particular value-laden position, they avoided talking about the difference in a sense that would bring up overly sensitive issues and cause conflict.

> R: Were there some good sides in the [previous] separative WE model or do you think this [integrative model] is better in every way?
>
> P29: Well you didn't need to worry [before] that you might accidentally say something wrong like towards the religion of the others…like if you accidentally say something that might upset someone's religion…

Here it is interesting how separative religious education has been considered to unite pupils from the same religious tradition into a homogeneous group where one does not need to worry about "saying something wrong". The underlying assumption here is that all pupils in one's 'own religion' class share the same stand on religion and thus one does not need to worry about upsetting anyone. Interestingly though, one pupil in the data also considered separative religious education classes as a potential source of internal conflicts and that the integrative practice can help in downplaying the differences between people:

> R: So what has been the best so far?
>
> P29: … It's nice that now it doesn't really matter that you cannot be separated and I think it's better for people like Muslims and others who have to face even negative consequences from their religion so that they also now have access to be with the rest, that they are not really different … when you are put into different study groups and you have classes at different times it's rather isolating.

4.3.3 Discourse 3: Organized View or Own Voice

The third prominent discourse category consists of discourses on organized, assumed worldviews on the one hand, and giving voice to personal experience on the other. The essentialist ways of talking about worldviews as certain fixed identities that can be identified are powerful in putting people into disadvantaged power positions. Teachers tended to both break but also create these worldview categories in their discourse. In the name of impartiality, teachers often approached worldviews from a distancing, scientific approach and treated pupil's worldview identity as an outside given, referring to their own religious education or to secular ethics as a subject. Teachers also easily reinforced linking pupils to certain worldview categories and "fixed" their identities even though their comments were not meant to be discriminatory. On the other hand, pupils from both majority and minorities were interested in breaking these official worldview identities, as they were keen on learning from the personal relevance of one's personal beliefs, values and views.

Non-Christian religious identities were easily essentialized and represented through cultural artefacts such as clothing or food, like Buddhists "who can be recognized from the orange colour gown and they get often mixed with Hare Krishna people" (Field notes 8.4.2014). Teachers aimed at using pupil identifications in a positive way to make pupils recognize the internal diversity of their group, but it often turned into pointing to differences and making individuals representatives of specific worldview groups. This discourse emphasizes and essentializes a small group of religious specialists such as monks as the defining factor of a religion (e.g., Owens, 2011).

The majority of the pupils considered it an important element in integrative WE to gain more understanding of other worldviews through the physical presence of difference. Several pupils mentioned that peers revealing their personal, lived dimension of religion had been crucial in challenging their own way of thinking. Especially the personal narratives of minority pupils were considered very interesting and eye-opening learning experiences for the majority pupils.

> Pupil 33: My friend, he's Orthodox Christian, he's my best friend in my class…I didn't know about his religion much at all before but now that we study together I know much more about his religion.

> Pupil 25: …for instance if my friend was a Muslim it would be easier to understand —it's easier to relate and understand compared with everyone being placed in different groups… then you wouldn't learn to see it through other eyes.

It should be critically noted that in the examples above, the minority pupils can be seen as a resource for the majority that increases the knowledge of those labelled as Others. According to the pupils though, the personal views delivered by their peers in comparison to the 'objective' school knowledge offered often the most meaningful learning experiences in the classroom. Also, depending on the power position of individuals in the class, it was also possible for minority pupils to see their role as power holders in the classroom and to have their own voice heard as the following excerpt reveals:

R: Have you talked about your religion in the class, how did you find it?

P36: I think it was fun! I enjoyed it and I was able sometimes…something that even the teacher didn't know so I always raised my hand. I was able to answer them when no one else had the answer.

R: How did the others find it that you were the specialist?

P36: I don't know, I think it's like knowledge can also come from a pupil's mouth—.

The idea of a pupil holding special knowledge is emancipatory. Even a minority pupil can have ways of resisting essentialist, pre-given and even wrong images and identifications. They can be offered control and space to make their own voices heard. It should also be noted, however, that this position of power can also be seen as an example of the over-visibility of minority pupils, where the difference between pupils is highlighted (Rissanen, 2019). If the only platform that the minority pupils can achieve a voice through is presumed religious expertise, the situation assumes the predominance of religious identity for the minority pupil, even though this might not be the case.

4.4 Discussion

This study analysed discourses on worldview identity in the context of Finnish integrative WE by focusing on the production of normal, ideal and hegemonic worldview identities and the majority's unchallenged power position through various discourses. As the results show, both pupils and teachers used different discourses for different purposes with different social consequences. When hegemonic secular discourse was dominant, it often silenced the religious stances. On the other hand, when Lutheran Christian discourse was prominent, it connected Lutheranism to national culture and excluded not only secular worldviews, but also non-Christian religious views. When language emphasizing either similarity or difference was used, in both cases, it easily excluded certain identities and positions outside the norm. When organized worldview discourse was used, it often resulted in the exclusion of the personal dimension of worldviews that the pupils valued most and unintentionally labelled students as representatives of worldview groups.

As argued by Nasser (2019), an emphasis on national history in particular leaves little space for individuals to choose their identity outside of the 'we – Others' binary system. Dervin (2016) challenges this kind of binary and believes that a coherent identity is an illusion, because "who I am is unstable, contextual, and has to be negotiated with others" (Dervin, 2016, p. 15). According to him, it is crucial to challenge the idea of 'natural' or 'god-given' identity as such views force us to create clear-cut boundaries between people who may actually share a lot in common. Identities related to religions and worldviews should be seen as intersectional and

strongly influenced by contextual ideological hegemonies. Therefore, what should be central in education is not the insertion of a specific identity keeping the illusion of stable identities and sharp differences between them, but rather understanding the overlapping and intersecting nature of identities (Dervin, 2016).

Here the notions about discourses related to cultures and religions (Baumann, 1996, 1997) can also provide tools for an integrative space of learning. Dominant discourses, which imply reified or essentialized forms of cultures and religions, tie ethnicity, culture and religion tightly together. These discourses often focus on a certain aspect of culture which is implied as commonal or inevitably inherent to a certain position (Baumann, 1996). In contrast to this, a demotic discourse frames, especially local and heterogenous practices, and challenges the links between a community and culture, making reified positions negotiable in the social process (Baumann, 1997, pp. 215–216). While dominant discourses can play an important part in identity negotiations, and indeed as seen in the data, are also a part of the integrative classroom space, making demotic discourses possible could be seen as an important factor in such spaces. As Baumann (1997) notes, communities of action are formed in dual discursive practices, where reified notions about culture and community are also rendered into active negotiation (Baumann, 1997, p. 209).

The results of this study have implications for both educational practice and further research. In general, education concerning religion and worldviews has to be better contextualized within complex historical and societal processes that are diverse, intersectional, and even messy. The results of this study suggest that what is needed is an understanding of religions and other worldviews as identity markers and a cause of many social categorizations, even exclusion. The results also suggest that religions and other worldviews can be used in a non-biased way to enhance inclusion and recognition of the diversity of identities and are regarded less as organized and fixed worldview categories. The shifting focus to psychological, sociological, existential and lived dimensions of worldviews and the worldview concept itself could be some of the starting points for worldview exploration (e.g., Hannam, 2018). An increased emphasis on lived religion (Ammerman, 2016) along with official and organized religion is needed.

Educationally, worldview reflexivity is needed in order for individuals to question their own assumptions that are often linked to official and popular binary discourses of cultural difference or sameness. Unreflexively, through our uncritical acceptance of dominant ways of thinking, we may contribute to the production of such identity discourses that place individuals in disadvantaged positions. Importantly, such reflexivity requires "a critique of roots" (Andreotti, 2014) and can only be achieved through recognition of our own cultural and political presuppositions, a recognition of the position from which we speak and negotiate differences (Rizvi, 2006, p. 33).

The themes relating to classroom discourses and how they create and maintain worldview categories and power positions can be seen as vital in whatever form RE or WE takes. This current study focused on integrative classrooms because they offer a new environment in the Finnish context in which previously unrecognized discourses can come to light. As seen in our other studies on the subject (Åhs et al., 2016, 2019a, 2019b), integrative practices emphasize the need for reflexivity in the

use of language and categories. The new classrooms provide challenges for both teachers and pupils in how to engage in inclusive discourses about religions and other worldviews and how to critically examine how worldview positions are created. As seen in the data, although this is challenging, integrative classrooms can also provide a space in which inclusive discourses can be practiced and come about. If a mutual community of action is the goal, which could be seen as an inherent motivator in dialogical religious or worldview education, investigating and reflecting upon the discourses which are created in such spaces seems to be of inherent import.

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Chapter 5
Reflections of Preservice Teacher Identity from Christian-based Institutions: What Matters?

Yune Tran and Amy Lynn Dee

Abstract Teacher identity is complex, dynamic, ongoing, and worthy of examination in a postmodern era in which subjectivity reigns. This study examined the perceptions of preservice teachers' personal identity (e.g., gender, race, religious background, etc.) and how they influence preservice teachers' professional identity as a subject, pedagogical, and professional expert. Participants ($N = 81$) were preservice teachers from two different Christian-based institutions, one in Canada and one in the United States, who were completing the requirements for initial licensure. Findings from a survey measured the preservice teachers' perceptions based on two scales examining personal and professional identity. Results suggested that preservice teachers did not perceive race as impacting their personal identity as a teacher, nor did they perceive religion as an influence on their professional identity, even though they had chosen to attend Christian-based institutions. However, preservice teachers did perceive teacher preparation impacting their understanding of professionalism as they transitioned from learner to teacher in the field.

5.1 Introduction

The U.S. teaching population has stayed relatively homogenous with the majority of teachers mirroring the identities that reflect female, White European-American, and middle-class backgrounds (Howard, 2010; Loewus, 2017). While teacher education research has focused on a variety of topics such as self-identity, teacher development, and knowledge related to content, pedagogy, and the profession, there have been current studies that have encompassed teachers' professional identity and its influence in the classroom (Beijaard et al., 2000). As preservice teachers prepare for the field, they embark on a shift of their identity by moving through coursework,

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student teaching practicum, and finally, assuming new roles in today's challenging classroom environments. Thus, given the complexity of the profession and the role that identity plays both internally and externally, it is no surprise that the concept of teacher identity has populated the research (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Carinus et al., 2012). However, few studies exist in regard to the role of preservice teachers' personal identities and the relationship to professional identities, generally. This research is further lacking with preservice teachers who attend religious-based institutions. Personal identity is related to the individual characteristics that one gives to the self (e.g., gender, race, religion, etc.) (Stryker, 2007) whereas professional (teacher) identity is interpreted in terms of individual perceptions of themselves as a teacher and the teacher they hope to become (Carinus et al., 2012). Given the possible interconnectedness between personal and professional identity within the process of teacher development, there is a continuing need for research within these dimensions. This study explored whether perceptions of preservice teachers' personal identity (personal and social factors such as gender, race, age, economic status, and religious background) influence their professional identity. The research examined: (1) What perceptions of personal and professional identity exist for teacher candidates at religious-based institutions? (2) How does teacher candidates' personal identity intersect with their perceptions of professional identity? (3) How do teacher candidates define their role as a professional after completing their preparation experience?

5.2 Theoretical Perspectives

We situate the research within the work of Stryker's (2007) and Mead's (1934) structural symbolic interactionism framework whereby personal identity develops in social settings. Furthermore, identity theory originated from the structure and serves to explain how one acts, thus defining the self, through role choice behavior. Identity theory suggested that social interactions, within various situations, and the resulting interpretations ultimately shape the self. Stryker (2007) contended that identity, as a construct, is used in various contexts and each may hold distinctive definitions of identity. From sociology and psychology, the concept of identity development has found a place of prominence in teacher development and served as a way of viewing oneself as a professional teacher (Murphey, 1998).

5.3 Literature Review

Identity is a difficult concept to describe definitively and objectively. Complicated by Erikson's (1968) stages of development, personal identity is ever an evolving and dynamic process. The same principle applies to the concept of professional identity. Teacher identity, specifically, then becomes enigmatic and assumes various definitions as well as a subject for study. Two meta-analyses have focused on the descriptions of professional identity and methods used to analyze identity development as

multivariate and dynamic (Beijaard et al., 2004; Izadinia, 2013). Moreover, these studies highlighted the importance of continued inquiry into meaning, application, and research.

Of particular interest, Hoffman-Kipp (2008) recognized that a traditional definition of identity is ascending from structural symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934; Stryker, 2007) or social interactions, thereby defining teacher identity as the junction of personal, pedagogical, and political realms. The process by which teachers reflect upon those factors within a social context leads to the realization of identity. Hoffman-Kipp (2008) expounded that identity includes a conglomerate of values, experiences, beliefs, community, family, and personal narratives that intersect with the professional understandings gained in educator preparation programs and professional practice.

5.3.1 Identity and Christian Institutions

Given Hoffman-Kipp's (2008) definition, other research continued the studies of identity formation in preservice teachers. De Kock (2009) studied teachers in Dutch Protestant Schools to explore how ideological identity manifests when dealing with educational change and found that teachers identified with the school's denomination as a type of social group. However, within that group, they may have different experiences that shape their professional approaches and decisions. In contrast, Blumenfeld and Jaekel (2012) studied preservice teachers who identified as Christians and were enrolled in a teacher education program at a public university in the United States. Their objective was to determine preservice teacher consciousness with the concept of Christian privilege. Given the acceptance of ideology as a factor in identity, it stands to reason that it would emerge as a primary awareness for participants, but the researchers found that the majority of those interviewed were unaware of Christian privilege. The research not only highlighted the lack of understanding of the privileges associated with mainstream ideology, but the ongoing need to investigate how that identity manifests in professional identity and professional practice.

According to Abelman and Dalessandro (2009) 100% of the Christian Institutions studied had either a Christ-centered mission or vision statement defining their Christian Identity in higher education. Christian higher education diverges from secular institutions with the integration of faith and learning. Notwithstanding that the definition of faith and learning integration, like identity, is multifaceted and somewhat elusive, some made the case for addressing the topic as if it were a conclusive and definitive concept (Wolterstorff, 1980). Regardless, in the public sector, faith and learning remain, on the surface, segregated. Christian scholars at non-secular institutions must wrestle with semantics, theology, and pedagogy when attempting to define how, when, and where this integration takes place (Ream & Glanzer, 2007), in addition to the task of identifying, measuring, and assessing faith and learning integration as part of the institutional mission. Identities as Christian professors are one place that faith learning integration occurs (Lawrence et al., 2005; Sherr et al.,

2007) and it seems to reason, that it manifests in the identity of students as well, but the literature on Christian identity as related to professional identity after graduation remains sparse.

A Christian university stands as an intermediary for culture and faith. While not exactly formidable, the position of religious institutions as a means to perpetuate faith, or in some cases, a particular denomination, has declined (Benne, 2001; Burtchaell, 1998). Buckley's (2007) work addressed the conflicts between the Catholic Church and its universities, conflicts that are largely the same as those within the denominations in Burtchaell's study. Internal conflicts and the separation of the academic life from the spiritual life seem to form the pattern and cause for historically Christian universities to sever ties with denominations. That said, Glassford (2003) spoke of instructing, modeling, training, and discerning when he spoke of teaching in a kingdom context, but was uncertain of the lasting implications of that approach to professional development. Nonetheless, we do know that spiritual development and outcomes according to the work of Bowman and Small (2010) remain an important part of the college experience.

While spiritual development may exist as central to Christian institutions, little research links the personal to the professional. Rogers and Love (2007) studied graduate students to determine the degree of spiritual development in their College Student Personnel program and found that faculty relationships are central to spiritual development, but the study did not address professional identification.

5.3.2 Relationship of Religion to Teacher Identity, Behavior, and Dispositions

Few studies have examined the role of religion and its impact on teacher identity. On one hand, the research found no relationship that existed between one's religion and that of being a teacher. For example, Bryan and Revell (2011) conducted a study with 184 subjects at three universities in England and found that participants from all three universities had similar responses in that Christian student teachers did not mention their faith when questioned about their professional qualities of teaching. Furthermore, their research indicated that these emerging teachers felt that while faith may have been an important part of their personal identities, it was not linked to the professional identity or the qualities of a "good teacher" (Bryan & Revell, 2011). On the other hand, a few studies found some relationship between religion and that of the teaching profession. Tran (2016) investigated the interconnectedness of race, religion, culture, and identity of eight preservice teachers who attended a Christian university. Participants in the study alluded to their religious faith as having a significant factor in shaping their identity as they learned how to become a teacher. Findings suggested how the religious practices and values of these preservice teachers supported their philosophy for teaching as well as using familiar experiences (e.g., prayer, church attendance, ministry work) to develop their behavior, attitudes,

and dispositions as a teacher. Another study by Nelson (2010) explored the difficulty of separating religion and teacher identity, specifically with two public school teachers who were teaching in highly diverse public K-8 school environments. The two teachers had similar religious backgrounds which were derived from Christian Baptist upbringings. Both teachers embodied Christian beliefs and found it difficult to separate their religious identity from their professional duties in the classroom. One teacher, Jada, shared that being a Christian teacher in a public school allowed her to be more open about her religion with curriculum topics by taking ownership and embodying her own religious identity. While Jada understood that as a public school teacher, she could not proselytize others, she managed to focus on casual conversations about religion and not directly emphasize one over the other. The other teacher, Gwen, believed that not being able to mention religion or talk about it in the classroom proved to be more destructive. Gwen believed that students and teachers were more comfortable when they can associate with others who shared similar religious views as she stated,

> There are quite a few people here that pray, that go to church, that believe in God-they may not be Baptist- and who know what I do also. So, there's more freedom to talk, to just say things to each other, like 'pray for me' or 'I'm praying that…' and use religious terms like that. I think that when you come out and it's not this big secret, then everybody feels more comfortable and they come out too (Nelson, 2010, p. 344).

5.3.3 Professional Identity

In regards to the teaching domain, teacher identity has included student–teacher development, the teaching of subject matter, and pedagogical knowledge. Scholars have noted that teacher identity is often interchanged with professional identity and involves the integration of both personal and professional identities influenced by what teachers have determined as essential based on their experiences in practice along with personal backgrounds (Beijaard et al., 2004; Pennington & Richards, 2016). Komba et al. (2013) also emphasized that within a teaching context, professional identity includes expertise in one's content area, moral integrity, and expertise in didactical terms derived from contextual factors such as family, personal background, apprenticeship, and teaching traditions (Beijaard et al., 2004; Zare-ee & Ghasedi, 2014). Oruc's study (2013) used the concept of teacher identity synonymously with teacher professional identity (TPI) and specified that TPI formation is influenced by many factors and conditions inside and outside of the classroom. Factors inside the classroom included one's self-efficacy for being successful and how successful students believe the teacher is. Factors outside the classroom included whether the teacher has a family or whether the teacher has a second job. Also, other factors include a teacher's attitude, belief, mindset, etc. These factors along with how teachers define their roles which could vary according to the various interactions they have with their students, parents, colleagues, administrators, and the wider community can affect their TPI formation (Zare-ee & Ghasedi, 2014; Zhou et al., 2013).

Thus, other authors have emphasized that since TPI is not fixed, it is often negotiated through experience (Oruç, 2013; Pennington & Richards, 2016; Zare-ee & Ghasedi, 2014).

Teachers are expected to not only adopt knowledge, attitudes, and professional characteristics, but also develop a personal identity that encompasses these professional attributes. Thus, given the interconnectedness between personal and professional identity within the process of teacher development, there is a continuing need for research within these dimensions. Furthermore, when Christian institutions espouse a Christ-centered education and professional preparation, faculty may anticipate the explicit role faith may possibly take professional identity formation. This study explored whether perceptions of preservice teachers' personal identity (personal and social factors such as gender, race, age, economic status, and religious background) influence their professional identity.

5.4 Methods and Data Sources

Participants for this study were teacher candidates enrolled at two private institutions, one located in a suburban area of Portland, Oregon (Institution A, $N = 41$), and the other, in a large urban area of Toronto, Canada (Institution B, $N = 40$). Candidates in Institution A included students from the traditional undergraduate program completing a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Education with initial licensure (60-credit core with field experience) in multiple subjects for PK-5 settings and students completing the Masters of Teaching (MAT) with initial licensure (36-credit core with field experience) in multiple subjects in elementary and middle school or single subject in high school. Program length varied across the formats to include the traditional four years of undergraduate coursework; 10.5 months for MAT full-time or up to 20 months for MAT part-time. Candidates in Institution B included students with a post-baccalaureate degree completing a 16-month Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) with certification in Primary/Junior (Kindergarten to Grade 3 and Grades 4–6) or Junior/Intermediate (Grades 4–6 and Grades 7–10 with a focus in one subject area), and Intermediate/Senior (Grades 7–10 and Grades 11 and 12 with two subject specialties) given the requirements from the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT).

These institutions were chosen given the common theme of preparing teacher candidates from a Christian faith-informed context to prepare students spiritually, academically, and professionally. Teacher candidates from both institutions had participated in a variety of foundational and content courses (e.g., curriculum design, language and literacy, classroom management, assessment, social justice and equity, math and science, etc.) including several educational activities throughout their

programs that embedded fieldwork several days of the week. The one notable difference that was apparent in coursework requirements was that candidates from Institution B had to complete a three-credit course with a choice between Christian perspectives in education or Catholic perspectives in education. Candidates at both institutions had the required full-time practicum experience. Participants included preservice teachers who matriculated at both universities and were in their final stage of program completion and fulfilling practicum experiences for state and/or provincial certification during the spring semester of 2018.

A survey instrument was used as the primary source of data. Eligible participants from each cohort of graduating preservice teachers received an email invitation to offer consent.

A total of 81 surveys were completed. The survey was developed by the authors but adopted several professional identity statements from the Dutch survey with items related to the teacher as a subject matter, pedagogical, and professional knowledge expert (Beijaard et al., 2000). For the professional category of the survey, the authors added statements related to teacher dispositions, character, and ways in which teachers interact with people and issues within their practice.

The final survey consisted of 20 total statements each on two scales related to personal identity and professional identity. Both scales were measured on a five-point *Likert* scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Four statements were allocated to each personal identity status (e.g., gender, age, religious background, race, and economic status) in which responses examined candidates' perceptions of how identity statuses applied during their preparation program. Several items from the personal identity scale were deleted during analysis since those items measured constructs of professional knowledge. The professional identity scale included seven statements each for perceptions of subject and pedagogical knowledge along with six statements on professional knowledge gained during the preparation program. Internal reliability scores from the survey consisted of 0.84 on the personal identity scale and 0.95 on the professional teacher identity scale using Cronbach's alpha. Demographic information (e.g., gender, race, religion, etc.) was included in the survey with an option in each question to decline specific criteria.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze demographic data and mean scores from the survey revealed the lowest and highest self-rated items according to statements of personal or professional identity. Inferential statistics were employed in STATA to find whether any correlations existed. Three open-ended questions asked participants to focus on their understanding of what it means to be a subject, pedagogical, and professional expert as a result of their learning in the programs. Responses were coded using in vivo codes (Creswell, 2013) taken directly from participants' comments.

5.5 Findings

Candidate demographics ($N = 81$) from the highest self-identification categories included: (a) gender—78% female, 20% male; (b) age—35% between 20 and 24 years-old, 34% between 25 and 29 years-old, (c) ethnic/racial background—61% White/Anglo, 13% Asian/Pacific Islander, 6% Hispanic/Latino; (d) religious background—80% Christian, 9% without any religious affiliation; and (e) economic status—27% upper-middle-class, 42% middle-class. Candidates' practicum experiences included 38% urban, 47% suburban, and 15% rural settings. The types of licensure/certification for all candidates included 38% multiple subjects, 30% primary/junior, 39% single subject (which may include primary/junior), 23% English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) or Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), and 13% Special Education. The following are tables of mean scores for candidates' perceptions of personal and professional identity.

As indicated in the personal identity scale in Table 5.1, the lowest mean averages included perceptions related to the teacher belonging to a religious group (2.36) and attitudes related to the economic background (2.36), whereas the highest mean averages included attitudes related to one's religion as an important role for teaching (3.53) and one's age in supporting knowledge and skills for teaching (3.3).

As indicated in the professional identity scale from Table 5.2, 19 of the 20 items had an average mean score of over four points except for one statement related to subject knowledge as a deciding factor for teaching. Items from pedagogical knowledge received the highest mean averages (4.73), followed by professional knowledge (4.64), and ending with subject knowledge (3.53).

No correlations were found between personal and professional identity scales given the similar demographic backgrounds of candidates. The following tables compared the mean averages between the two institutions with candidates' perceptions of personal identity in regard to their religious background (Table 5.3) and economic status (Table 5.4).

Table 5.1 Perceptions of personal identity ($N = 81$)

Perception statement	Mean score
My gender has influenced my ability to develop as a teacher. (G)	3
Religion plays an important role in helping me be the best teacher I can be. (R)	3.53
I believe my economic status prepares me well to be a teacher. (C)	2.96
My confidence in developing as a teacher is influenced by my own racial identity. (E)	2.84
I believe that a teacher's age helps her/him be more effective. (A)	2.77
To develop fully as a teacher, I think it is important to be a member of a religious community. (R)	2.36
Important to my development as a teacher is being a particular age. (A)	2.44
I believe my family's economic status influences my ability to teach. (C)	2.65
I believe that my preparation as a teacher is influenced by my racial heritage. (E)	2.43
The way I look at teaching is determined by the way I belong to a religious community. (R)	2.7
My age allows me to develop knowledge and skills that are critical to the profession. (A)	3.3
My knowledge of becoming a teacher is influenced by the gender of my past teachers. (G)	2.51
Important to my development as a teacher is being from a particular economic background. (C)	2.36
I believe that my strengths as a teacher come with my age. (A)	2.85
My racial identity is important to how I see myself as a teacher. (E)	2.57
The norms and values I bring to the profession are characterized by my religious identity. (R)	3.26
My economic status allows me to relate to my students. (C)	2.8

G = Gender; R = Religion; E = Ethnicity/Race; A = Age; C = Class/Economic Status

As indicated above, Table 5.3 showed candidates from Institution B rated themselves slightly higher than Institution A on attitudes of their religious background, whereas Table 5.4 showed candidates from Institution A rated themselves slightly higher than Institution B in attitudes of economic status.

Compare means also showed differences in attitudes of religious and economic backgrounds influencing personal identities based on the school locale where candidates were completing their practicum experiences. The following tables compared the mean averages of school locale (urban versus suburban) with candidates' perceptions of personal identity in regard to their religious background (Table 5.5) and economic status (Table 5.6).

As indicated above, Table 5.5 showed candidates' mean scores that were slightly higher in urban settings for perceptions of the religious background, whereas Table 5.6 showed candidates' mean scores that were slightly higher in suburban settings for perceptions of economic status.

Table 5.2 Perceptions of professional teacher identity ($N = 81$)

Perception statement	Mean score
It is important to plan lessons where students have interaction with each other. (P)	4.63
In preparing my lessons, I pay a lot of attention to how students are learning the content. (S)	4.53
It is important as a professional to advocate for individual students' needs. (PF)	4.72
The subject(s) I studied has been a deciding factor for my choice for the teaching profession. (S)	3.53
I am conscious of creating good relationships with students. (P)	4.73
It is important to continually serve my school community as a professional. (PF)	4.52
I have good subject knowledge for my work as a teacher. (S)	4.26
I want students to show me that they are learning the content. (S)	4.52
I use the background knowledge of students to plan my lessons. (P)	4.42
I believe that ethical conduct is critical outside the classroom. (PF)	4.52
It is very important to me that students learn the content. (S)	4.42
If I notice a problem in how students are learning, I try to do something about it. (P)	4.64
I support my lessons with as many strategies and tools as possible. (P)	4.49
I believe that communication and engagement with families are necessary for my role as a professional. (PF)	4.51
I appreciate discussions with other peers that are oriented around subject-related content. (S)	4.46
I create lessons so that students learn the content well. (S)	4.43
I regularly evaluate what students know and don't know in order to plan future lessons. (P)	4.35
I pay close attention to the identification of where students are in the learning process and adjust the lesson for learning. (PF)	4.42
I place a lot of value in planning lessons to meet students' different needs. (P)	4.47
I believe continued personal development influences my individual professional performance. (PF)	4.64

S = Subject Knowledge; P = Pedagogical Knowledge; PF = Professional Knowledge

Several themes emerged from open-ended responses. Topics that emerged almost immediately required analysis using axial coding as a secondary interpretation of the recognizable themes. Participants responded overwhelmingly that a subject expert has a solid background in content knowledge. Emerging themes for *content expert* were (a) various teaching methods for the subject and (b) a commitment to continued learning in the content area. Table 5.7 included a selection of responses from participants regarding their understanding of a content expert.

For *pedagogical expert*, themes were: (c) teaching for inclusion, (d) teaching involves relevance and adapting to change, and (e) using a variety of teaching

Table 5.3 Comparison of two institutions on perceptions of religious background ($N = 81$)

Perception statement	Institution A mean score	Institution B mean score
Religion plays an important role in helping me be the best teacher I can be	3.44	3.63
To develop fully as a teacher, I think it is important to be a member of a religious community	2.27	2.45
The way I look at teaching is determined by the way I belong to a religious community	2.68	2.73
The norms and values I bring to the profession are characterized by my religious identity	3.25	3.27

Table 5.4 Comparison of two institutions on perceptions of economic status ($N = 81$)

Perception statement	Institution A mean score	Institution B mean score
I believe my economic status prepares me well to be a teacher	3.15	2.77
I believe my family's economic status influences my ability to teach	2.83	2.48
Important to my development as a teacher is being from a particular economic background	2.49	2.23
My economic status allows me to relate to my students	2.83	2.77

Table 5.5 Comparison of candidates' placement in school locale on perceptions of religious background ($N = 81$)

Perception statement	Urban placement mean score	Suburban placement mean score
Religion plays an important role in helping me be the best teacher I can be	3.74	3.55
To develop fully as a teacher, I think it is important to be a member of a religious community	2.52	2.37
The way I look at teaching is determined by the way I belong to a religious community	2.90	2.76
The norms and values I bring to the profession are characterized by my religious identity	3.45	3.29

Table 5.6 Comparison of candidates' placement in school locale on perceptions of economic status ($N = 81$)

Perception statement	Urban mean score	Suburban mean score
I believe my economic status prepares me well to be a teacher	2.81	3.16
I believe my family's economic status influences my ability to teach	2.48	2.99
Important to my development as a teacher is being from a particular economic background	2.42	2.42
My economic status allows me to relate to my students	2.84	2.87

Table 5.7 Candidates' responses related to their understanding of a content expert

Various teaching methods	Commitment to learning the content
I have evolved from the traditional way of teaching where there were lectures only. I have learned the constructionist way of teaching by involving students as equal contributors by asking questions and adding their voices to the class	That I will be continually learning, reflecting, evaluating, and keeping current
I need to know the Ontario curriculum inside and out, be aware of the materials available to me for teaching, and be able to create separate lessons for students with IEP and use different strategies for D.I	You can never be an expert. There is always room to improve and work toward that elusive aspect of an expert
I hope to teach mathematics in the future, and I learned that as a "math expert", I must be knowledgeable in the subject area and prepared to teach my students in a variety of ways	I am also a student, and I will continue to learn. I do not know everything, and I will not know the answers to all of my students' questions. However, as an expert, I know where to go to find these answers. As a teacher, I want my students to learn as much as they can, even if that means they become more of a 'math expert' than myself
I need to be aware of the content in the curriculum in order to make sure my students are learning what they need to learn. I also need to make sure that I am teaching my kids to the best of my ability and admitting when I do not know something but then going out and finding out those missing answers. However, I do believe this extends past the curriculum and we need to teach students things about "academics"	That I continue to practice subject content in order to reach mastery and comfortability with a specific subject
It is my responsibility to ensure that the learning is accessible to all of my students and to make them feel comfortable, so that they are able to fully be engaged	I must know enough as a starting point to plan and prepare lessons. I believe strongly that I'm continuously learning, especially during planning and preparation

methods. Table 5.8 included a selection of responses from participants regarding their understanding of a pedagogical expert.

For *professional experts*, candidates used the same terminology, simply responding to the definition that professionalism means behaving professionally. Only a subset of participants indicated themes related to (f) professional integrity and (g) ethical responsibility/accountability. Table 5.9 included a selection of responses from participants in their understanding of a professional expert.

Table 5.8 Candidates' responses related to their understanding of pedagogical expert

Teaching for inclusion	Teaching involves relevance and adapting to change	Using a variety of teaching methods
I must understand the diversities of each student and understand the struggles they face. I must steer away from bias and keep an open mind for open dialog	Keeping an open mind when teaching and always welcoming new material in their classroom	I will find all the necessary information and training to help the students succeed in their school year and furthermore
That I take into account each and every students' needs and teach based on their individual needs	Children change adults as much as adults change them	I must attempt to develop my teaching skills and practices every year
It means I form strong and trusting relationships with each one of them which helps to nurture a safe learning	That I am in the mindset of looking to accompany learners, care for, and about them, and bring learning to life	Being aware of different ways of reaching students on an academic level as well as making the most out of all the resources that are available to me
I bring forth my knowledge of the subject and implement teaching and learning strategies that will ensure student achievement for all	I need to be in a continuous growth mindset of learning	Exploring teaching methods that can help the students most effectively
I need to be aware of different learning styles and that students have many different needs beyond academics, so it is important to look at the whole child	Constantly learning and improving my practice to better serve my students and the community at hand	I need to be creative and flexible in coming up with personal tools and strategies that best engage my students
	I need to understand my own worldview in order to teach the content in a meaningful way	Teaching using all the tools of my craft, so that my students are actively participating and learning

Table 5.9 Candidates' responses related to their understanding of professional expert

Professional integrity	Ethical responsibility/accountability
Love, community, collaboration, modesty	I am following applying all the OCT standards and its ethical conduct and beyond. Courtesy toward all members of the scholastic community is very important
Love and forgiveness	I am accountable for my actions and behavior inside and outside the school community. That I meet and continually maintain all professional standards
That I must be professional at all times. No matter who it may be with, whether it be peers, other teachers, administration of my students, I must also demonstrate a professional attitude and mindset	Follow the OCT standard of practice and ethical standards. Using my personal and religious beliefs as guidelines to be professional
I need to establish good relationships with everyone in my community	As a professional expert, it is my responsibility to embody the ethical standards and standards of practice for the teaching profession as determined by the OCT
Conducting myself in a professional manner, and living up to the expectations of professionalism, even if it means standing up for what I believe is right	
That I am held to a high standard to keep up to date on research relating to my field to best serve my students and the community	
I am inclusive, considerate, professional, equitable, collegial, and provide a service that I believe in	

5.6 Discussion

This study extends the conceptualization of teacher identity with contextual factors of personal identity that can influence candidates' attitudes and beliefs in themselves, their teaching, and their professional role. The candidates from both institutions, one in the Pacific Northwest (Institution A) and one in Canada (Institution B) were surprisingly similar. As aforementioned, candidates from Institution B were required to complete the Christian or Catholic perspectives in education course as part of their preparation program; however, the slight increase in mean scores with attitudes of their religious background was still not significant. The reflective component of the course might explain why candidates scored only slightly higher than candidates from Institution A. Candidates from Institution A who were likely placed in suburban settings ranked the impact of economic influences on teaching slightly higher than candidates from Institution B.

On the personal identity scale, the lowest mean averages included perceptions related to the teacher belonging to a religious group (2.36) and attitudes related to

one's economic background (2.36), whereas the highest mean averages included attitudes related to one's religion as an important role for teaching (3.53) and one's age in supporting knowledge and skills for teaching (3.3). Findings from the personal identity scale revealed that teacher preparation programs in Christian-based contexts do not influence candidates' beliefs that religion plays a role in professional identity even if religion was important to oneself. Additionally, the low overall mean average from the racial identity category (2.43–2.84) revealed that candidates from both institutions do not consider racial identity as impacting their personal identity as a teacher, thus raising questions about an internalized understanding of institutional racism and White privilege.

Alternatively, these emerging teachers have separated their personal self and their corresponding identity from the professional identity and the public persona of a teacher along with its accompanying qualities and skills. In the professional identity scale, 19 of the 20 items had an average mean score of over four points except for one statement related to subject knowledge as a deciding factor for teaching. Items from pedagogical knowledge received the highest mean averages (4.73), followed by professional knowledge (4.64), and ending with subject knowledge (3.53). Hence, candidates likely perceived these programs exclusively as career and professional development opportunities.

Findings on the professional identity scale suggested that preparation programs have supported candidates' conception of teaching where the traditional teacher-centered roles have shifted toward more student-centered orientations, thus changing instructional practice when needed. Current trends in pedagogy and a focus on student growth may account for this change. Finally, preparation programs have supported candidates' understanding of professionalism for continued success in their development of a teacher.

No correlations were found between personal and professional identity scales given the similar demographic backgrounds of candidates. However, compared means show differences in attitudes of religious and economic backgrounds influencing personal identities between the two institutions, as well as the school locale where candidates were completing their practicum experiences (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4). Candidates from Institution B rated themselves slightly higher than Institution A in attitudes of their religious background whereas candidates from Institution A rated themselves slightly higher than Institution B in attitudes of economic status. Mean scores were slightly higher in urban settings for perceptions of their religious background whereas mean scores were slightly higher in suburban settings for perceptions of economic status (see Tables 5.5 and 5.6).

Several themes emerged from open-ended responses. Topics that emerged almost immediately required analysis using axial coding as a secondary interpretation of the recognizable themes. Participants responded overwhelmingly that a subject expert has a solid background in content knowledge. Emerging themes for *content experts* were (a) various teaching methods for the subject and (b) a commitment to continued learning in the content area. For *pedagogical expert*, themes were: (c) teaching for inclusion, (d) teaching relevant content, and (e) using a variety of teaching methods. For *professional expert*, candidates used the same terminology, simply responding

to the definition that professionalism means behaving professionally. Only a subset of participants indicated themes: (f) collegiality and (g) life-long learning.

The three knowledge areas from open-ended responses contained overlap and not a signal area had unique qualities except for professionalism where participants alluded to ethical behavior and collegiality. Previous literature highlighted the ever-changing nature of teacher identity (Erikson, 1968). This research further supports the convoluted definition of identity and that candidates have ranked themselves lower in personal identity factors (e.g., religion; race) over professional praxis which they view as superseding the affective nature of teaching.

5.7 Conclusion

In a university classroom filled with students completing a teacher education program, we must stop and ask students to examine what specific content means to them as humans with an ethical mandate, either as teachers who care about justice or as Christian teachers, to practice inclusion, teach to a standard, differentiate for diverse learners, or present content with which they do not agree. Such conversations add to the identity formation both at a personal and professional level for these emerging teachers. These discussions and questions about how content knowledge influence and touch the soul should cause students to unite the academic with faith in ways that generate growth as students, as future teachers, and as humans. While Christian institutions must prepare future teachers to teach in all settings and to serve as examples of excellence in practice, we must evaluate how, and if it is even appropriate in an inclusive professional preparation program, to also teach ways to incorporate personal faith identity into professional identity. If deemed appropriate, we must then grapple with the possibility of limiting applicants and thus our ability to elevate faith within professionalism in a post-truth era.

Christian educators recognize that culture and faith can inform one another through deep questioning and through Christ we can claim a common identity. Because learning requires the assimilation of new knowledge through that already known when Christians filter new content information through faith, and perhaps even including specific denominational teaching, integration of learning and faith naturally occurs. The spirited and active interaction between faith and professional identity could serve as a crux of the professional preparation programs at Christian institutions if we are willing to limit, even if unintentionally, enrollment to those professing Christian beliefs. Otherwise, we risk marginalizing future education professionals who enroll in our excellent programs for professional development and not for spiritual development. The dilemma is not new. Many programs, to remain viable and profitable have abandoned their denominational connections (Burtchaell, 1998).

Ultimately, we see a disconnect between what Christian faculty at Christian institutions believe has shaped their students, based on institutional mission, and what those students in teacher preparation programs consider as important professional identity factors based on the study outcomes. Perhaps we have merely done a good

job of teaching the importance of the separation of church and state, or we don't influence our students in ways in which we believe. We could argue that Christian education remains paramount in the liberal arts or the core educational program, and that professional skills development remains focused on only proficiencies and professional dispositions that are void of personal ideologies. On the other hand, we could integrate faith into professional development at a cost of perhaps explicit or implicit exclusion. Whatever it is or whatever we choose, the results of this study indicate that our attempts at faith integration do not have a lasting influence on the professional identities of our graduates.

We believe that faith and learning merge to elevate Christian education to that of rigor and relevance.

Adopting Buckley's (2007) position that "the religious intrinsically engages the academic and the academic intrinsically engages the religious" (p. 16) acknowledges that any quest to know deeply ultimately leads back to basic questions of faith, the source of truth, and what it means to be human. Even for those who are not Christian, the need remains strong for integrated personal and professional identity that examines the truth of who we are—and it matters.

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Chapter 6 The Outrageous Idea of Christian Student Affairs: How Christian Chief Student Affairs Officers Envision Their Practice

Theodore F. Cockle, Perry L. Glanzer, Elijah G. Jeong, and Britney N. Graber

Abstract Despite a growing body of literature depicting specific aspects of a Christian approach to student affairs, a discipline-wide theological vision for Christian student life professionals does not exist. This paper reports on the first stage of a larger research project that attempts to meet this need by investigating how the Christian intellectual tradition animates the practice of student affairs professionals at Christian colleges and universities. We used Benne's (2001) typology to identify 192 "Orthodox" and "Critical Mass" institutions of higher education in the Christian Protestant tradition. We then sent a mixed-methods survey to their chief student affairs officers (CSAOs) and received 69 responses, capturing their initial reflections on what makes their institution's student life practice(s) distinctively Christian. Our findings reveal that some of the participants' responses included language and practices common to non-Christian student affairs, but most referred to words, theological concepts, and practices selectively borrowed from the Christian tradition. The latter distinctively shaped the aims and methods of Christian student affairs.

6.1 Introduction

In 1996, a study of senior student affairs officers at Catholic institutions produced findings that were alarming for many Catholic administrators (Estanek, 1996). The researchers found that although the senior student affairs officers recognized that integrating the Catholic identity and tradition into their work was an important element of

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their job, they struggled to accomplish this goal because "they did not have sufficient knowledge and formation to assist them in their role of interpreter of the Catholic identity of the institution in the realm of student life. Nor did they have somewhere to go to learn" (James & Estanek, 2012, p. 143). This led to the creation of the Association for Student Affairs at Catholic Colleges and Universities (ASACCU) and ultimately a document entitled *Principles of Good Practice for Student Affairs at Catholic Colleges and Universities* (Estanek & James, 2007, 2010). This document has proved immensely successful and has received significant use among the large majority of Catholic campuses by both student life leaders as well as presidents (James & Estanek, 2012). These efforts to develop an agreed-upon framework have been further bolstered by the publication of an edited volume based on the principles of good practice (Estanek et al., 2017).

Although Protestant student affairs leaders actually helped birth their own organization much earlier than their Catholic counterparts (i.e., the Association for Christians in Student Development established in 1980), a common statement of best practices for Protestant Christian student life professionals did not exist before we began our study (Glanzer et al., 2020). Student life professionals at Christian colleges have published a few edited books about unique Christian approaches to student life (e.g., Beers & Trudeau, 2015; Guthrie, 1997; Herrmann & Riedel, 2018), but these volumes were not meant to offer a comprehensive theological vision. Our project, therefore, seeks to address this void. The specific purpose of our overall study is to determine how Christianity animates the practice of student affairs professionals at Christian colleges and universities. Our goal is to demonstrate that, despite the limited literature on the topic, the idea of Christian student affairs is not all that outrageous. This paper reports on the first stage of our research project which focused exclusively on the views of chief student affairs officers (CSAOs) at Protestant Christian colleges and universities.

6.2 Review of the Literature

Although student affairs practice has some roots in distinctively Christian organizations, such as the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations (YMCA, YWCA) present on many campuses in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Alleman & Finnegan, 2009; Setran, 2007; Turpin, 2016), current professional theory and practice have grown far more secularized. To accommodate and remain relevant at pluralistic institutions, the field of student affairs looked to non-faith-based metanarratives as the basis for their theory and practice (Glanzer & Ream, 2009; Marsden, 1994). This reliance on non-faith-based narratives, combined with the fact that Christian institutions tend to synthesize research rather than create it (Noll, 1994) would seem to explain the dearth of student development theory with theological language or with a distinctively Christian approach to student affairs. Higher education scholars have researched the subjects of religion and spirituality (e.g., Astin et al., 2010; Mayhew et al., 2016; Parks, 2011), but these works do not

address or set forth claims regarding a distinctively Christian student affairs practice. Therefore, even student affairs professionals trained at Christian institutions are often forced to draw on the theory that pays little attention to metaphysical assumptions or claims, and when it does, it does so from a non-Christian worldview (Patton et al., 2016). As a result, it is our belief that the student affairs profession would benefit from a deeper theological conversation that is comparable to faculty discussions about the integration of faith and learning (Holmes, 1987).

Many Christian scholars have written on "the integration of faith and learning" as it relates to faculty (e.g., Holmes, 1987; Noll, 1994, 2011; Marsden, 1997; Ream & Glanzer, 2007)—the concept that faith and scholarship are not mutually exclusive, but mutually informing. Instead of understanding faith as a private matter, these authors suggest that Christian faith and theology are relevant to their professional work as researchers and teachers. Despite a substantial body of research on faith and learning for academics, relatively little has been written about how theology informs and even animates the aims and methods of professional student affairs practice.

Our recent, larger review of the literature (Glanzer et al., 2019a) revealed that much of the previous literature was written by practitioners, especially vice presidents of student life, who focused on practical wisdom about certain student life practices from both Protestant (e.g., Balzer & Reed, 2012; Beers & Trudeau, 2015; Guthrie, 1997; Herrmann and Riedel, 2018) and Catholic (e.g., Estanek, 2002; Estanek et al., 2017) perspectives. Although these authors have significantly contributed to and grown the field, there is still a lack of literature that builds a comprehensive theological framework for student affairs.

6.3 Methods

We used a mixed-methods design within a grounded theory methodology to answer the question: *How does Christianity transform student affairs practice?* The results reported in this paper are taken from the first phase of our larger grounded theory study. Grounded theory was "discovered" by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a methodology that allows a theory to arise naturally from the data, rather than presupposing theory on social realities. Our initial categories reported here came from the qualitative responses in order to elevate the unique experiences of individuals and the meaning they make of those experiences (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). We used descriptive statistics to analyze trends within our quantitative sample.

6.3.1 Identifying Christian Colleges and Universities

Benne (2001) provides a list of helpful empirical criteria by which to make distinctions between colleges that prioritize the Christian mission and paradigm, and church-related colleges that use a secular paradigm to organize their vision and ethos. We

believe his typology provides a strong basis by which to identify Christian higher education institutions in the Protestant tradition. Following our empirical assessment of Protestant institutions using Benne's typology, we found 192 institutions prioritizing their Christian mission and paradigm, and sent the survey to their chief student affairs officers (CSAOs).

6.3.2 The Survey Instrument

The electronic survey we sent to CSAOs at Christian colleges and universities asked a few questions that would help us build a fundamental framework for this study. The core of this initial survey focused on three questions:

(1) On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 6 (extremely well), how well has your formal academic education helped you integrate your institution's Christian mission with student affairs practice?
(2) What would be the reason for your answer?
(3) If your institution's board were to ask you to identify two or more key practices, programs, stories, etc., that exemplify how your institution's Christian faith commitment animates student affairs practice, what would they be?

We also asked for the educational background of the participants (highest granted degree and granting institution).

The brevity of the survey was intentionally designed to reflect the oftentimes quick and reactive nature of student affairs work. Despite their brevity, participants' reflections provided us with the building blocks upon which further knowledge, wisdom, and theories could be built as we advanced into the subsequent stages of our larger project.

6.3.3 Limitations

Before reporting on our method of analysis or our findings, there are a few limitations worth highlighting. First, although we found 192 orthodox and critical mass institutions (Benne, 2001), we received responses from student affairs professionals at only 69 institutions. In light of this limitation, we have worked to bolster transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) by including a "thick description" of the aggregated participant demographics and various institutional types at the beginning of our findings section. We chose not to disaggregate institutional or personal information with quoted responses—beyond the CSAO's educational background—in order to protect the anonymity of our participants. In select cases, we obtained permission from the participants to quote the mission statement they had shared in full.

Secondly, because this survey was sent only to CSAOs, our findings and discussion do not reflect Christian professionals at all levels of student affairs practice. Additional reports on the next stages of our larger research project have addressed this gap (e.g., Glanzer et al., 2020).

6.3.4 Analysis

Coding methods associated with grounded theory were utilized to analyze the survey responses (questions 2 and 3, above) and some descriptive statistics were used to analyze how demographic factors influenced a participant's sense of preparation for faith integration in their student affairs work (question 1, above). In our qualitative analysis, we used multiple coding approaches, such as open- and cross-comparative coding, to analyze the data, form our categories, and create subsequent frameworks or emerging theoretical constructs.

6.4 Findings

We received responses from 69 CSAOs employed at Christian institutions from every region of the country (i.e., West, Midwest, Southwest, Southeast, and Northeast). In addition to regional diversity, the range of denominational identities resembled the diversity and make-up of Christian institutions as reported in our previously published research (Glanzer et al., 2019b).

The participants ranged from 30- to 70-years-old, but the majority (over 60%) were over 50-years-old. The participant group was largely male (73%) and overwhelmingly White (90%). All but one participant had some graduate training, and a majority (over 60%) had earned a doctorate. Two-thirds of those with a doctorate earned their terminal degree at a non-faith-based institution. Interestingly, however, over 73% of CSAOs, whose highest degree was a master's, earned this credential at a Christian institution.

Overall, participants indicated they were somewhat well- and well-trained to integrate Christian faith with student affairs practice (mean of 4.62 on a scale of 1-not at all trained to 6-extremely well-trained). Those who received their highest degree from a non-Christian institution ($n = 31$) had a mean of 4.19. In contrast, those who received their highest degree from a faith-based institution ($n = 28$) had a higher mean of 5.04.

When we asked them what they thought exemplified their Christian approach to student affairs, the CSAOs responded in different ways. Some responded by identifying or implying the overall aims of student development practice. Others responded more practically with stories about particular programs or methods. Still, others offered something in-between by combining both extremes. In what follows, we trace the themes that arose from their responses.

6.4.1 Aims

Aims, as we defined them, refer to the participants' responses that discussed an abstract and ultimate end or purpose for their work in student affairs. Thirty-four of the respondents (49%) included aims in their responses. We found two general categories of responses that could be further sub-divided into four similar types of sub-categories.

6.4.1.1 Moral Aims

The first category refers to responses that included moral aims likely found on secular or pluralistic campuses. We refer to "moral" here in the broadest sense of the term, as in "moral formation," (for more information, please see Glanzer (2013)) and not the narrower formation of individual "morals." Our participants' moral goals had three foci:

Moral Goals Focused on the Individual Student. This category includes goals such as "purpose and identity development," "leadership development," "learning to live the good life," and learning to "understand their calling" or have "vocational formation across the entire educational experience." As the last quote indicates, a significant subset of this theme was tied to vocation or calling. A CSAO with a doctorate from a public land-grant institution shared, "Calling [is] one of our pillars…" Elaborating further, he shared a specific learning outcome: "Students will develop a sense of purpose, explore the concept of calling, and recognize specific opportunities for contribution." This category is distinct from purpose and identity development in that it deals with the broader notion of moral development.

Moral Goals Focused on the College Community. This group of respondents wanted to create a particular community of character, one that was "true," "loving," and "peaceful." They also wanted students to learn how to "participate," "serve," and "engage" in this community. In these responses, the aim of student affairs practices took the focus off of the individual and shifted it to the larger campus community.

Moral Goals Focused on the Outside Community. A handful of participant responses discussed goals of "meaningful service," community service," "community engagement," and "global service." These responses implied a moral goal beyond the campus grounds.

Although some of the languages obviously came from unique emphases within the participants' various Christian traditions (e.g., "love" and "vocation"), overall these goals were not necessarily unique to Christian institutions.

6.4.1.2 Christian Aims

The second set of aims focused on distinctly spiritual or Christian ends with language that was rooted in theological or biblical terminology. These responses also had four foci:

Spiritual or Faith Goals for Individual Students. By far the largest category of responses ($n = 20$), this group of respondents wanted their students to experience spiritual "development," "formation," "growth," "maturity," and "mentoring." They also mentioned hoping for "faith development," "a mature faith," or "faith integration" Still others mentioned they wanted "to connect our students to their faith journey" and "to restore/strengthen a student's faith." At rare times, this goal was expressed in specifically Christian language. For instance, one leader sought to help students achieve "a healthy life in the love of Jesus Christ while they are pursuing their academic degree." Another response used the language of transformation to describe their institution's ultimate aim for student affairs practice: "we strive to help students examine their hearts and reflect on how their Christian faith can transform their lives." In these responses, distinctly spiritual goals were expressed in terms of individual students and their formation.

Communal Spiritual Growth. The second category of responses involved "communal faith development." In these responses, "Christian community," "living as the community of Jesus," and "modeling life together based on biblical principles" were held as the ultimate aims. We should note that a focus on the above two goals was not exclusive. For instance, one staff member described her goal as "to integrate Christian faith, institutional and personal."

Discipleship for Christian Endeavors. A dozen respondents saw discipleship, mentoring, or equipping students for particular Christian endeavors as the primary end of their student affairs practice. A CSAO who thought her master's degree from a Christian institution prepared her extremely well to integrate faith with practice shared how her division's commitment to discipleship flows out of her institution's Christian mission:

> Student Life is seen as a central component to the formative education that happens across the college. The mission of [the institution] is to equip students to think deeply, act justly, and live wholeheartedly as Christ's agents of renewal in the world. This mission undergirds all that we do in Student Life. In fact, our divisional mission statements map onto the larger college mission and read: "Student Life cultivates co-curricular learning experiences that disciple, develop, and equip students to thrive as Christ's agents of renewal in the world."

As in this case, the responses that fell under this theme saw discipleship as a means to a particular Christian goal (e.g., "thrive as Christ's agents of renewal in the world"). Another participant wrote that her department aspired to help students learn how to "live like Jesus, treating everyone as equal, and serving all." These responses implied that discipleship is not an end in-and-of-itself but serves to equip students for distinctly Christian endeavors.

Ends Focused on God/Christ. In seven cases, respondents discussed particular ends that would direct the focus of their work toward God/Christ. One CSAO shared

that her student life staff tried to help students learn "how to glorify God in the fullness of who they are called to be." Again, we wish to note that this theme was also combined with other themes. For instance, one participant wrote that he wanted students "to be servant leaders as they honor the Lord and mature in their spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical growth." As can be seen, these responses combined both individual forms of development (both spiritual and other) with a focus on honoring God. Another leader described her desire to "cultivate an academic community in which students flourish as they encounter the Triune God with their whole lives and discover the joy of their vocation." Here, we see one of the most comprehensive statements about the integration of Christian faith with student affairs practice, since it encompassed a combination of individual, communal, and God-focused goals. Interestingly, few participant responses included God as the ultimate end, and those that did often did so in conjunction with other aims.

6.4.2 Means

The more practical "means" refer to the specific and practical methods forty-four CSAOs shared in their responses. Some CSAOs only shared the specific methods that exemplified their Christian approach; others specifically referenced their methods in the context of achieving a greater aim. We have included instances of both within the five themes we found in this group of responses: (1) common student life programming, (2) individual Christian practices, (3) corporate Christian practices, (4) restorative discipline, and (5) staff faith commitments.

6.4.2.1 Common Student Life Programming

A prevalent "means" to effect larger aims offered by CSAOs referred to student life programming common beyond Christian or even faith-based higher education. Responses included phrases such as "student leadership," "leadership development programming," "clubs and organizations," "res[idence]-life training," "programs and experiences," "service," or "community service." A CSAO with a doctorate from a Christian institution listed the range of opportunities that exemplified the type of programs mentioned: "…students can serve in more than 200 positions in areas ranging from student government to campus ministries, transitions, residence life and community life, plus athletics, university choir, and our club's program." Like this one, many CSAOs provided a list of student programs that are commonly found on non-Christian campuses. We should note, however, that these common practices were not always listed alone. Several CSAOs listed common practices alongside more explicitly Christian practices.

6.4.2.2 Individual Christian Practices

A few participants included individual Christian practices as an example of how faith animates their student affairs practice. These included only a few references to individual "Bible reading" or "prayer." Slightly more frequent were references to the use of Bible or prayer "as a key piece of most [one-on-one] meetings" with student life staff or peer leaders such as "chaplains-in-residence" or "RAs."

6.4.2.3 Corporate Christian Practices

A significant number of responses referred to various forms of corporate Christian practices. These refer to unique Christian practices enacted with members of the campus community and fell into four sub-categories:

Chapel. One of the most prevalent responses ($n = 16$) was simply, as one CSAO typed, "CHAPEL" (or one of its variant forms such as "convocation," "corporate worship," or "campus worship"). Though the function of these gatherings was similar, the scope and form varied. Descriptions ranged from a single "daily chapel" to "seven diverse chapel worship services a week attended by approximately 4,000 students." Others described their chapels as "robust," "student-focused," or "intentional." Only a few responses included a reference to "mandatory" or "required" chapels or "chapel credits," but the consensus from the responses reflected a "commitment to daily chapel."

Small Groups. Six responses referenced some form of small group activity. These included references to "small group Bible studies"; "discipleship groups"; "life groups"; or "book studies." As the names suggest, the groups varied in form. Still, in general, they reflected a typical small group experience where, as a CSAO with a doctorate from a research university described, "life is lived and discussed in mentoring a group of students."

Retreats. One participant simply listed "retreats." We included this under communal Christian practices because this form of discipleship has roots in the Christian tradition. That said, no retreat details were shared, and therefore, the practice might be better suited under common student life programming.

External programs. A few participants referenced external programs that were tied to the Christian mission of their institutions. These included "mission trips" (both "domestic" and "foreign"), "outreach/mission work," and "street ministry." One CSAO shared that his institution "[has an] annual gospel outreach…that has reached over 100,000 students [over the] last 30 years." The evangelistic nature of these external practices renders them distinct from the generic forms of "community service" referenced above.

Most responses in the corporate Christian practices category tended to be programmatic in nature, but not all were. For example, one CSAO with a doctorate from a secular university shared about his institution's general commitment to the "actualization of prayer and integration of Scripture into classes, forums, residence halls, and activities."

6.4.2.4 Restorative Discipline

Though shared less often in the responses, we think the references to what we would call redemptive discipline, which respondents often called restorative discipline, provide an excellent example of how faith *can* animate student affairs practice. Participants referred to policies "rooted in New Testament values" and policies designed to "restore an individual not only back to the university's student community, but it is also designed to restore/strengthen a student's faith." The latter statement by a CSAO with a doctorate from a Christian institution continues by offering this vision for the practice: "We hope it serves as a 'crisis point' for a student's faith journey." In this way, the redemptive discipline process goes beyond maintaining order to include the ultimate welfare and development of the student as well. A CSAO with a doctorate from a public university outlines a similar conduct process with transformation as the goal: "We not only aim to address and correct inappropriate academic or social behavior, but we strive to help students examine their hearts and reflect on how their Christian faith can transform their lives." These participants described a disciplinary process rooted in the Christian hope of redemption.

6.4.2.5 Staff Faith Commitments

A handful of CSAOs referred to staff faith commitments as an example of how the Christian faith animates student affairs practice. CSAOs referenced the importance of "hiring practices" in a few responses. One, with a doctorate from a state institution, shared his commitment to "hiring practices that focus on finding individuals who value and live out our Christ-focused mission." CSAOs also shared a commitment to developing existing staff spiritually. A CSAO with a master's degree from a Christian institution articulated an expected "focus on spiritual growth" for staff and students alike. Another CSAO shared that their staff development "is based on Christian leadership principles that emphasize relationships built upon Christian values and care for one another."

At times, these two sub-themes were presented together. For example, a CSAO with training at a Jesuit institution shared, "[We are] very intentional on who we hire and how we integrate Christian faith commitments in the training of professional and para-professional staff." Staff faith commitments were sometimes linked to a greater aim or sub-aim as in a CSAO's response, sharing the conviction that "a strong and skilled Student Development staff… is crucial to seeing the kind of growth and transformation among students." The responses indicate hiring and development practices were a vital means to ensuring faithful personnel are serving students rather than professionals with lesser faith commitments.

In sum, CSAOs from a range of educational backgrounds thought they had been generally well-prepared to integrate faith with their student affairs practice. They specified a variety of aims and means that exemplify how their institution's Christian faith commitment animates their student affairs practice. We found aims and means focused on the individual student, the campus community, and the community beyond the campus grounds. Some of the responses reflected the Christian mission of the institution, and others were more common to the wider profession of student affairs.

6.5 Discussion

We are grateful for the participation of CSAOs from institutions of various sizes, cultures, and locations which led to a significant collection of reflections on Christian student affairs practice. We have drawn three conclusions from our findings.

6.5.1 Conclusion #1: Church Words and Practices

Many of the participants' responses included words explicitly borrowed from the church and the Christian tradition. Unsurprisingly, the aims we labeled as "Christian aims" were laden with language common to church traditions, including "faith development," "renewal," "[cultivation of] biblical principles," and students' "[examination of] their hearts." Although not explicitly Christian, even the moral aims participants shared used language like "love," "true," and "serve" in a manner consistent with the Christian tradition. The means in the CSAOs' responses were also unequivocally borrowed from the church. When discussing individual and corporate Christian practices, CSAOs referenced practices common to Protestant Christian churches such as "worship services," "small groups," "ministry," and "mission work."

So, what was missing? Despite the wide use of church language in the aims and means, we found very little use of theological terms or references to the Triune God, sin, redemption, or the *Imago Dei*. Only a handful of participants referenced the Bible in any capacity, and only one cited a specific passage of Scripture used to direct his work.

Additionally, we found no references to personal holiness or humility, and only two references to a theological vision for diversity and inclusion, both of which came from professionals of color. Hugh of St. Victor (1991) believed, and we are inclined to agree, that the purpose of education was to restore the *Imago Dei* in our students. But, how can the image of God be restored in students if scholar-practitioners do not use language that describes who God is or how their methods work toward His purposes? Although CSAOs used Christian language and referred to Christian practices, it was difficult to determine, at times, how CSAOs connected theological assumptions to their student affairs practice.

6.5.2 Conclusion #2: Professional Words and Practices

Several responses used language and practices common to non-Christian professional associations for student affairs (e.g., NASPA, ACPA). Examples of these practices and language include the moral, and not inherently Christian, aims of "development," "purpose and identity," "community/global service," or "community involvement." Our findings also revealed several means that were not uniquely Christian, including "clubs and organizations," "res-life training," "service," "student leadership," and "student government" as exemplary practices. We found this interesting, not because we are opposed to learning or adopting practices from the wider student affairs community, but because we asked for practices that specifically exemplified faith-animated practice. These are not distinct in their own right.

We highlight this trend to encourage thoughtfulness when borrowing theory and practices. In their recent publication on the structure and resources of student affairs divisions, Dahlvig and Beers (2018) indicated that, despite working an average of 55 h per week, CSAOs spend less than three percent of their work hours each semester on professional development. In light of the demand for efficiency, our fear is that student affairs professionals have borrowed, or will continue to borrow, aims or practices that appear compatible with their Christian mission, yet end up limiting the scope of their practice. For example, a student affairs professional could begin implementing various student success initiatives from Kuh et al.'s (2010) seminal work without realizing the "success" these initiatives were meant to increase is defined as "higher-than-predicted graduation rates and better-than-predicted student engagements scores" (p. xii). Although the book is a phenomenal resource, we suspect this definition will seem lacking to leaders in Christian higher education since it lacks any metaphysical, let alone spiritual or theological, purpose. While learning from the wider student affairs community is important for Christian student affairs practice, we would like to encourage a more robust and frequent conversation about how the Christian tradition might make those practices different.

6.5.3 Conclusion #3: Discrete Foci

Across our findings, we found examples of student affairs practice with varying foci. That is, the various examples of student affairs practice were intended to serve the individual student, the college community, the world beyond, and/or God Himself. We found moral aims for individuals, the college, or the community; Christian aims for the individual, the community, the world, or for God; and means for corporate and individual benefit. Some responses did include multiple foci together, but, on the whole, we found a limited number of comprehensive statements that sought to encompass all of them. According to Holmes (1987), a distinctively Christian education ought to cultivate the full range of spiritual virtues, moral virtues, intellectual

virtues, communal action virtues, as well as self-knowledge. Student affairs professionals are not the only employees responsible for the cultivation of these virtues in students, yet it seems the field of Christian student affairs could benefit from thinking more holistically in this domain.

We acknowledge that the concise responses to our brief survey were unlikely to produce robust models for student affairs, yet it is telling that the specific and discrete foci articulated here resemble what we found elsewhere in the literature (Glanzer et al., 2019a). That is, we found a range of similar foci that were rarely comprehensive. This leads us to believe a model that can account for the range of the foci that Holmes (1987) and our participants presented is not only possible but needed. Just as biblical redemptive history has individual and global foci, we believe part of what would make a model distinctively Christian would be the inclusion of foci ranging from the individual to the global.

6.6 Conclusion

In 1997, Notre Dame historian George Marsden proposed *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*. He argued that, despite faculty reluctance, "mainstream American higher education should be more open to explicit discussion of the relationship of religious faith to learning" (p. 3). In other words, Christian scholarship should not be seen as an outrageous idea. Over twenty years later, we contend that the idea of Christian student affairs should not be seen as outrageous either. Fortunately, our findings reveal that faith explicitly animates much of Christian student affairs practice. Our hope is that this project will help assemble the riches of the Christian tradition for the profession more comprehensively. This does not imply that Christian student affairs practice needs to eschew all secular wisdom. Instead, Christian scholar-practitioners should follow Marsden's (1997) lead in asking: "[supposing] someone believed in God, how would the assumptions or conclusions of our discipline look different?" (p. 84). If student affairs professionals consistently considered this question when envisioning their work, even secular professional language and practice could find new meaning as it became animated by God and God's story. For this reason, we suggest that future research is needed to synthesize the best elements of current practice into a theologically-informed model for Christian student affairs practice. We envision a model built on theologically-rich language, using a distinctly Christian approach, and accounting for all foci ranging from the individual to the global.

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Part II
Minorities, Education and Alienation

Chapter 7
Multicultural Learning Environments in Turkey: A New Challenge About Refugee Education

Aybiçe Tosun

Abstract Due to globalization, migration trends, refugee crises, and global media during the past few decades, social and cultural components of societies have undergone significant change. New multicultural societies have a big effect on daily life, culture, and education by bringing new perspectives about being local and universal. Including refugees in the school system creates a new learning environment for local students and educators. Living together with different cultures reveals different challenges for every part of the society. Changes in the society have a huge effect on the school environment, and the diversity in faith, religious beliefs and worldviews can be seen among students in Turkish schools. This new situation requires reconsidering the educational contents and curriculums in the schools. The inclusion of diverse point of view in the curriculum will transform students' thoughts and attitudes toward others, especially refugees, and help them to understand the importance of living together peacefully. Apart from all other courses in the Turkish educational system the compulsory religious education should undertake the role of peace-making in the society with its content and approach. Focusing on cultural similarities and differences in an educational setting could bring a new context that society might use in dealing with conflicts.

Keywords Refugee education · Turkey · Multicultural learning

7.1 Introduction

Today, as the global migration is increasing, it has become an urgent problem for people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds to learn how to live together. Social and cultural aspects of societies got changed dramatically in the last decades because of globalisation, migration movements, refugee crisis, and global media. These new multicultural societies have a big effect on daily life, culture, and education by bringing new perspectives about being local and universal. Living together with

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different cultures reveals different challenges for every part of the society. It can be considered an opportunity to learn about the other and living peacefully, and it can also create conflicts among different groups.

There are many dimensions of compulsory migration that occurred for different reasons throughout the history. Compulsory immigration has cultural consequences as well as legal, socio-economic, and political consequences. The studies reveal that the two groups, both the locals and the refugees, do not easily unite; in other words, neither side has acted eagerly in the direction of integration (Erşan, 2006; Ökten, 2012). The phenomenon of 'refugee' and the difficulties of being a refugee have been on the agenda of the world for many years. It is possible to say that refugees face many difficulties like the uncertainty of legal status, finding proper jobs, health care support, integration, violence, etc. in refugee camps and in host countries.

Turkey hosts a big amount of refugees from various Middle Eastern countries for a long time. Living with different cultures and religions is not a new concept as Ottoman Empire had a multicultural society for a long time. But the challenges about legal, social, cultural, and educational status of refugees require new policies in the Turkish Republic. Turkey has a very deep and strong experience from the history to re-establish suitable policies for the social and educational integration of refugees.

Turkish cities like Mardin, Hatay, and Istanbul have been an example of the culture of living together peacefully for centuries in Anatolia, this can be exemplary in terms of the experience of togetherness. Researches about the culture of living together in these cities show that despite the differences in faith, beliefs, lifestyle, etc. people of different orientation always found a way to hold on to the peace and each other. This culture of coexistence makes it possible to celebrating each other's religious holidays, shopping with each other, and keeping neighborhood relations alive despite the cultural differences (Doğruel, 2013; Sarı, 2007). In recent years, the coexistence culture in regions where different religions, races, and cultures coexist can be used as an important experience in coping with increasing problems emerging from refugee migration. It can be said that the main basis of the culture of living together in these areas is the freedom in the religious life, respect for differences, and common economic and social activities.

Modern societies face a new problem in multicultural learning environments. Students' thoughts and attitudes toward others, particularly refugees, will be transformed by including multiple points of view in the curriculum, which will help them comprehend the significance of living peacefully together. Apart from all other courses in the Turkish educational system the compulsory religious education should undertake the role of peace-making in the society with its content and approach. Focusing on cultural similarities and differences in an educational setting could bring a new context that society might use in dealing with conflicts.

It is a necessity to study to building consensus and peace culture among different groups in multicultural societies. Building consensus and peace culture consists of different stages like; determining the problematic areas of living together, recognizing similarities and differences among cultures, and accepting the other with respect and tolerance. Creating this kind of point of view can be possible with education on every level of human life. So it can be said that education has a very important responsibility

in creating an awareness about consensus and peace culture and its' importance on social structure.

In today's world where multicultural and multi-religious social structures emerged as a new reality, educational practices encompassing the religious, cultural, and social structures of all students are among the primary needs. Multiculturalism creates an environment that makes it easier for different cultures to enter into dialogues that will benefit the parties. Different traditions; moral, artistic, literary, and musical values question each other, investigate, challenge each other, borrow ideas from each other and experiment with them, and often reveal brand new ideas and sensibilities none of which can produce on their own.

7.2 Refugees and Education in Turkey

Building a coexistence culture, which is one of the keys to social peace and serenity in multicultural environments, is of great importance in the establishment and maintenance of new social structures. Education is the most crucial area to establish a culture of living together and new changes over the society have a huge effect on learning environments.

In addition to its own multicultural history, Turkey has been a country that has accepted asylum seekers from all over the world for a long time. According to UNHCR's data, Turkey hosts asylum seekers mainly from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Somalia, and Afghanistan. Since the beginning of March, in 2011, over 3.6 million Syrian refugees have reached Turkey and which is the highest refugee population in the country (UNHCR, 2020).

Refugees in Turkey participate to the society in many different areas such as the health services, the business life, the education, and the shelter. This situation necessitates some rearrangements in Turkish society. In the 2020–2021 academic year nearly there were 1.197.124 school-age refugee children in Turkey and only 774.257 Syrian students were registered in the education in Turkey (MoE, 2021). Refugee students have continued their education in Turkey at public schools, Temporary Education Centers, refugee camps, or through the open education system. Temporary Educational Centers are no longer offer education for refugees. In these Temporary Education Centers, Syrian students continued their uncompleted education in Arabic which is their mother tongue and Syrian teachers worked in these centers. As part of the integration of Syrians into society, intensive Turkish language education was also provided in these centers. While the Temporary Education Centers seem to be a positive application in terms of presenting the school environment or curriculum that students are accustomed to, it is also criticized for preventing Syrians from integrating into the Turkish education system and integration.

Another option for refugee students is public schools. Syrian students have the right to register for all state schools or private schools in Turkey. According to April 2019 data, about 540.000 refugees, mostly Syrian and Iraqi students, are studying in public schools in Turkey. The curriculum is determined by the Ministry of

National Education in public schools and the language of the programming language is Turkish. Refugee students who are attending these schools are also educated in Turkish.

One of the important goals of education is to make students compatible with society. In multicultural societies, the education and training environment is expected to reflect the social structure and prepare students for a life together. In countries where education and training environments differ with refugee students, there are also changes in education policies, academic studies in this field are increasing and changes are being made in both teacher training policies and course contents (Moosung & Cha, 2018; Nieto, 2017; Obondo, 2016; Timm, 2016). At this point, it is a necessity to rebuild multicultural educational environments (Armthor & Kevin, 2016).

In Turkey, the Ministry of Education General Directorate of Lifelong Learning and Civil Society Organization's collaboration focuses both on identifying problems and suggestions for solutions (Tüzün, 2017). The Project of Supporting the Integration of Syrian Children into the Turkish Education System supported by the European Union (PICTES) is the most notable among these studies. Apart from these types of projects, it is seen that organizations such as Reform Initiative in Education and Open Society Platform have conducted relevant researches and published reports (ATV, 2016; ERG, 2017).

7.3 The Research

This case study aims to determine the problematic areas of the multicultural learning environments for refugees in Turkey. A case study 'involves the study of a case within a real-life, contemporary context or setting' (Creswell & Poth, 2018, s. 153). The purpose of this research is to designate the problematic areas of multicultural learning environments and refugees at the high school level and determine students' needs to overcome the difficulties that they had to face in school.

As the research employs direct interpretation as analysis this book chapter will focus only on one of the student's story as a case about being a refugee in the Turkish educational system. Direct interpretation is 'the case study researcher looks at a single instance and draws meaning from it without looking for multiple instances' (Creswell & Poth, 2018, s. 278). For this research a high school refugee student has been chosen as a case. The study was undertaken in a public school in Eskişehir, Turkey in Fall of 2018 with Leyla who is a 17-year-old high school senior student. Five years ago she came to Turkey from Syria with her family and since then she continues her education at a state school in Turkey.

Problems with the school environment and lessons have been questioned by a semi-structured interview and an open-ended questionnaire. Leyla stated a variety of problems like; communication, content of the lessons, insufficient source for the courses, lack of counselling, friendship, depression, problems about living together, and adjustment to the society and classroom environment.

7.4 Findings

Research on refugee education shows that refugees face various problems in the host countries and the camps. Access to education, quality of education in school and classroom environment, and social problems experienced by students is the main problem of refugee children. The main ones of these problems are the language barriers, peer bullying, discrimination, depression, social adaptation problems arising from cultural differences, insufficient school capacities, shortcomings of school administrators and teachers, financial difficulties, child laboring, and lack of motivation in children (Duruel, 2016; Tanrıkulu, 2017; ERG, 2017). Although there are many dimensions of the issue of immigration, in this part of the study, it is tried to approach the subject especially in terms of identity and cultural problems faced by immigrants.

7.4.1 Learning the Language and Communication

One of the most important problems that migrants face both in the educational process and in cultural adaptation is the language. The language skills, education, social networks, and cultural distance from the majority of the society play an important role in the integration process. (Martikainen, 2010).

The language problem is one of the primary causes of intercultural disconnection between immigrants and the people of the country they live in Akıncı (2014), Çetintaş (2011). The insufficiency of language that the immigrants face, causes them to be contented with a daily and superficial relationship with the host society. For example, the local people and the Syrian immigrants who settled in Turkey are experiencing some problems with language, lifestyle, and cultural habits. Afghan people do not know how to read and write in Turkish since the schools they are studying at teach them Arabic or Persian (Ökten, 2012).

It can be said that immigrants develop a limited relationship with other groups, communicate with only their mother tongue in their daily life in intensive places where the sense of belonging is intensely felt, and this behavior that they do occurs consciously so that their mother tongue can not be forgotten and can be transferred from generation to generation (Ökten, 2012). The language problem of immigrants emerges as a problem not only in social life but also in education and school success.

Leyla share about her first days in the school. Lack of communication in the school environment is the main obstacle for her: 'I was an alien when I came here at the first time. I couldn't understand anything. I didn't want to come to the class for a long time because I was like invisible. But there were also other Syrians so I want to be with them and continue to come to class. Then, when I learnt Turkish everything was a lot easier. I made friends and all other things…' The first step of multicultural learning should be the find a common communication tool in the educational environment.

7.4.2 Finding Myself in the School

One big problem that the immigrants face is stemming from their commitment to their culture and traditions. Fearing not to lose the culture they belong to, immigrants who tend to hug their values, languages, and cultures, which provide them a permanent identity, they act according to their own culture in subjects such as dress, weddings, food, and drink, and they tend to resist despite cultural influences (Ökten, 2012).

The Turkish youth in Europe, on the one hand, are trying to protect their cultural identity that they get from their families, and on the other hand, they are looking for ways to live the social values they belong to. This can cause some cultural tensions from time to time (Çelik, 2003; Çetintaş, 2011; Küçükcan, 2003). In fact, the idea of not leaving the region where they live and living only with their own immigrants is seen in almost all immigrants, which prevents the formation of social cohesion (Perşembe, 2010).

Leyla states that she could not share anything about her own culture at school as in the following: 'I sometimes feel myself as a stranger in the lessons. I cannot mention any of the memories as an example during the classes because neither my friends nor my teachers understand me that much, it's hard to give something as an example.'

> I couldn't attend the history, geography and the language classes in my new school because they were quite different from the classes that I learned in my previous school in terms of content. Also the history classes in my new school are quite hard for me.

The main problem that immigrants should tackle with socio-economic problems in urban life is the problem of cultural difference, the effect of which is more comprehensive (Çelik, 2003). It is stated that when immigrants are concerned about exactly which culture they belong to, they experience a dual socialization, when they are at home they stick to their own cultures but in social life they tend to go back and forth between other cultures (Güllü, 2015). Although this situation has some features from both communities it basically raises a cultural hybridization problem that does not belong to either (Çelik, 2003). Eliminating citizenship-related issues that cause cultural walls to be built, and acceptance of dual citizenship will contribute to speeding up the integration and integration process (Küçükcan, 2003).

Leyla expresses how she finds it valuable to share in different situations and to introduce her own culture to teachers and students in her new school. Belonging to one culture and presenting it to others is a relaxing experience for her.

> My friends at school are very good and we get along very well. I am always very happy when I talk about my life in Syria. How we lived, how were the weddings and holidays…

> Last term, I brought a national food made by my mother to the school during a special week, I love to share my food. My friends and teachers also showed great interest and wanted to taste it immediately. I love Turkish food as well.

Leyla expresses the differences that she observed between the two cultures and how she adapted to these differences with the following sentences: 'I don't play

children games anymore but my Turkish friends had taught me new games when I came Turkey. It was very fun to learn new games.'

Sharing the same school environment or social structure reduces the differences among students and emphasizes the common points more. Leyla emphasizes it with the following sentences; 'We are not different than our Turkish friends, we listen the same music and our way of dressings are same as well.. I think we look like each other.'

7.4.3 Talking About Faith

With the impact of the psychological crisis brought about by immigrants living in a different religious and cultural environment, Islam is a spiritual refuge for them. Their marginalizing attitude has not only been destructive and isolating but also a completely cooling and repelling effect from the relevant culture. To undergo such treatment, in turn, causes these people, who are already religiously sensitive, to embrace their religion and culture more strongly (Çetintaş, 2011; Yapıcı & Emre, 2015). Thus, religion constitutes a cultural area based on the system of belonging, tradition, and values in the efforts of immigrants to take a place in a foreign world. Some immigrant communities that are exposed to the disintegrating effects of migration try to overcome this disintegration by embracing the unifying power of religion. (Erkan, 2016).

On the basis of this problem that immigrants are experiencing, while they are receiving religious services, they ignore the historical and sociological conditions of the country, the general mentality and religious sensibilities of the people of the country in which immigrants live, and on the other hand, from time to time, beyond the exclusion of knowing these values of people, suggestions are made for the purpose of creating contrast and hostility and as a result of this, it poses a serious quality problem in the context of healthy religious education and the integration of the youth to the society becomes harder (Çetintaş, 2011). The fewer cultural and religious differences there are, the easier it is for immigrants to continue their religious activities (Martikainen, 2010).

Leyla shares about her praying routine; 'I'm trying to perform daily prayers but my mom and I pray together every night before sleep. Praying with my mom is relaxing and always makes me happy. I pray for lots of different things; when I first arrive here I was praying for finding new friends. Nowadays I pray for succes in school and happiness.' Leyla finds praying a helpful way to make her happy during the adjustment times and coping with the difficulties of being a refugee.

Leyla also emphasizes the course about religions is her favorites; 'Even if I couldn't understand the language at that time I was good at Religious and Ethic course. I also like the course very much because I was aware of the topics and can tell all the prayers by heart.' Sharing the same religious background makes the school environment more tolerable for her.

7.5 The Need for a Multicultural Education

Changes in the society have a huge effect on the school environment as well. The diversity in faith, religious beliefs, and worldviews can be seen among students. This new situation requires reconsidering the educational contents and curriculums in the schools. In dealing with diversity students need to learn more about themselves and other.

Multicultural education can be seen as a major challenge for the Turkish education system. Because a common curriculum prepared by the Ministry of National Education is mandatory in all public and private schools. Although the curriculum refers to multiculturalism, it does not seem to reflect the differences sufficiently and does not have the necessary content for a multicultural education environment (Arslan, 2016; Cırık, 2008). However, the educational needs of the teachers, who are expected to realize the citations related to multiculturalism, are seen as a gap to be filled (Tonbuloğlu et al., 2014). In addition, the content of multicultural education in teachers' training institutions is very limited and the university education is not designed accordingly (Polat & Eylem, 2013). There are very limited researches related to multicultural learning environments and the researches show that multicultural education is an urgent need for the Turkish educational system (Başbay & Bektaş, 2009; Kaya, 2014).

The case of Syrian refugees to participating in education is related to multicultural education and it also brings some problems. The absence of a content for multicultural education in teacher training institutions, the lessons conducted in schools are not suitable for multicultural societies, and the negative judgements about multicultural education in society deepen the problem of refugee students. However, the main problems related to multiculturalism are the problems that need to be solved urgently both in terms of the adaptation of refugees to the society and to increase the efficiency of the educational environment.

In Turkey, the Ministry of Education is developing various measures and strategies to organize the refugee training and to solve the problems faced by the refugees. These studies are can be listed as, to be able to solve refugee adaptation problems, combating violence and bullying, to eliminate the prejudices of students and teachers, to bring the refugee students to schools through sports and cultural activities (Gümüşten, 2017; MoE, 2017).

Strategies developed by the Ministry of National Education may not be sufficient in solving the problems faced by refugee students. Researches show that refugee students face many difficulties that negatively affect their educational environment starting from communication problems to peer bullying, from cultural conflicts to psychological problems, from economic problems to access to health services (Kılıç & Özkor, 2019; Tanrıkulu, 2017). At the point of overcoming these difficulties, it is seen that school management, school guidance services, and teachers are not enough to cope with them (Erdemli & Taşkın, 2018).

Various researches and studies are carried out to analyze the needs of multicultural and multi-religious societies formed as a result of immigration in the world and in

Turkey, to identify their problems and to meet the humanitarian needs of both locals and immigrants in the process of adaptation to new social codes. The new social and cultural structures formed by migration require the restructuring of the content, method, and roles of students and teachers in educational activities. At this point, educational practices of different countries with a multicultural society structure can guide civilizations that have managed to live different cultures together in Anatolian lands throughout history are also examples.

The fact that the education system does not have the characteristics to cover refugees at the point of adaptation of refugees to the Turkish education system, not knowing the social and cultural characteristics of the refugees and therefore cannot be transferred to the educational environment and these can be considered among the important problems (Soylu et al., 2020). At this point, although the educational environment has gained a multicultural image with the partiipation of students from different nationalities, it cannot be said that the course contents, teacher approaches, and school culture can be adapted to it.

According to the researches, the problems that arise with the participation of refugee students in the educational environment are also related to luck of multicultural education. Participation in education, language and communication, national curriculum, inefficient teaching techniques, nationalistic textbooks are the main problematic areas. There are also problems with teachers' competence and knowledge about multicultural education.

7.6 Can Religious Education Respond to the Multicultural Education Needs?

The problem of multicultural education in the Turkish educational system requires a holistic approach to redesign the curriculum and the courses. But as religious education aims to develop an understanding of cultural awareness and social cohesion the curriculum of the course can be changed according to multicultural education.

Turkey is a country that has compulsory religious education from the 4th grade up to the 12th grade. Christian and Jewish citizens are exempted from religious classes in the country where Muslims constitute the majority. However, all Muslim students must receive the same religious education regardless of differences. Although the religious culture and ethics course is described as non-confessional in the curriculum, in practice it gives has very limited space for intra-religious points of views.

Standardized religious education is already a huge issue in a country that includes secular, atheist, or agnostic citizens. Along with this, it can be said that the diversity of beliefs, interpretations, and perspectives in religious lessons has increased with students who migrated from countries with different Islamic interpretations such as Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Somalia. This situation requires a new program sensitive to cultural differences in terms of religious culture and ethics courses.

In the compulsory religious culture and ethics course, students learn information about the principles of faith, worship, moral principles, history and content of the Qur'an, the life of the Prophet Muhammad, and finally the relationship between religion and culture. Among the educational themes, there is no title for the inclusion of different religions or cultures at the primary and secondary levels, and the program generally ignores intercultural pluralism. Nevertheless, it emphasizes the relationship between religion and culture, the concept of tolerance, the principle of generosity, the importance of social solidarity, and universal moral values and this implies that pluralism can be included. But it is up to the comments and perspectives of educators to link multicultural education. However, the content of multicultural religious education should be seen as an urgent need.

It is also possible to make some suggestions about the Religious Culture and Ethics Course. In themes titled moral principles, religion, and culture, it generally refers to daily life, society, interpersonal relationships, and universal values. First of all, these subjects need to be designed in a multicultural manner by taking in-class pluralism into account. Religious culture and ethics courses should be reorganized in a way that includes characteristics of different religious beliefs and cultures, and daily practices. In addition to these, transferring the differences to the student within the specific objectives of the course, respecting differences, eliminating prejudices, and gains from the requirements of multicultural societies and appropriate content should be added to them.

Religious education should adopt a *learning from religion* approach to embrace multicultural point of views. Religious education textbooks need to include different points of view from various cultures, nationalities, and religions to include refugees in education. Teacher training education for religious learning also needs to have multicultural theories to prepare teachers for this new reality. 'Multicultural Education' should be a separate course in the faculty of theologies so all religious educators would be aware of the situation.

7.7 Conclusion

Cultural distance and differences between societies can be eliminated by enriching the culture of living together. For this, the parties participating in the experience of living together must be unprejudiced and respect each other's values. Ignored educational problems, language problems, attitudes, and behaviors that feed exclusion have led to these problems.

For both refugee and local people, keeping up with the suddenly changing social structure of refugee migrations, recognizing the new social structure, and facilitating living in a culture of reconciliation and peace should be one of the most important goals of education. The educational practices, which actively involve children, embrace different cultures equally will not only support the child's cognitive and social development, but it will also lay the foundations for building a culture of reconciliation and peace.

In cultural interaction and integration analysis, there should be given a more central place to the religion and religious education, and it should not be counted only as an aspect of ethnicity. It is not causeless that the interest in the religious lives of immigrants has increased in recent years (Martikainen, 2010). Therefore, they should be given education about their worldviews in schools and they should be given the opportunity to express their own thoughts and desires (Karlsson, 2003).

Both refugee and local students confront problems regarding living together in their daily life at school and group of friends. There is no education for refugees for adjusting to the culture or learning the language and this causes the biggest obstacles in the school environment. Cultural differences can be an obstacle to create a relationship between local students and refugees but it is also a chance to create relationships. In this context the aim of education must be to teach how to use differences in a peaceful way.

Creating a multicultural school environment and curriculum seems to be an urgent need for the Turkish educational system. In new societies that are formed as a result of global migrations different needs emerge in the public sphere. This situation necessitates some changes in the society with new perspectives. Multicultural education will not only ensure the achievement of a better education for the refugees living in Turkey but it will also enrich the worldviews of Turkish students.

Educational programs need an inclusive language and content to accommodate differences. In addition, teachers, students, and parents are needed to be informed so that they can familiar with the new social context and can understand the necessity of multicultural education.

Designing the school environment in a way that respects cultural differences and adopting the 'respect for differences' acquisition as one of the basic and general objectives of education is of great importance in the combating against discrimination. The perspective required for the peaceful coexistence of different cultures should be a consistent part of the educational environment.

The multicultural life experience has existed in the Anatolia for very a long time but it has started to disappear with modern times. Previous experience can serve as an example to cope with the new situation with refugees today. The mutual recognition of cultures, celebrating special days together, and establishing partnerships in the social field will enable refugees and local people to get to know each other far from prejudices. Each individual in the society should be aware of his or her personal competencies and be able to recognize similar and different aspects of the others. For a society free from conflicts, it is necessary to know oneself and the others without prejudice, respect differences, and develop a solution-oriented perspective against social problems.

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Chapter 8
Anti-religious Education or Preventing Religious Extremism?—An Examination of the Re-education Camps in the Uyghur Region of China

Dilmurat Mahmut

Abstract It is estimated that between one and three million Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims have been held involuntarily in so-called "Education and Transformation Training Centers" or "Counter-extremism Training Schools" in the Uyghur region of China (aka Eastern Turkestan) (Greitens et al., 2020; Ramzy, 2021). With such a background, this study tries to explore the nature of these centers through multiple theoretical lenses, namely Orientalism (Said, 1978), Internal Orientalism (Schein, 1997), critical race theory, and post-colonialism, while putting the inquiry into both local and global contexts. The data was from published interviews conducted by various reporters and scholars who visited some of these facilities, personal testimonies were given by some former detainees or teachers, as well as several Chinese government documents. The findings suggest that the Islamic faith and extremism are largely conflated in those educational spaces. Moreover, Islam is depicted as the polar opposite to science as well as the communist ideology. The Chinese authorities have opportunistically benefited from the global rise of Islamophobia and racialization of Muslims in the West to legitimize their anti-religious project in the Uyghur region. Meanwhile, within these camps, mastering Mandarin Chinese is seen as an important sign of progress while using the mother tongue is strongly discouraged as an indication of backwardness, reflecting the long-existing discourse of Internal Orientalism in China (Schein, 1997). Meanwhile, the Chinese government regards that Uyghur Islamic identity can pose a threat to the integrity and future prosperity of the Chinese state. Therefore, these institutions, as part of the state-enforced mass political, assimilative, anti-Islamic project, are deemed highly necessary by the Chinese government. This is a form of genocide that reflects the legacy of the shameful and destructive colonial past of humanity.

Keywords Reeducation centers/camps · Islam · Extremism · Terrorism · Identity · Uyghur · Genocide

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8.1 Introduction

The Chinese government's policies toward the Islamic faith and practices in the Uyghur Homeland-East Turkestan (aka Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region) alternated between "radical intolerance" especially during the 1960s and 1970s to "controlled tolerance" (Waite, 2007, p. 167) with "the relative openness" in the early 1980s (Millward, 2004, p. viii). Such "openness" culminated in the establishment of The Law on National Regional Autonomy of 1984 that granted national minorities, including the Uyghurs, some limited rights to follow their religious traditions in comparison to previous legislations (Wu, 2014). Thousands of mosques were built during the 1980s in the Uyghur Homeland (Bovingdon, 2010; Smith Finley, 2013), and private religious education had been tolerated to a certain extent until the end of the 1990s (Roberts, 2004).

However, right after the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001, there occurred a "rhetorical shift" in relation to ethnic conflicts in the Uyghur region. The Chinese state for the first time officially claimed the existence of the Uyghur terrorist threat in China, branding the long-existing violent anti-government movements or ethnic conflicts as "terrorism" (Human Rights Watch, 2018; Roberts, 2018, p. 234;). In the early 2000s, the government started to use the global "war on terror" rhetoric to restrict Uyghur rights to practice Islam (Bovingdon, 2010; Roberts, 2018, 2020). Since then, the sole state media as well as attempted to intentionally reinforce the imagined connection between the Islamic faith and political violence in the Uyghur context (Harris, 2013, 2014; Lams, 2016). For example, the nationalist, state-run tabloid Global Times claims that under the current leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, "Xinjiang has avoided the fate of becoming 'China's Syria' or 'China's Libya'" (Griffiths & Westcott, 2018). While the Uyghurs as a group have been increasingly seen as "an almost biological threat" to the Chinese state (Roberts, 2018, p. 246), other Muslim communities such as Hui Muslims[1] have rarely faced similar treatments by the authorities (Armijo, 2017). This indicates that the cause of Uyghur religious unfreedom is very much political; religion has been instrumentalized to suppress Uyghur national/ethnic identity, which is seen as incompatible with the Chinese nation (Bovingdon, 2010; Roberts, 2018, 2020).

Under such rhetoric, educational institutions were targeted first (Clothey & Koku, 2016; Kanat, 2015). Soon, wearing religious symbols and engaging in religious activities, including praying, fasting during Ramadan, etc. were outlawed in all formal educational spaces (Dearden, 2017; Grieboski, 2014). These restrictions have become more drastic and expanded to all spheres of life since Xi Jinping took power in 2012. As Cook (2017) describes, "a wide range of routine and peaceful aspects of religious observance that were once permissible have been arbitrarily labeled

[1] Hui Muslims are mostly concentrated in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, but they also live throughout China. Their population is also more than 10 million, according to 2011 National Census. Unlike Uyghurs, their mother tongue is Mandarin Chinese, and they embrace Han Chinese culture, and do not pose a threat to national integrity. Therefore, they don't face harsh repressions as the Uyghurs do. For more information, see Gladney (1996, 2004).

as ‘illegal activities’ or ‘religious extremism’”[2] (p. 70). In 2014, China initiated “People’s War on Terror” campaign, the groundwork of the current re-education camps project (Smith Finley, 2019). Subsequently, wearing the hijab or niqab, which made inroads to the Uyghur Homeland during the late 1990s from the Islamic West, was outlawed in all public and private settings, “as an observable symbol of religious extremism and cultural backwardness” (Leibold & Grose, 2016, pp. 88–89). The banned activities even started to include uttering “As-salamu alaykum”, a simple Islamic greeting (Grose, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2018). Meanwhile, hundreds of mosques have been demolished and many Islamic shrines (*mazar*) have been desecrated or destroyed (Harris, 2019; Thum, 2020).

In early 2016, China launched its comprehensive Anti-terrorism Law primarily concerning the so-called extremism issue among the Uyghurs (Doyon, 2019; Duchâtel, 2016). This development escalated sharply after the new regional CCP secretary Chen Quanguo began an intensive securitization program in early 2017 (Millward, 2018; Smith Finley, 2019). In March 2017, *Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Regulation on De-extremification* was adopted explicitly emphasizing “making religion more Chinese and under law, and actively guide religions to become compatible with socialist society” (Article 4). At the same time, the Regulation states that religious schools and institutions also “should adhere to the direction of sinocizing (sic) religion, and earnestly perform the duties of cultivating and training religious professionals, to prevent permeation by extremification” (Article 40).[3]

Concurrently, the local authorities began to establish “Education and Transformation Training Centers” or “Counter-extremism Training Schools,” where “radicalized” people should “unlearn” their extremist religious ideologies. In 2017 and 2018, these schools proliferated in large numbers in many parts of the Uyghur Homeland to “re-educate” hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims (Smith Finley, 2018, 2019; Thum, 2018, 2019). In the next few years, these facilities have expanded massively. At least one million (Ramzy, 2021; Zenz, 2019a, 2019b), or up to three million Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims are estimated to be held in those political education centers, where conditions are extremely horrible (Greitens et al., 2020). In November 2019, Friedman (2019), an internationally recognized geopolitical forecaster and strategist on international affairs, estimated that 1 in 10 Uyghurs were detained in re-education camps in 2019. In Ibrahim’s (2018) words, for the government, it is necessary to “re-educate” the entire Uyghur population to achieve “ethnic harmony” and “social stability”. According to the China expert Adrian Zenz, by November 2019 the number of such camps had already surpassed 1000 (Seytoff, 2019).

In the beginning, the Chinese government strongly denied the existence of such camps (Westcott & Xiong, 2018; Zenz, 2018). Yet, in August 2018, under the

[2] In late 2014, the Xinjiang authorities released “75 behavioral indicators of religious extremism” which includes many normal everyday practices. The first page of the document features a picture of a woman wearing jilbab as a sign of religious extremism (极端宗教服装 “古里巴甫”). For more information, see http://www.cssn.cn/zjx/zjx_zjsj/201412/t20141224_1454905.shtml.

[3] For more information, see https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/新疆维吾尔自治区去极端化条例/?lang=en.

mounting international pressure, the authorities admitted that they had built such facilities, but claimed that these were the "Vocational Skills Education Training Centers" for people who committed minor offenses or who are on the verge of becoming criminals. In other words, these centers were to eliminate people's extremist ideologies, while offering them various vocational skills so that they can successfully reintegrate into society (BBC, 2019; Kuo, 2018; The Economist, 2018). In March 2019, the Chinese government released a white paper, titled "The Fight Against Terrorism and Extremism and Human Rights Protection in Xinjiang".[4] The document states that "Law-based de-radicalization has been launched in the region which has effectively curbed the breeding and spread of religious extremism" so that the Uyghur region has not had a single violent or terrorist event in the last two years (China Daily, 2019; Xinhua Net, 2019).

According to Zenz (2019a), the Chinese government's own documents reveal the prison-like nature of those camps. The students in those camps are called "detained re-education persons", and "numerous" documents clearly state that these "trainees" are not recruited voluntarily. No single government report states that these people were asked for consent or any kind of contract related to their graduation dates. Some recently leaked CCP internal documents (403 pages) also expose the Chinese government's determination to show "absolutely no mercy" in cracking down extremism through all possible approaches, particularly the reeducation camps (Ramzy & Buckley, 2019). Meanwhile, various other sources indicate that the conditions in those camps are extremely poor, while torture, disappearances, and even deaths are very common (e.g. France 24 English, 2019; Griffiths & Westcott, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2018; NBC News 2019; The Wall Street Journal, 2018; Zenz, 2019a, 2019b). For example, a former camp teacher told The Guardian (2020) that the camp, where she worked had "tight" security installations, and the room windows were covered with thin iron sheets. The inmates who attended her class were wearing shackles and handcuffs. She also reveals that forced sterilization of Uyghur women is rampant both inside and outside of camps.

Moreover, according to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, since 2017 more than 80 thousand Uyghurs have been exploited as forced cheap labor in the factories linked to 83 international brands including Apple, Nike, Samsung, and Zara. (Reynolds, 2020). Even the Covid-19 pandemic has not interrupted massive transferring of Uyghur workers to various Chinese factories (South China Morning Post, 2020). By 2023, the local government aims to have one million workers in textile and garment industries, with 650,000 of them coming from the south where most Uyghurs live (Lehr & Bechrakis, 2019).[5]

The international responses to these developments have become increasingly prominent in the last few years. In July 2019, the United Nations ambassadors from

[4] For more information, see http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2019/03/18/content_281476567813306.htm.

[5] See the original document here: "Xinjiang Textile and Apparel Industry Development Plan (2018–2023)," The Government of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China, March 2, 2018, https://web.archive.org/web/20190623230756/, http://www.xinjiang.gov.cn/2018/03/02/148047.html.

22 nations, including Australia, Canada, France, and the United Kingdom signed a letter condemning China's mass detention of the Uyghurs and other Turkic groups, while 37 countries such as Algeria, Congo, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and Pakistan signed a counter-letter supporting China's policy in the Uyghur region (Miles, 2019; Putz, 2019). In October 2021 the number of countries accusing the Chinese government increased to 43 that included some Muslim countries (Charbonneau, 2021).

In the meantime, some high-level US politicians have directly voiced their viewpoints regarding this issue. For example, the former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo stated that the reason behind locking up millions of Uyghurs and other Muslims in reeducation camps is political. He adds that "when the state rules absolutely, it demands its citizens' worship government, not God…and, God becomes an absolute threat to authority" (Simmons, 2019). Rubio (2019) declared that the re-education camp strategy, "in its worst forms, [is] a eugenic project," which aims to Sinicize and politically further subjugate all Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslim minorities.

Against this backdrop, this chapter tries to explore the nature of these reeducation camps through synthesizing some available second-hand data, using multiple theoretical lenses such as Orientalism (Said, 1978), Internal Orientalism (Schein, 1997), critical race theory, and post-colonialism.

8.2 The Uyghurs and Their Homeland

Uyghurs are a Turkic people, who currently live in the north-western border region of China, which is the hub of the Eurasian Crossroads. Since as early as the tenth century they have been following the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam that is organically mingled with their local/pre-Islamic traditions and ancient worldviews (Harris & Dawut, 2002). They regard being Muslim as one of the most crucial aspects of Uyghur collective identity (Brophy, 2016; Kuşçu-Bonnenfant, 2014; Mahmut, 2021). They established numerous kingdoms in Central Asia before and after their Islamic turn (Millward, 2007). Manchu Empire annexed the Uyghur Homeland to China proper around the late-eighteenth century and had ruled the local inhabitants through indirect means till 1884 when Xinjiang (Ch. new dominion) province was established (Millward, 2007). After the demise of the Manchu Dynasty, they were able to gain their short-lived independence twice.[6]

Till the early twentieth century, the education among Uyghurs was mostly regulated through *maktaps*—the Islamic schools. The advent of Russian imperialism in Central Asia triggered the modern educational reformism among the local intellectuals, who attempted to establish *Jadid* (new method) schools that would offer secular education, too (Khalid, 1998). Up to the founding of the People's Republic

[6] These two independent states -East Turkestan Islamic Republic (1933–1934) and East Turkestan Republic (1944–1949)- were established by the local Turkic groups lead by the Uyghur elites. The advent of the communist China ended the second short independence of the Uyghurs. For more information see Bovingdon (2010).

of China in 1949, these schools had flourished all over the Uyghur Homeland. The formation of modern Uyghur identity has indebted tremendously to *Jadidism* that blended Islamic and secular education systems in a syncretistic manner (Brophy, 2016; Waite, 2007).

Today, the Uyghurs are one of the 55 officially recognized minority ethnic groups in China, contrasting to the majority Han Chinese who comprise 91% of the total population. According to the 2017 regional census, the Uyghur population is slightly more than 12 million, which still constitutes less than one percent of the entire Chinese population. Yet, the Uyghur Homeland occupies one-sixth of the total Chinese landmass. It harbors more than 20% of China's total natural gas, coal, and other fossil resources, and its wind power and solar energy production are ranked second in China.[7] In 2019, China's Ministry of Natural Resources estimated that the Tarim Basin holds 9.7 t/m^3 of ultra-deep natural gas resources or 60% of the country's potential gas reserves.[8] Meanwhile, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), China produces around 22% of global cotton supplies and 84% of Chinese cotton came from the Uyghur region in 2018 (Lehr & Bechrakis, 2019). Therefore, one can clearly see the importance of the region in relation to China's drive to meet strategic energy-related plans such as the Belt and Road Initiative and 5G technology.

8.3 Theoretical Perspectives and Methods

Theoretically, this article puts the inquiry at the intersection of critical race theory, Orientalism (Said, 1978), Internal Orientalism (Schein, 1997), and post-colonial perspectives, which are still and increasingly more relevant to the issues around the global Muslim identities. This is to connect the local with the global; the Uyghur reality in China cannot be effectively discussed without situating it within the larger reality of global *Umma*. As many scholars argue, since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, religious identity, especially the Muslim identity has been essentialized, as a result of the backlash of the global surge of Islamophobia (Esposito, 2019; Mahmut, 2018; Sen, 2006). The same process also has produced a racialized Muslim identity that can be effectively scrutinized through the lens of traditional critical race theory, reflecting the old-fashioned race relationships in politics, culture, and economy (Gotanda, 2011; Razack, 2008). In Ogbuagu's (2013) words, the Muslims have become the "New Black" in the post- 9/11 era (p. 469).

Furthermore, the faith of Muslims also has been subject to interrogation, despite the fact that the terrorists follow a very heterodox, divergent, and politicized faith. The mainstream discourses after 9/11 effectively made all "terrorism" as "Islamic",

[7] For more information, see https://www.powermag.com/energy-industry-xinjiang-china-potential-problems-solutions-web/.

[8] For more information, see https://www.petroleum-economist.com/articles/politics-economics/asia-pacific/2019/china-looks-west-to-solve-energy-riddle.

and the term "Islamic Terrorism" was created to label all violent events perpetuated by Muslims (Mamdani, 2004, p. 18). As a result, Islamophobia has become "normalized" in the West (Esposito, 2019, p. 15). Consequently, anti-Muslim sentiments have risen to an unprecedented level due to the supposed connection between the Islamic faith and terrorism and the incompatibility of Islam with modernity (Afsaruddin, 2015, Espositio, 2019; Kundnani, 2014). Meanwhile, the so-called "war on terror" rhetoric has exposed the West's anti-Islam and anti-Muslim prejudice (Kundnani, 2014).

In 1978, Edward Said rightly pointed out that through the Orientalism discourse an "East versus West" dichotomy was constructed in order to consolidate Western "superiority" over Eastern "backwardness" in every aspect of human life. Right after 2001, as Volpp (2002) asserted, "the redeployment of old Orientalist tropes" created an "us versus Muslims" dichotomy (p. 1576). Similarly, after 9/11, the Chinese government has created an "us/Han Chinese state vs. them/ Muslim Uyghurs" dichotomy through its recent rhetoric, policies, and practices pertaining to the Uyghur Islamic identity (Mahmut, 2019; Roberts, 2020). Prior to early 2000s, the discourse of "Internal Orientalism" (Schein, 1997, p. 70) had already been rendering Uyghurs a "backward" and "uncivilized" ethnic group vis a vis the "civilized" Han majority. Following Edward Said's (1978) points, Schein (1997) coined "Internal Orientalism" to describe how minority cultures, since the early 1980s, are commercialized in an essentialized fashion, and categorized as "female, rural, and backward", while the majority "modern Han urbanite" lead them to "progress" (p. 89). Under such a discourse, for the Han Chinese, "'culture' is inextricably linked to 'education', where 'education' is understood as (a) mastery of the Chinese language; and (b) knowledge of Confucian codes of behavior (*li*)". The widespread assumption is that receiving education in non-Chinese languages (including underground Islamic education in the Uyghur Homeland) equals to being "lack of culture", "uncultured" or "uncivilized" (Smith Finley, 2013, pp. 125–126). This very discourse has gained more political tones since the turn of the new millennium, with Uyghur Islamic identity and culture becoming the focus of scrutiny in relation to the "terrorism" issue within the Chinese state.

In terms of methods, this study is partially based on some secondary data obtained by reporters of various media agencies, namely the BBC, Vice News, France 24 English, The Guardian and Dr. Olsi Jazexhi,[9] who visited or observed some reeducation camps through independent secret trips or guided tours organized by the Chinese government. I also tried to synthesize some interviews of former camp inmates and teachers conducted by several reporters mentioned above. These and other individuals' courageous scrutiny of the issue yielded some valuable data that would help us better understand the hidden realities in those facilities. Meanwhile, I gave attention

[9] Dr. Olsi Jazexhi is an Albanian-Canadian historian. According to himself, he was first skeptical about the coverage of Western news outlets on the human rights abuses in reeducation camps, so he approached the Chinese Embassy in Albania for doing research on this matter. He was offered by the Chinese state a guided visit to two reeducation centers, along with some other foreign guests in August 2019. After that visit, he has become one of the most vocal critics of reeducation facilities in the Uyghur Homeland.

to some relevant scholarly literature as debates around this topic have flourished in the past few years. The content analysis of several Chinese government documents is included as well. Because only those who are granted a special permit by the Chinese state can visit those sites (since the start of Covid-19 Pandemic, no guided tour has been organized by the Chinese authorities, apart from the former UN High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet's visit to the Uyghur region in May 2022), I was only able to rely on the above sources for my analysis.

That said, it should be noted that before the guided visits, the designated reeducation camps most probably underwent a "beautification" process. For example, shortly before the visit of the BBC News (2019) team led by John Sudworth, the satellite images showed that all the watch towers had been taken down and empty yards had been filled with sports facilities. "But if these are show camps, what might that say about the places we are not given access to? With their watch towers and barbed wires are still in place, they look much less like schools…" asks John Sudworth. It is also revealed from Sudworth's interview of Rakhima Senbay, who spent one year in a camp before being released, each time, right before visitors were arriving, the inmates would be ordered to prepare for the visit. They would be taught singing and dancing and be warned that if they were to expose anything about the camp, they would be sent to an even worse place. Thus, it is highly important that the available data should be treated very cautiously.

8.4 Findings

8.4.1 Islam, as a Whole, is Targeted as the Source of Extremism

First, it may be very useful to find out what reasons could cause someone to be sent to one of those reeducation camps. In her study, Smith Finley (2019) compiled a list of such reasons, many of which turn out to be related to Islamic faith, directly or indirectly. These reasons include travelling or studying abroad,[10] especially in a Muslim country, or planning to do so, or simply having a relative who has travelled abroad, particularly to a Muslim country (Denyer, 2018; Dooley, 2018; Famularo, 2018; Feng, 2018; Special Correspondent, 2018; Sudworth, 2018; The Economist, 2018); engaging in "extremist" religious practices, which include some very mainstream behaviors like wearing religious symbols, praying regularly, fasting during Ramadan, making the pilgrimage to Mecca, preaching Islam or allowing others to do so, teaching children about Islam, giving children names of Islamic origin, attending Friday prayers outside of one's own village, etc. (Byler, 2018a; Dearden,

[10] The local authorities published an official list of "26 sensitive countries," (all mostly Muslim apart from Russia, Kenya and Thailand), including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Egypt, Algeria, Malaysia, and Indonesia. For more information see https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/09/09/eradicating-ideological-viruses/chinas-campaign-repression-against-xinjiangs.

2017; Denyer, 2018; The Economist, 2018); and possessing and/or spreading sensitive digital content such as messages containing religious language, e.g., Quranic verses or graphics; explanations of the Quran (*tabligh*) or pictures of women praying and wearing religious symbols (Feng, 2018; Kuo, 2018; Rajagopalan, 2017; Shih, 2018; Special Correspondent, 2018). Greer (2018) lists 48 factors that would lead to the same consequence. Apart from the above-mentioned reasons, his list contains some very much vague ones such as telling others not to sin and not to swear; wearing a shirt with Arabic-lettered writing on it; having a full beard; and abstaining from drinking and smoking. Obviously, the Chinese authorities associate all these behaviors with Islamic extremism, through sweeping generalization. As such, along with many ordinary religious people, some very prominent Islamic scholars such as Muhemmed Salih Hajim[11], and some secular academics studying Uyghur Islamic culture, such as Prof. Rahile Dawut[12] have been targeted as extremists or potential terrorists.

Correspondingly, many inmates or former inmates of various reeducation camps unanimously expressed that they had to confess that they were heavily influenced by Islamist extremism or terrorism in the past, so they were now being helped to "unlearn" those elements (BBC, 2019; France 24 English, 2019; Jazexhi, 2019; Karim, 2019; Vice News, 2019. For example, Vice News (2019) reporter Isobel Yeung interviewed some Uyghurs in Turkey who had spent some time in reeducation camps. An interviewee said she was sent to a camp because she had learned the Quran and Arabic. Another said he was put in a solitary confinement for one month because of refusing to eat pork and sing red songs about the Chinese Communist Party. France 24 English's (2019) interview with Sayragul Sauytbay, who had worked as a Mandarin Chinese teacher in a camp, also reveals that the Islamic lifestyle has absolutely no space in those camps. Moreover, according to The New York Times reporters Buckley et al., (2019), who interviewed a Uyghur woman, young Uyghur children are constantly asked by their teachers if their parents teach them about Islam at home. According to her, a girl in her daughter's class told her teachers that her mother had done so, and on the following day both of her parents were sent to a reeducation camp.

Dr. Olsi Jazexhi's visit to two reeducation camps in Aksu and Kashgar in August 2019 may provide us with some more concrete information in this regard (Blackwell, 2019). Dr. Jazexhi's interviews of students in the above two facilities involved many critical and sensitive inquiries, although he was always closely monitored by several Chinese officials. At the first camp, he consistently greeted the Uyghur students in an Islamic way, saying "As-salamu alaykum", which is banned by the Chinese

[11] Muhemmed Salih Hajim was the first scholar who translated the Quran into modern Uyghur language in the 1986. He was the former President of the Xinjiang Islamic Institute. He died in police custody in early 2018. For more information, see https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/scholar-death-01292018180427.html.

[12] Dr. Rahile Dawut is an internationally renowned Uyghur scholar specialized in Uyghur Islamic shrines. She has been disappeared since late 2017 and is believed to be held in a reeducation camp or a jail. For more information, see https://www.elle.com/culture/a36421114/rahile-dawut-disappearance-china/.

government as mentioned earlier. Accordingly, no single student responded to him in the corresponding fashion by saying "Wa-alaykum as-salam". Instead, they all answered him uttering "Ni hao" (Ch. hello). After such greetings, one of his very frequent questions was "Are you a Muslim?". Surprisingly, everyone unanimously declared they were not. He then asked them if they had been Muslims before coming to the reeducation center. Again, all said they had not been Muslims originally, either; some of them said they had been confused about their religious identities and now they realized that they had wrongly self-identified as Muslims before. For example, a young woman said she had been covering herself and praying five times a day prior to coming to the camp, but she now realized that she had been blindly following other people and affected by religious extremism. Now she was an atheist, according to her. Dr. Jazexhi asked the woman if she knew about Shahada or Prophet Muhammad, obviously to check if she was forced to give up her Muslim identity. She said "no", shaking her head nervously. She even declared that her parents had never been Muslims, either. Another student was asked if he understood the word "Bismillah". Similarly, he indicated he had never heard of that, with the same anxious body language. During these interviews, a very tense atmosphere could be sensed, with many students showing a high level of uneasiness, although they put smiles on their faces.[13]

In the second reeducation center he visited in Kashgar, however, everybody responded to his Islamic greeting correspondingly. They said they had always been Muslims and had not stopped being Muslims after coming to the camp. Yet, they all highlighted that they had been heavily influenced by Islamic extremist ideologies, so now they were receiving help to eradicate these negative elements from their minds.[14] Dr. Jazexhi (2019) expresses his suspicion over the disparity between this camp and the previous one, assuming that the students at this institution might have been given instructions to behave this way, as his videos on the Aksu camp he had uploaded on YouTube a few days earlier created much sensation. According to him, some Uyghur diaspora members even wrote to him in the comments sections of his YouTube videos asking him to help them find their lost relatives who might have been sent to reeducation camps. His uploading camp interviews on YouTube soon caught the attention of the Chinese authorities who directly warned him. Probably for this reason, the students in the second camp reacted quite differently from their counterparts in the previous camp, with regard to their Islamic identity.[15] This is totally understandable as the Islamic way of greeting is banned and labeled as a sign of extremism by the government, as mentioned earlier (Grose, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2018). Anyway, the atmosphere of the second camp was the same; everyone was trying to be politically correct.

[13] For more information, see the interviews here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMup-RgaZ0E.

[14] For more details, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oit1JQZGnDg.

[15] For more information, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VC1THdpRCPI.

Multiple other sources and accounts also reveal that Islam as a whole, whether inside or outside the camps, is targeted as the root cause of violent extremism. No differentiation is made between political jihadi ideologies and mainstream Islamic ways of life (e.g. Goldfarb, 2018; Harris, 2019; Kirby, 2020; Maizland, 2020; Shih & Kang, 2018; Sudworth, 2018). The inmates are forced to renounce their Islamic identity, and even required to drink alcohol and eat pork to prove that they truly gave up their faith (Goldfarb, 2018; Shih & Kang, 2018). As an example, a former camp teacher told The Guardian (2020) that when she first started her class, she mistakenly greeted the students uttering "As-salamu alaykum", to which no one answered in any way, apparently due to shock and fear. Other eyewitnesses also expose that the more religious the inmates are believed to be, the stricter control and heavier punishments they face (Byler, 2019).

Equally important, the recent government rhetoric around the Islamic faith of Uyghurs further unveils a very negative position of the Chinese state vis-a-vis Islam. For example, a newly published white paper titled "Historical Matters Concerning Xinjiang" (Published on 21 July 2019) depicted Islam as a foreign religion that was forced upon the local Uyghurs (Mai, 2019). The 6,800-word document states that "the Uyghur conversion to Islam was not a voluntary choice made by the common people, but a result of religious wars and imposition by the ruling class…. Islam is neither an indigenous nor the sole belief system of the Uyghur people."[16] What is suggested in the document is that Islam is a violent religion, as waging "religious wars" was necessary for converting the local Uyghurs into Islam. Putting "religious" in front of "war" accentuates the "cruel nature" of Islam, while indirectly signaling that the Uyghurs had been following some other religions which were not forcibly imposed on them, such as Buddhism (the forefathers of Uyghurs followed Buddhism before Islam), which is part of Chinese culture. Dr. Jazexhi also narrates that such white papers were presented to the group of visitors before their trip to the camps started.[17]

8.4.2 *Islam is Seen as a Polar Opposite to Science as Well as the Chinese Communism*

As a secularist[18] state, the communist China has always been approaching religion with an irreligious or anti-religious paradigm. Especially in the 1960s and 1970s, communism or state atheism became the dominant ideology, while virtually all forms of religious or spiritual expression were abolished (Yang, 2018). Although, from early

[16] For more information, see http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201907/22/WS5d351a66a310d830564003f2.html.

[17] For more information, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VC1THdpRCPI.

[18] The term "secularist", as Jackson (2012) sees, refers to a paradigm that deems "religious claims are false or meaningless", versus "secular" which implies equal treatment of various religious traditions while respecting the principle of freedom of religion (p. 60).

1980s to early 2010s, the Chinese government had maintained relatively relaxed control over most religious matters, the most recent political reality has revealed once again the Chinese government's most radical stance against religion since the end of the Great Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) (Farr, 2019; Mauldin, 2019).

Although in the 1980s, religion enjoyed some limited space in public educational institutions, it still remained as totally incompatible with modern civilization. As Article 8 of the Education Law of the People's Republic of China,[19] adopted in 1995, states: "The state shall separate education from religion. Any organization or individual may not employ religion to obstruct activities of the state education system." Till the late 2000s, the only available religious content at the primary and secondary levels of education had been restricted to introducing world's major religions and some relevant cultures (Nanbu, 2008).

At the tertiary level, some academic courses and programs related to religion were offered, but, again, exclusively through secularist or irreligious perspectives (Nanbu, 2008). There are religious institutions operated by various patriotic religious organizations that aim to train officials and scholars who work in jobs related to religion. The most important obligation of these schools is to cultivate a group of young religious professionals who are patriotic, upholding socialism, and loyal to the Communist Party (Department of Ethnic Religion Theory, Central Institute of the Party, 1998, pp. 448–9).

Since Xi Jinping too power in late 2012, the government policies have become significantly radical, mostly in relation to Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners, and Protestant Christians. Even Chinese Buddhism and Taoism have started to face much intolerance (Cook, 2017, 2020).

Within such a political climate, it seems that the reeducation camps have been further positioning religion as a polar opposite to modernity as well as communism. According to some available sources, the curricula (both open and hidden) of those centers indeed reveal such a dichotomy. The students are exclusively taught secular subjects such as Chinese law, Xi Jinping ideas, Mandarin Chinese, as well as various vocational knowledge and skills (the last content may not exist in all camps). The classroom walls and building hallways are filled with political propaganda and Chinese classical literature.[20] An anonymous witness who survived a camp told The Wall Street Journal (2018) that the camp teachers' key task is to convince their students that "there is no such a thing as religion… There is no God…" The students cannot utter that they have alternative ideas. A female student said to Dr. Jazexhi that she does not pray anymore, as "she learned more science and technology, and

[19] For more information about the content of this law, see http://www.china.org.cn/english/education/184669.htm.

[20] See the documentaries by French 24 English, Vice News, and Dr. Olsi Jazexhi, which are presented in the reference section.

Mandarin Chinese, thus she does not need religion." Many other students he interviewed also expressed that they were wrong to believe in God; they should have believed in science and the Communist Party from the very beginning.[21]

It seems that the situation outside the camps is not very much different. In the fall of 2019, CBC's (2019) undercover reporter managed to interview some people about the situation of the Uyghurs and the reeducation camps. Responding to his question about the spiritual life of the Uyghurs, a Han Chinese woman said, "They don't talk about their religion anymore. In the past, they used to say their faith was Islam. Now, they say their religion is the Communist Party of China. That's the only answer they can give." This further testifies that Islamic identity has become a key factor that could cause Uyghurs to be targeted as extremists or potential terrorists, while the Chinese communism and atheism are forced upon them as exclusive paradigms they should follow.

8.4.3 Mandarin Chinese and Chinese Culture Are Highlighted as Signs of Progress

It appears that the discourse of "Internal Orientalism" (Shein, 1997) has become insufficient to describe the subaltern status of the Uyghurs in the Xi Jinping era. A new level of Han Chinese cultural chauvinism has begun to manifest itself as of 2014, which is accompanied by a process of outlawing the Uyghur Islamic way of life. As such, the practices like following Han Chinese cultural traditions and using Mandarin Chinese instead of the mother tongue in everyday public life have started to be more openly and strongly advocated and reinforced by the state. Those who showed passivity or disobedience in doing so can be easily sent to reeducation camps (Byler, 2018b). Byler (2018b), uses the term "violent paternalism" to describe the current level of Chinese cultural dominance in the Uyghur Homeland. Under such paternalism, it is believed that many Uyghur intellectuals and public figures have been labeled as "two-faced persons" and sent to camps, as they tried to protect the Uyghur language and culture, or merely because of speaking Uyghur in public spaces (Ala, 2018; Ramzy, 2019). Meanwhile, poor Chinese-language proficiency is regarded as a factor that would push Uyghurs towards radicalization, therefore a great number of rural Uyghurs, most of whom have poor Mandarin skills, have been put into reeducation camps (Byler, 2018a; Dooley, 2018; Shih, 2018).

At the same time, it seems that the government's oppressive and anti-Islamic rhetoric has been further fueling the discourse of "Internal Orientalism", rendering some Han-Chinese people more discriminatory against the Uyghurs and their Islamic culture. For example, Vice News (2019) correspondent Isobel Yeung asked a Han Chinese woman on a train if she would feel sorry about the Uyghurs who were targeted by the systemic. In response, the woman said, with a smiley face, "no need

[21] For more information, see the YouTube video, from minute 05:00 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jp5y9LCZqTA.

to feel sorry. They still lag behind the Han Chinese," showing no respect or sympathy at all.

According to various other sources, all classes in reeducation camps are taught in Mandarin Chinese for the purpose of raising inmates' national language (国语Guoyu)[22] skills, and those who are seen as passive in learning Mandarin Chinese and Chinese culture are subject to torture and abuse. The inmates are strictly banned from speaking the Uyghur language (The Guardian, 2019; Rubio, 2019; Stavrou, 2019). The walls of the camps are covered with Chinese cultural style of decorations and Chinese classic or modern literature. A video made by Dr. Jazxeshi shows that Chinese tea culture is being taught in an activity room. Some very few Uyghur writings on the walls can be seen in the video. But it is obvious that these were displayed just for show, as no one was using the Uyghur language in those camps he visited. Interestingly, Dr. Jazxeshi tried to communicate with some students using a simple Turkish sentence, like "Ismin ne?" (What is your name?), which is understandable to Uyghurs, but the students replied to him in Mandarin Chinese.[23]

8.4.4 *The Children of the Detainees Are Facing the Similar Fate*

The fate of the children whose parents are sent to the camps or living overseas has also become deeply horrible. These children are arbitrarily collected into state-run kindergartens/orphanages or mandatory boarding schools where they should live separately from their other relatives (The Independent, 2018). They are forced to learn Mandarin Chinese, while their access to Uyghur language education is totally prohibited. Moreover, the children are strictly prevented from practicing their religion (Choi, 2019). These kindergartens are more like prisons as they are closed even during weekends and their walls have barbwires (Human Rights Watch, 2019). In winter 2019, VICE News correspondent Isobel Yeung and her colleague attempted to have a closer look at a few such boarding schools in Hotan, but they were not able to enter any of them. Some Uyghur parents they interviewed in Turkey said, in tears, that they had recognized their own children in some video footage leaked from those facilities. Bitter Winter also presents several videos about the children who are living in those boarding schools. The trauma they are going through can be observed clearly in those videos.[24]

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[22] Mandarin Chinese used to be called *Han Yu* (汉语)—literally meaning "Han language" in China. Yet, since 2014, the term has been replaced by *Guo Yu* (国语)—"national language", signaling that using Mandarin Chinese is part of Chinese patriotism. For more information, see Byler (2019b).

[23] For more information, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jp5y9LCZqTA.

[24] For more information, see Video: Uyghur Children Indoctrinated in Campshttps; Feng, Emily (9 July 2018). "Uighur children fall victim to China anti-terror drive". *Financial Times.*; Dake Kang, Yanan Wang and (21 September 2019). "China treats Uighur kids as 'orphans' after parents seized". *apnews.com.* The Associated Press.

According to the 2017 policy document of the Chinese Ministry of Education, these boarding schools are planned to be further expanded as a top priority.[25] China expert Adrian Zenz (2019a) calls the effort a "systematic campaign of social re-engineering and cultural genocide" in his paper published in the *Journal of Political Risk*. According to some estimates, currently more than 900,000 children are being forcibly indoctrinated in those boarding schools (Idris, 2021). The Chinese Department of Education admits that children as young as eight are enrolled in these schools (Cheng, 2019), yet there is evidence that children as young as 4 years of age are also targeted(Qin, 2020). Obviously, these boarding schools are essentially the same as the reeducation camps in nature. The only difference here is that the children do not need to "unlearn" much as they just came to this world. This also means that they will become Chinese before they know enough about their Uyghur heritage. They are the most helpless victims of a cultural genocide, which is no less than a genocide in the eyes of Lemkin (1944).

8.5 Conclusion

Prior to 2001, Muslims around the world more often would be addressed by their ethnic or geographical backgrounds rather than their Muslim identity. Since then, Muslimness has become the number one identity marker for those who follow Islam (Kymlicka, 2015). In parallel, the Islamic aspect of Uyghur collective identity has become more salient in the last two decades. In other words, the Chinese application of global "war on terror" rhetoric to the Uyghur context has transformed the Uyghurs from a "backward ethnicity" to "uncivilized violent Muslim others". Furthermore, the "demeaning or contemptible" (Taylor, 1994, p. 25) image of Muslims created by the international media and right-wing politics has encouraged the Xi Jinping government to become more overtly anti-Islamic in its own policies and practices. The Chinese state has conveniently and opportunistically benefited from the global rise of Islamophobia to legitimize its anti-religious educational projects in the Uyghur Homeland.

All this is most vividly reflected in the infamous reeducation camps that have been stripping away Uyghur rights to follow their Islamic ways of life, or simply to believe in their religion. As the China expert James Millward states, Islam, as a whole "is now effectively being demonized in China" (Samuel, 2018). In the words of Dennis Wilder, a former National Security Council director for China, it is all about "crushing the Uyghur Islamic culture" (Simmons, 2019).

Moreover, Islam is seen by the Chinese government as incompatible with or contrary to science and advancement, while communism or Xi Jinping thoughts are

[25] Chinese Ministry of Education: 全国统筹县域内城乡义务教育一体化 改革发展现场推进会-交流资料 (Exchange Material for the National Meeting on Overall Planning of Urban and Rural Compulsory Education Integration, Reform and Development) p. 232.

For more information, see http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/xw_zt/moe_357/jyzt_2016nztzl/ztzl_xyncs/ztzl_xy_dxjy/201801/W020180109353888301306.pdf.

equivalent to secularism and civilization. Meanwhile, mastering Mandarin Chinese is highlighted as an important sign of progress, yet using the mother tongue is strongly discouraged as an indication of backwardness and disloyalty to the state, exposing a deeply politized form of "Internal Orientalism" (Schein, 1997). Accordingly, as Dr. Thum, who is an expert in Uyghur history, argues there is also a strong political agenda here; the Communist Party of China (CCP) regards Islam "as a threat to their continued rule over China" (Zeballos-Roig, 2019). More specifically, the current Chinese government regards the Uyghur Islamic identity as a threat to the Chinese state and its future prosperity, so it has not stopped such a state-enforced mass pedagogical, assimilative, anti-Islamic project, despite the mounting international pressure. According to Lemkin's (1944) framework, which defines genocide as any deliberate act committed with the intention of destroying the language, religion, or culture of a group, what the Chinese authorities are doing to Uyghurs is a genocide which reflects the legacy of shameful and destructive colonial past of humanity.

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Chapter 9
The Integral Link Between Islamic Education and Religious Education: A Bonhoeffer Reflection on the Urgent Task of Countering Jihadist Pedagogy

Terence Lovat

9.1 Introduction

The chapter will begin with Dietrich Bonhoeffer's reflections on the integration between religion and life that he discerned in Islam, then to explore this notion in relation to the consequential integral link to be found between Islamic education and religious education. It will explore Islamic scholarship old and new in making the point that all Islamic education is religious education in the important sense that its ultimate goal is the pupil's holistic well-being and development, intellectual, moral, and spiritual. The chapter will then address an urgent task for contemporary Islamic religious education to return to its original charter of holistic well-being by countering the ease with which Jihadist pedagogy has been able to draw young people to its counter-wellbeing agenda and so tarnish Islam's reputation.

9.2 Bonhoeffer on Islam: Perceiving the Integration Between Religion and Life

I have written elsewhere (Lovat, 2018a, 2018b, 2020a, 2020b) that, among his many missteps around the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, missteps that Green (2010) has described as a "hijacking", Metaxas (2010) sets Bonhoeffer up as a virtual Islamophobe. The insinuation is that, was he active today, Bonhoeffer would be leading a kind of Christian campaign against Islam's alleged inherent violent streak. The logic behind the claim appears to rest on Hitler's alleged adulation of Islam for its warrior culture. The only evidence that Hitler ever said such a thing is in Speers' (1997) musings on the Third Reich's inner life and some memories on his part of

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Hitler making a few errant comments about the "Japanese religion" and "Muhammadanism" being a better fit for Germany than the "flabby" Christianity with which he had been forced to contend.

Whether Hitler ever said such a thing is just one line of the inherent dubiousness in the argument. Even if he had, Hitler's actual knowledge of Islam was, in all likelihood, extremely limited. Least of all could he be referenced as an expert. Moreover, if such comments had any meaning, they could only be taken to bespeak a frustration with a Christianity that was becoming less and less compliant to Hitler's every command. Finally, granted Bonhoeffer's own detestation of Hitler and all for which he stood, the idea that he would have been influenced one way or the other by Hitler's view of such a thing, or anything at all, is at the top end of innate dubiousness.

For all that, Metaxas's assertion has sparked some interest in speculating on just what Bonhoeffer's view on Islam might have been, especially in an era when it is in the news so much and often for the wrong reasons. Just how might Bonhoeffer have positioned on the subject of Islam? There is little direct evidence but plenty of clues and they are helpful ones in considering the issue of Islamic religious education and indeed education more broadly. Indeed, it might be that Bonhoeffer perceived the essential interface between Islamic education and religious education better than most Western analysts, this in spite of his limited direct exposure to the religion.

Bonhoeffer's only direct exposure to Islam came in 1924 through a trip to Libya, Morocco, and Southern Spain. He wrote to his parents with the following words:

> …it seems to me that there is immense similarity between Islam and the lifestyle and piety recorded in the Old Testament … In Islam, everyday life and religion are not separated at all. (Bonhoeffer, 2002, p. 124)

When reflecting on his experiences of Islam in later life, we find him writing in Ethics:

> Technical development in the Islamic world … remains completely in the service of belief in God and the building of Islamic community. (Bonhoeffer, 2005, p. 117)

Putting these reflections together, we find nothing that would lead one to suppose Bonhoeffer might have ended up with the disposition alleged by Metaxas. In contrast, what we do find is a tone of respectfulness but, of greater importance, the sense of an integrity that Bonhoeffer saw in Islam that, we know from his entire corpus, he saw lacking in the Christianity of his day, not least through the fractures created by the so-called "Reich Church". As a theologian, Bonhoeffer was always seeking out the theological edge of any issue he confronted and so what he arguably perceived as laying at the foundations of Islam was a theological view of the world that integrated religion and life. Islam was not just about creeds and worship; it had a practical edge to it. "Life and religion are not separated", he said. "Belief in God and the building of community are one and the same".

It was the same integration of religion and practical action that Bonhoeffer admired in what he referred to as "the Indian religions", especially as he saw them lived out in the life and witness of Mohandas Gandhi. Bethge (2000) quotes Bonhoeffer as

saying he saw '… more Christianity in (them) than our entire Reich Church (Bonhoeffer, 2007, p. 152),' a clear reference to the integration of religion and practical commitment. Bonhoeffer had communicated with Gandhi and hoped to visit him, only to be thwarted by events beyond his control. He clearly wished to know and understand better the theology that underpinned his commitment to pacifism in the face of tyrannical violence. Had he come to know better the nature of Gandhi's commitment, Bonhoeffer would soon have discovered the importance of Islam to the man.

In Gandhi's (1949) own words, Islam was one of the religions that inspired both his spirituality and his practical stance. He describes himself as being as much a Muslim as a Hindu or Christian, and Muhammad as one of his prophetic figures, along with Krishna and Jesus. In strengthening the argument, it should be noted that Gandhi was no relativist when it came to religions. He was quite critical of some traditions for what he regarded as their hypocrisy, the disjunction he perceived between their spoken beliefs and practical actions. Indeed, he came to blows with at least one tradition in this regard, a tension that persisted well beyond his death (Sinha, 2014). In contrast, he had only good words to offer about Islam, including about the synergy between what it espoused and what its followers did, and acknowledging the influence of its spirituality and practice on his own life and actions (Dey, 2013; Gandhi, 1949). I believe it is a reasonable case to make that we find in Gandhi's reflections on Islam the essence of that integration between religion and life that Bonhoeffer had sensed and that was clearly part of what attracted him to Gandhi in the first place.

This is a useful place to begin considering the distinctiveness of Islamic religious education, one that encompasses everything for which Islamic education more broadly stands. In that sense, we might say that all Islamic education, in its traditional sense, is religious education. The separation between religious and secular education, and least of all the diminution of the former that we have come to expect in Western education, does not apply. In identifying the principal threats imposed by Western education on the essential principles of Islamic education, Syed al-Attas (1979) spoke mainly of two things: first, the central importance of the nature of the relationship between teacher and student, one characterized as close, personal and loving, so reflecting the role of the teacher as standing in the place of God in the pupil's formation; and, second, the need for balance between intellectual and broader developmental aims, especially those around moral and spiritual formation. In a word, Islamic education is principally a form of holistic spiritual education, to be seen in a teacher-student relationship that models the relationship a student has with God and the balancing of intellectual with moral and spiritual ends. These are persistent themes among Muslim scholars, both of the past and present, and they underpin the notion that all education is, in its holistic understanding, religious education. We find evidence of this integration in both medieval and contemporary scholarship (Lovat, 2019, 2021).

9.3 Islamic Education as Religious Education: Medieval and Contemporary Scholarship

Ibn Tufayl (b. 1105) is famous for his story of the shipwrecked sailor who intuits the principles of Islam without the need for instruction of any kind (Attar, 2010; Baroud, 2012). Implicit in the story is again the integration between religion and life that Bonhoeffer appeared to ascertain in Islam. Religion and life are one. Godliness and worldliness are indistinguishable. All that Islam stands for can be apprised through turning one's mind to God and the conscientious striving that goes with it. In an extreme interpretation, what Tufayl is pointing to is a form of what we might refer to as "religionless Islam", much as Bonhoeffer referred to the need for a "religionless Christianity" (Bonhoeffer, 2005) to supersede the profanity of the Reich form of Christianity that had overtaken Germany. Better to have no religion than a profane form was the lesson. Similarly, from Tufayl's point of view, better to have no religion than one that would stultify, leading perhaps to the outward expression of religiousness but lacking its spirit. For him, that would be an aberrant form of Islam, much as Bonhoeffer saw of the Christianity represented in the Reich Church. Worse still would be to have a religion that led one to turn from God and towards Satan, a theme we find in both the Qur'an (Sura, 4:76) and in Bonhoeffer (Bonhoeffer, 1998).

Just as it was better to have no religion than the wrong kind, so the same could be said of education. From the perspective of Tufayl's logic, formal education about the essential matters of Islam was superfluous. People could come to understand and live out the essential principles of godliness and worldliness embedded in the Five Pillars of Islam without the need for human intervention (Katz, 2013). Hence, it follows that any education, if it were to happen, had to be supremely facilitative, not in any way obstructive. It had to fit and be integrated into those essential features of Islamic life that Muslims could discover for themselves, rather than in any way distracting them by having them conform to external religious structures that were not true representations of the mandated life of the Muslim. The risk inherent in human intervention, including the formalities of education, is that they could lead the individual away from this true religious form to false religion.

Tufayl is one of any number of scholars of Islam's medieval "Golden Age" (Lombard, 2009), an era that saw Islam responsible for pioneering breakthroughs in the sciences, medicine and healthcare, and social and political philosophy, among other reforms. The great Jewish scholar, Maimonides, and the equally great Christian scholar, Thomas Aquinas, among a myriad of others, were heavily influenced by elements of this pioneering breakthrough in thinking (Altman, 1978; Gehman, 1935; Pasnau, 2011). Nestled within this new thinking were many ideas essential to sound education, ones that fit neatly with the perspectives of Tufayl and, as Bonhoeffer sensed, whose basis lies in Islam's innate sense of the integration between religion and life. Hence, those who spoke to education did so from a theological position whose foundation was to be found in the revelation era and in the person of the Prophet, one who, among other things, is depicted as a teacher of extraordinary capacity. His teaching prowess, seen as flowing from his encounter with God, is held

to be foundational to the way the original Ummah was settled and how it developed as an ideal society (Ghuddah, 2010). Effective education was therefore integral to his charter before God to inspire, form, and lead the Ummah. What the Prophet models is an education that, in the spirit of Tufayl, facilitates the natural processes that God has established for people coming to know and understand the principles of Islam, rather than in any way distracting from them by leading people to "false religion", the religion of outward rather than inward conformity. In this way, from the beginning, Islamic education and religious education are one.

In the "Golden Age", we find this integration of education and religious education persisting in the way the central role of education is referred to. Nasr al-Farabi (b. 870CE), for instance, refers to education as being about the acquisition of the values, knowledge, and practical skills necessary for the perfection required for life in the Ummah and before God. The happiness that will accrue from this is what is intended by God. The teacher's role is therefore quasi-divine. In a similar way to the imam, the teacher stands before the student in the place of God, following in the footsteps of the Prophet whose instructions were most wise and who provided the supreme model for all Muslims to follow (Al-Talbi, 1993).

Ali Ibn Sina (b. 980) was another of the pioneers of this era. Similarly, for him, teaching was a divine quest designed to bring the human to fulfillment according to God's plan. It was therefore in its essence a supremely moral and spiritual enterprise, the role of the teacher being both to serve as a model of living according to God's plan as well as engage in the kind of effective teaching that will lead the pupils to the same path. Under God's ordinance, Ibn Sina insisted, modeling and effective instruction were not separable components but must be integrated as a single educational construct (Nowrozi et al., 2013).

Hamid al-Ghazali's (b. 1058CE) Revival of Religious Sciences is designated '… one of the most comprehensive and influential essays on ethics and education in medieval Islamic culture' (Gil'adi, 1992, p. 45). Al-Ghazali insisted that the imparting of any knowledge had to have a practical element to it. God did not want a community of "know-it-alls" but of those whose practical actions matched their knowledge and espoused beliefs. The notion of the kind of integration of religion and life underpinning the tradition, in the way Bonhoeffer appeared to sense it, is most explicit in al-Ghazali's educational philosophy. While layered in mysticism at one end, the final goal of education is an extremely practical one. All knowledge worth having emanates from God and it is the teacher's principal task to ensure the pupil is drawn into this understanding. At the same time, however, the acid test of effective education is not in a store of knowledge but in the practical behavior that makes one fit for God's purpose as a member of the Ummah (Attaran, 1987). In this sense, all education is religious education.

The utmost importance of education in achieving the central aim of Islam to form a community of God-like people is underlined in al-Ghazali's work as well as we find it anywhere. His own sense of teaching as a practical art results in perspectives on teaching worthy of the most avant-garde pedagogue (Gil'adi, 1992). For example, he emphasized the need for students' imaginative and creative capacities to be stimulated, with memorization and rote learning largely rendered ineffective in drawing

students into the ambiance where optimal learning was likely to result. Hence, the relationship with the teacher was paramount because the teacher was the best source of stimulation. He encouraged teachers to be, above all, kind and encouraging and to be sparing in punishment (Orak, 2016). He wrote of the need for balance between the academic, the creative, and the spiritual in the learning provided. Al-Ghazali seems especially aware that education can serve to obstruct rather than facilitate the growth, intellectual and spiritual, that accords with God's plan for each individual.

Walid Ibn Rushd (b. 1126) shared much the same perspective on education as his fellow Muslim scholars (Fakhry, 2001). His particular emphasis on virtue formation, conceived of as a divine as well as a human venture, was for him the most important feature of Islamic education. He pondered on the need to develop the essential virtues of good character and civility in the young and, in the obverse, how to teach them the best means of avoiding those dispositions that might threaten such development. Fairly typical of his generation of Muslim scholars, Ibn Rushd always had an eye on the link between knowing and doing. It was not merely the conceptual aspects of good character that were important but their application in practice. For him, to know was to do, and so the principal importance of the teacher-student relationship was that the teacher not only provide the knowledge but model the practice as well. Ibn Rushd arguably moved Islamic education more closely towards Qur'anic conformity than his predecessors, in the sense that Qur'anic knowledge, especially as represented in Shari'a Law, was presented as the perfect way in which all the goals of education could be conceived of, and the essential virtues attained. In turn, these virtues were represented best in the Five Pillars. In other words, Islamic education is morally and spiritually grounded. In its essence, it is always a form of religious education.

Faryadi (2015) regards education as a tool that, above all, serves as an instrument for God's plan for the individual to be dispensed. In this process, the teacher stands in the place of God, expressing the essence of God's love for the individual in the form of respect and mutual regard. Sultana (2012) contrasts educational assumptions typically found in the West, ones alleged to concentrate principally on intellectual formation, with the main goal to be found in Islamic tradition, one said to focus on whole-person development, including principally spiritual development. Nasr (2010) speaks of the emphasis in Islam on the balanced and comprehensive curriculum and the revered role of teaching, especially in facilitating the philosophical understanding that is essential to spiritual development.

Zahra al-Zeera (2001) challenges the kind of education most prominent in the West, one that focuses principally on the intellectual and physical aspects of human development. She compares this with what she describes as the methodological aim and structure of Islamic education where the centrality of spiritual and religious factors, along with scholarly ones, are aimed at forming a 'whole and holy' human being. Al-Zeera's philosophy of teaching seems to rest principally on the teacher's capacity to utilize 'transformative methodology', modeling and guiding the student in the kind of learning acquisition that leads to such formation:

> For a student to be able to think holistically, she or he must be trained and equipped with methods that both develop the mind and discipline the soul. (p. xxvii)

Al-Zeera criticizes the narrow intellectual focus of much Western education in the following way:

> …they create unbalanced human beings that have advanced intellectual abilities, yet spiritually are poor and weak. (p. xxvii)

In summary, all Islamic education can be said meaningfully to be religious education. This integrated religious education is designed principally to provide holistic development, including intellectual, moral and spiritual well-being, as defined by the principles embedded in the original charter of Islam, represented best by the Five Pillars. In turn, the Five Pillars encapsulate both the essential beliefs and practices of the Muslim, what we might describe as the integration between religion and life that Bonhoeffer perceived in his own limited encounters with Islam. Continuing to employ a Bonhoeffer perspective, what might then he have to say about Islam, and especially Islamic religious education, were he alive and active today at a time that has seen Islam's reputation brought low by its association with Jihadic forms of violence? In a word, what are the challenges for Islamic religious education in our day and age?

9.4 What Goal for Islamic Religious Education in Our Times?

As suggested above, Bonhoeffer resorted to the notion of "religionless Christianity" in the face of an institutional Christianity that he characterized as working for the "anti-Christ" rather than for Christ, a Christianity that had succumbed to his own and the Qur'anic warning that religious people can be fooled into thinking they are doing God's work when in fact they are doing the work of the devil:

> The teaching as well as the action of the responsible leaders of the Reich Church has clearly proved that this church does no longer serve Christ but that it serves the Antichrist. (Bonhoeffer, 2011, p. 72)

Rogowski (1975) makes a case for there being some similarity between Bonhoeffer and Mohamed Talbi, the latter noted mainly for his taking the fight to the so-called radical Islamist, or Jihadist, those mainly responsible for bringing Islam into such disrepute through promoting it as a religion of innate violence. Talbi (1967, 1995, 2002, 2006, 2011; Talbi & Jarczyk, 2002) stood out against the Islamist's narrow interpretation of the tradition and especially any interpretation associated with hatefulness and violence. On the contrary, Talbi saw in the Islamic inspirational narrative an inherent inclusiveness and therefore proffered that Islam should be a world leader of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, rather than the recalcitrant tradition that had become its modern reputation. Talbi employed the sacred sources of Islam to argue the case that Islam should rightly be regarded as one of the great reforming movements of the medieval world, building societies where peoples of all faiths could live safely and thrive together for the common good. He proposed that it

is an important, indeed urgent, need to educate youth, especially vulnerable Muslim youth, about these realities in order to challenge both the tabloid stereotype about Islam and the radical Islamist's calls to Jihadism.

Just as Bonhoeffer railed against those narrow understandings of Christianity that had led to the ease with which Christian scriptures and motifs had been employed by the Nazis, including Hitler himself (Comfort, 2012; Nicholls, 1995), to justify the horrendous agenda of the Reich, so Talbi castigated those who employ Islamic scriptures and motifs to justify the execrable deeds of the likes of ISIS (The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) (Baghdadi, 2014). Just as Bonhoeffer urged a more informed education of Christians about their scripture and tradition in order to ensure that future generations would not be as susceptible as those Christians who became complicit with the Reich (Bonhoeffer, 2006), so Talbi urged the same for Muslims. Against the Jihadist who summons Muslims to Holy War with the words 'The Ummah must wake up and join the Jihadist vanguard elite to defend itself and reclaim its God-given right to rule the earth' (Zackie, 2013, p. 15), Talbi proposed an Islam that is inherently an artisan of peace and a leader of religious tolerance:

> … we can think of the whole of mankind (sic) as a brotherly 'community of communities' – or God's Family as the Hadith states – in which everyone has the right to be different, to be accepted, and fully respected in his chosen differences. (Talbi, 1995, p. 61)

Islamic scholarship of Talbi's kind has challenged the ways in which radical Islamist and Jihadist discourse has become the Islamic stereotype, a stereotype that, for Talbi, betrayed Islam. For him, this ignorance is robbing the world of an Islam that could be a leader in dealing with twenty-first-century challenges. The means of reversing this circumstance is education. It is a prime task for an Islamic religious education that is cognisant of its heritage as integral to an education whose primary goal is to draw people into God's plan.

Admittedly, this is a two-edged sword because the Jihadists can employ precisely the same argument to justify their own proselytization, and Talbi recognized that this constituted the main challenge. Indeed, the Jihadist message was, in modern social media terms, often more effective than traditional forms of religious education. Low (2016) refers to ISIS's social media propaganda as a "pedagogy" whose aim is "making up the Ummah" to entice potential followers to believe the ISIS community is the kind of ideal state that the Prophet initially established at the origins of Islam. Worthington (2016) refers similarly to the "re-imagined Ummah" that ISIS propagates, especially through the internet, an Ummah that is inherently a violent one, bent on the destruction of any and all who do not conform to its notion of what Islam stands for. Such oppositional forces are characterized, with all the associated drama that social media invites, as an infidel. While it targets the West, deemed to be inspired by the infidel Abrahamic traditions of Judaism and Christianity, its principal target concerns Muslims who do not agree with its understanding of Islam. They are deemed to be apostate Muslims, worse in a sense than infidels because they should know better. Hence, the University of Maryland-based National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) and its estimation that the vast majority of victims of terrorism, including from Muslim-inspired groups, like

ISIS, were Muslim (Herrera, 2019). The made-up, imaginary Ummah is, in the case of ISIS, an entirely malevolent one bent on the destruction of anything that stands in the way of establishing the promised Caliphate, the so-called Islamic State. As Low and Worthington imply, such an imaginary Islamic State is entirely the product of education, in this case, a pernicious one. It is, we might say, a religious education gone tragically wrong.

Again, one sees the similarity with the educational product that Bonhoeffer confronted. In his case, the pedagogically charged propaganda that the Nazis employed was founded in what Clements (2011) describes as a “Volkish ideology”. Combined with a formal religious education devoid of the kind of understanding of its scriptures and tradition that believers require for mature faith (Bonhoeffer, 2006, p. 29), people had been duped into confusing this Volkish ideology with the essence of Christian commitment. At the apex of this duping was Hitler’s delusional self-referencing as “Messiah” and Hans Kerll, Nazi Minister for Church Affairs, referring to him when dialoguing with church officials as “the New Christ” (Comfort, 2012). As in the case of ISIS, Nazi pedagogy was highly effective in dramaturgical terms.

I have referred elsewhere (Lovat, 2017) to Hitler’s pedagogical method of employing Christian scriptures to both promote his Messianic claims and justify his horrendous agenda with the similar method employed by Abu al-Baghdadi, self-proclaimed Caliph of Islamic State and leader of ISIS. In his infamous sermon at the mosque in Mosul in July 2014 (Baghdadi, 2014), one that marked the veritable launch of the ISIS plunder and savagery against largely innocent populations of mainly Muslim peoples, he purported to cite the Qur’an 126 times. As with Hitler, it was a pedagogy designed to convince his audience that he was speaking for the God whose word was embodied in the scriptures and that, as a consequence, what he was urging was divinely endorsed. As I have also written (Lovat, 2018b), it is a pedagogy whose success relies on a profound level of ignorance of those scriptures in one’s audience. Just as Hitler could only have succeeded turning the Gospel of Matthew XXI into an anti-Semitic diatribe because of an audience betrayed by a poor religious education about the scriptures, so Baghdadi could only have gotten away with his misquoting and false attributions of the largely agreed meanings behind these 126 Qur’anic references because his audience had similarly been betrayed by a religious education that had failed to provide the literacy essential to informed belief, including through being versed in respected and authentic interpretations of the Qur’an (Saffazadeh, 2009). As an instance, he turned Sura 4:74, largely taken to be a call for justice and the inner Jihad, into incitement to violence of the most horrendous kind. Likewise, he turned Sura 60:2, which includes a reference to ‘those who believe and those who disbelieve’, into a diatribe against Jewish, Christian, and Shi’a coalitions against the true Islam, his version of Islam.

The potential for both Muslim and non-Muslim listeners to understand what Baghdadi was doing was, in other words, severely hampered by their poor grounding in essential religious understanding, clearly a task for a properly constructed religious education. As if the lack of scriptural literacy was not enough, the situation was made worse by the fact that Baghdadi resorted to deep-seated and skewed bigotries

in Islamic historiography in the interstices between the supposed Qur'anic references. This part of the sermon was referred to as "gibberish" by Western intelligence listeners and some even questioned if the speaker was really Baghdadi because they were not used to hearing such gibberish from him (JTTM, 2016). Eventually it became clear that Baghdadi was drawing on a deep historical theological tradition in Islam inspired especially by the Abbasid Caliphate that had sparked an Eighth Century revolution in Islam, directed especially against Shi'ism and other 'infidel' forms of Islam (Al-Tabari, 1985; Kennedy, 2004; Mishra, 2016).

Furthermore, it was claimed that Baghdadi's own inspirational figure was Abu as-Saffah, the first Abbasid Caliph, otherwise known as "the Butcher" for the blood spilled in the Abbasid establishment, much of it Shi'ite blood (Mousawi, 1995). According to legend, as-Saffah had given a similar speech in the mosque in launching the Abbasid Caliphate. Against this background, Baghdadi's Mosul sermon was replete with the historical theological significance of the kind that only a robust, fully informed analysis could unravel (Esfandiary & Tabatabai, 2015; Lovat & Moghadam, 2017; Moghadam & Lovat, 2019). One might argue that it is expecting too much of religious education to deal with such things, but the counter-argument is that without it, we leave our populations far too vulnerable to the ill-informed and pernicious pedagogies of ideologues, be they Jihadic or Volkish ones. One senses that neither Bonhoeffer nor Talbi would have regarded such religious education as beyond reasonable expectations, granted its importance in preserving their religious traditions, traditions that, in both cases, they saw trashed by the combination of false ideologies and the vulnerability of poorly informed populations.

9.5 Conclusion

The chapter began with Dietrich Bonhoeffer's reflections on the integration between religion and life in Islam, proceeding to explore this notion in relation to a similar integration between Islamic education and religious education, as found in Islamic scholarship both old and new. It proposed the view that all Islamic education is religious education in the important sense that its ultimate goal is the pupil's holistic wellbeing and development, intellectual, moral, and spiritual. The chapter then proposed an urgent task for contemporary Islamic religious education to counter the ease with which Jihadist pedagogy has been able to draw young people to its counter-wellbeing agenda and so tarnish Islam's reputation.

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Chapter 10
Testing the Contact Hypothesis in Interfaith Encounters: Personal Friendships with Sikhs Countering Anti-Sikh Attitudes?

Ursula McKenna and Leslie J. Francis

Abstract Drawing on data provided by 5,811 students from schools in England, Wales, and London who self-identified as either 'no religion' or as Christian, this study explored the effect of the contact hypothesis (having friends who are Sikhs) on scores recorded on the five-item Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude (SASA), after controlling for type of school (with or without a religious character), location (England, Wales, and London), personal factors (sex and age), psychological factors (extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism) and religious factors (self-assigned affiliation as Christian, worship attendance, and belief in God). The data demonstrated the positive effect of having friends who are Sikhs on lowering anti-Sikh attitudes.

Keywords Religious diversity · Contact hypothesis · Sikhs · Gurdwara · United Kingdom

10.1 Introduction

The charity BeatBullying found one in four of over 800 children they surveyed were bullied because of their faith or religious beliefs (Lipsett, 2008). As highlighted by Lipsett, these children may begin to question their faith, stop talking about it, or even feel ashamed of it. Other studies have also shown that students who identify as religious, or are visibly members of religious minorities, may experience hostility, abuse, and prejudice, and may face challenging incidents at school because of their religious beliefs (Dupper et al., 2015; Ipgrave, 2012; Ipgrave & McKenna, 2008; Moulin, 2011, 2016; Weller et al., 2001).

However, the body of research on religion-related victimization and its impact on the lives of people from different faiths appears sparse in comparison to research

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examining race-related or sexuality-related discrimination and victimization. Moreover, the perspectives and experiences of school-age students belonging to religious minorities have been given relatively little attention. Empirical research has often focused on the perspectives of students towards religion and to religious education (Arweck, 2017; Bertram-Troost & O'Grady, 2008; Ipgrave & McKenna, 2008; McKenna et al., 2009), while research that does explore the connections between religion and victimization among young people, has tended to give particular attention to the experiences of faith-based discrimination and harassment reported by those from the Muslim faith (Anwar, 2005; Archer, 2003; Francis & McKenna, 2018; Verma et al., 1994). In particular, the Sikh community in the UK may have been overlooked in this regard.

There is a long-established Sikh population in the UK. While some writers have claimed that the number of Sikhs in the UK may be under-estimated (Singh & Tatla, 2006, p. 58), according to the 2011 UK Census, 420,196 Sikhs live in England and of these 30% live in London (126,134). A further smaller number of Sikhs live in Wales (2,962) (Office for National Statistics, 2012). The majority of these Sikhs were born in the UK, with the first generation of Sikh immigrants giving way to second, third, and fourth generations of younger Sikh people. In terms of their religiosity these young Sikhs are not a homogeneous group, but rather diverse in terms of identifying with, and practizing their faith. According to Singh and Tatla (2006, p. 58), 'while religion remains an important determinant of self and collective identity the younger generation of Sikhs are both less religious and more likely to identify with British identity.' The wearing of the five articles of faith, known as the Khalsa (5Ks), as a way of signifying their commitment to the Sikh religion makes Sikhs distinctive and publicly recognizable. However, there may be differences in the degree to which young Sikhs give public expression to their Sikh identity. As Hall (2002, p. 5) points out, 'some who practize Sikhism choose to keep the symbols of the faith, while others do not, and not all those who could identify as Sikh, ethnically or religiously actually do.'

Generally, the Sikh population has been able to integrate socially into UK society, and UK law has been accommodating when cases of potential discrimination have been highlighted by the Sikh community. For example, within the UK there have been legal exemptions for Sikhs who wear turbans from having to wear crash helmets when riding a motorcycle, and from wearing hard hats on construction sites. Likewise, offensive weapons legislation allows for the carrying of the Kirpan on religious grounds (see: Singh & Tatla, 2006, pp. 127–138; Sidhu & Gohil, 2009, pp. 118–119; EHRC, 2011, p. 12), although as pointed out by Singh and Tatla (2006) not all challenges have been successful as particular exemptions do not always override health and safety legislation. Consequently, at times there have been highly publicized legal disputes where individual Sikhs have challenged discrimination in the workplace, in schools, and in public spaces on the basis of their right to wear particular items of the 5Ks including the Kirpan (ritual sword) and the Kara (bracelet) (Singh & Tatla, 2006, p. 135; Gammal & Allen, 2008; London Evening Standard, 2009). Often in the case of schools it is the headteacher and school governors who decide and develop policies on appropriate school uniforms or the wearing of religious articles of faith.

In one incident the parents of a Sikh boy removed their son from his school when the school banned him from carrying the Kirpan. While the school argued it was a safety risk, it was revealed that the boy had worn it for the previous two years without any problem (London Evening Standard, 2009). Gammal and Allen (2008), similarly, detail the case of a Sikh teenager who was successful in winning a high court discrimination case against her school when she refused to take off her Kara.

Though not one of the 5Ks, for many Sikhs who keep the Kesh (uncut hair), it is the turban which is the core part of their self-identity with some Sikhs choosing to wear a turban despite not adopting the remaining four Ks. According to Nesbitt (2000, p. 9), 'the turban symbolically marks the interface between Sikhs and all other communities in Britain.' Similarly, Singh (2010) concluded that the turban, like any item of religious dress which symbolizes ethnic identity, was not just important for those who actually wear it but highly significant for the majority of the community which it represents. Indeed, many respondents in the study by Singh (2010) raised specific issues related to being Sikh and wearing the turban in Britain. The right to do so is perhaps the most debated and most written about issue in the literature on Sikh identity. In 2019, about a quarter of nearly 2,500 respondents who took part in the annual *British Sikh Report* said that they wore a turban (BSR, 2019, p. 14). While BSR (2019) makes no mention of racism or discrimination, the first BSR report undertaken in 2013 with 650 respondents, found that three-quarters had experienced racism (Talwar, 2013). Such racism experienced by Sikhs due to their appearance is not new. In the UK, Rait (2005) interviewed young, middle-aged, and elderly Sikh women. All age groups reported incidents of intimidation and harassment that had occurred in schools and in daily life dating back to the 1950s. The nature of such incidents included witnessing physical attacks and verbal abuse.

Sikhs, along with Asians of all faiths, have experienced a rise in hate crimes with incidents of intolerance, discrimination, and violence increasing after the attacks on the World Trade Centre in America on 11 September 2001 (9/11), and after the attacks in London on 7 July 2005 (7/7). Thus, the first reported hate crime after 7/7 was the firebombing of a Sikh gurdwara in Kent (Nagarajah, 2005). The perception of turbaned Sikhs changed significantly as a result of these events and as part of a heightened dialogue on dealing with global terrorism. Frequently the association between Sikhism and terrorism is made as a result of media images which mistakenly link Sikh appearance, in particular the wearing of the turban, with membership of terrorist groups, 'hate crimes have increased against turbaned Sikhs who are often mistaken for followers of bin Laden or Muslim extremists' (Singh & Tatla, 2006, p. 93). There is increasing evidence which illustrates how Sikhs can be homogenized in this way and which report on how Sikhs have been targeted in cases of mistaken identity. Their physical appearance, and turban in particular, leading to them being labeled as terrorists (Atwal & Wang, 2019; Falcone, 2006; Klein, 2015; Sidhu & Gohil, 2009; Singh & Tatla, 2006). This in turn, according to Hall (2002, p. 206), 'has produced its own forms of terror in the lives of those, like Sikhs, who have been implicated however mistakenly as other.'

Much of the research on the way in which terrorist events have affected those of the Sikh faith comes from studies undertaken in America, particularly since 9/11

(Falcone, 2006; Sidhu & Gohil, 2009). This includes research which focuses on the experience of Sikh students in American schools with many Sikh American students reporting experiences of peer victimization linked to their physical appearance and the wearing of the turban (Atwal & Wang, 2019; Klein, 2015; Sidhu & Gohil, 2009; Verma, 2006). According to Sidhu and Gohil (2009, pp. 69–73), the harassment and bullying of Sikh students by their peers in American schools occurred immediately after the attacks of 9/11 and went beyond any playful teasing or joking that might usually occur among students. Sikh students, according to Sidhu and Gohil (2009), were specifically targeted because of the association of the Sikh turban with terrorism. Likewise, research by Verma (2006) with a small group of 12 American Sikh youth revealed Sikh students struggling to deal with their treatment by peers within school. Verma maintains that her findings 'challenge assumptions about…the resilience of immigrant youth in the face of hostile experiences and interactions' (Verma, 2006, p. 89). According to Verma (2006) the Sikh students who were clearly identifiable because of their turbans presented a unique case and this created additional barriers for them not shared by other South Asian immigrant youth. More recently, Atwal and Wang (2019) continue to find evidence of victimization related to race and religion in American schools with Asian American students reporting higher levels of victimization and discrimination at school than students of other ethnic backgrounds. All types of victimization correlated with lower self-esteem and higher depressive and anxiety symptoms. Moreover, using their survey data collected from 199 Sikh American adolescents (aged 12–18 years), from 120 schools in 61 cities in California, Atwal and Wang (2019, p. 233) showed that Sikh American students were at higher risk for victimization with a large percentage (76%) of such students in their study reporting at least one type of victimization related to ethnicity and religion during the school year.

Being mislabeled because of their appearance also happens to Sikh young people in the UK with Keay (2019) reporting on the racism encountered by a 10-year-old Sikh girl in a London park. The young Sikh girl, who was wearing a turban, had asked to play with a group of teenagers who in turn responded by calling her a 'terrorist'. The Sikh girl returned to the park the next day where she proceeded to make friends with a child nearer her own age, a 9-year-old girl. However, that girl was subsequently told by her mother that her new friend was 'dangerous' and she couldn't play with her anymore. While the teenagers may not have wanted to play with a 10-year-old, this incident illustrates how the general public both young (teenagers) and old (the child's mother) with their inaccurate and hostile responses still lack knowledge about Sikh identity. Eighteen years after 9/11 and fourteen years after 7/7, they were still associating the Sikh turban with terrorism.

While not as prolific as found in the American literature, in the UK there are a small number of research studies that include testimonies and situations illustrating how Sikh young people are particularly vulnerable to abuse and victimization from peers, including in the school setting (Hall, 2002; James, 1974; Nesbitt, 2000). As far back as the early 1970s, James (1974) noted how having long hair made Sikh students look markedly different from their peers with the result being that in schools where there were few Sikh children, such children were likely to get 'teased' for this

(James, 1974, p. 49). A generation later, Nesbitt (2000) in an ethnographic study of the religious lives of 45 young British Sikhs, explored the experience of these young Sikhs and their relationship to the visible symbols of Sikhism. In this study, Nesbitt (2000, pp. 223–228, 248) recounts incidents described by Sikh students of being subjected to verbal abuse and being ridiculed by their peers because of their faith. Examples included a 10-year-old Sikh boy being mocked when he spoke Punjabi as well as being taunted for having long hair and a turban (which he subsequently cut), and a 13-year-old girl being abused for having an Indian accent. Hall (2002, pp. 94–101) also detailed interactions between students which illustrate the racism experienced by Sikh students, including their subjection to widespread stereotyping (in relation to appearance, dress, and language) alongside a lack of cross-ethnic friendships. Hall (2002, p.185), comments on how for British Sikh teenagers the turban can symbolize 'social distance' between them and their friends. Hall spent 11 months engaging with young Sikhs in years 9–13 (13- to 18-year-olds) at a Leeds school and singled out the dilemma faced by Sikh boys of whether to cut their hair in an attempt to become more English. She cites the example of a Sikh boy in the sixth form who removed his turban and cut his hair and was subsequently described as 'trendy' (Hall, 2002, p. 109). The bullying experienced and reported by Sikh students in all these studies is very similar to the accounts reported by Archer (2003) as experienced by Muslim students.

As a result of experiencing such prejudice and victimization both verbal and physical, young Sikhs, and young turbaned Sikhs in particular, are faced with the dilemma of whether to embrace or reject their culture and religion. In the UK even before the events of 9/11 and 7/7, Nesbitt (2000, p. 247) noted how, as a result of bullying, some boys in her study had chosen to have their hair cut, thus making 'themselves less conspicuous' (p. 247). Nesbitt (2000) concluded that the effect of such racism might be for young Sikhs to minimize their visibility and to distance themselves from a Khalsa identity. This worry was subsequently shared by Verma (2006, p. 97) who noted that after 9/11 American students tried to 'hide' who they were, thus compromising their self-identity. For Verma (2006, p. 99) this led to concern among Sikhs worldwide that schools 'would become places where young Sikh children would be compelled to 'assimilate' and abandon cultural aspects of their self-identity.'

Despite many of the issues identified, and in contrast to the conclusions of Nesbitt (2000) and Verma (2006) that victimization, bullying, and abuse may lead to Sikh young people having to compromise their self-identity, Singh (2010) on the basis of semi-structured interviews with 25 18- to 32-year-old Sikhs concluded that young Sikhs in the UK were confident in choosing to wear the turban. While some of the Sikhs in this study chose not to keep their hair uncut and not to wear a turban, this was not always because of peer pressure or because they thought doing so would negatively single them out as religious, but instead was attributed to practical difficulties or because they did not feel it fashionable to do so. As stated by Singh (2010), while many Sikhs in other parts of the world had removed their turbans in order to distance themselves from the media and public image of what a terrorist might be, none of the British Sikhs in his study had done so, even though some

had experienced increased racism after the events of 9/11. Singh (2010) concluded that young British Sikhs continued to wear the turban, primarily because they were confident to do so. It is possible that the older age of the interviewees (18–32 years) in this study may have made them more confident in asserting their identity and in challenging abuse and discrimination than might be found among school-age students.

Much of the international research into the Sikh community has been ethnographic in approach with scholarship focusing on the history and diversity of Sikh settlement and on the development and transmission of Sikh identity and Sikh values (Barrier & Dusenbery, 1989; Coward et al., 2000; Hawley, 2013). In the UK, a number of studies report on the Sikh experience (Ballard, 2000; Helweg, 1986; Jaspal, 2013; Nesbitt, 2005; Rait, 2005; Singh & Tatla, 2006) with studies specifically focused on Sikh young people (Gill, 2005; Hall, 2002; James, 1974; Nesbitt, 1999, 2000) and including those growing up in mixed-faith families (Nesbitt, 2009). The limitation of existing UK research is that some of it is now dated and is small in scale. Hence, the work by James (1974) was focused mostly on immigrant Sikh children when there are now subsequent generations of Sikh children who have been born and raised in the UK. Comprehensively, Nesbitt (2000) provided an overview of early studies of the Sikh tradition (pp. 12–13), studies of Sikhs in the UK (pp. 14–16), and studies on Sikh children and young people (pp. 18–20). However, the empirical studies cited tend to be localized MA and Ph.D. dissertations (see Drury, 1989; Gill, 2005; Sohal, 1989). Although more recent, Jaspal (2013) looked at Sikh identity among young British-born Sikhs but this was limited to 10 interviews with post school-age young adults aged between 18 and 27 years in Derby.

Moreover, while existing studies may draw attention to individual incidents of racist bullying and discrimination, these studies do not specifically focus on school-based peer relationships as the main focus of the study. Rather, they explore the lives of Sikh children in relation to the transmission of the Sikh religion, gender roles within Sikh families, and issues of Sikh identity. For Hall (2002) the central focus was the social mobility experiences of Sikh young people and the process of becoming British citizens. Indeed, Hall (2002) discussed the turban only in relation to Sikh boys, but increasingly the issues surrounding the wearing of this item of Sikh identity also apply to Sikh girls as the racist incident reported by Keay (2019) demonstrates. Similarly, Singh and Tatla (2006, p. 3) in what they claim to be the 'first systematic and comprehensive national study of the British Sikh experience since World War II' focus on youth identity in relation to Punjabi language, Punjabi broadcasting, the British Punjabi press, British Punjabi literature and Bhangra music (pp. 186–207) rather than on peer relationships. There are few peer-reviewed empirical studies that explore the direct experiences of school-age Sikh students in relation to peer-based victimization, or which examine the attitudes of other students toward their Sikh peers.

One study, the work of Thanissaro (2012), aimed to explore attitudes toward Sikhism and toward Sikh values among a sample of 364 non-Sikh schoolchildren aged between 13 and 15 years in London. Thanissaro (2012) concluded that in respect of non-Sikh attitudes toward Sikhism, schools had failed to ameliorate negative attitudes

toward Sikh values. However, examination of the data presented by Thanissaro shows that the majority of student answers in this study were in the 'not certain' category. Thanissaro interprets this as 'apathy' towards Sikhism which he then judges to be illustrative of a negative attitude to the Sikh religion.

In her study, Nesbitt (2000, pp. 260–261) suggested that future research look at the hypothesis that differences in geographic region (e.g., between London and the provinces) might affect the lives of British Sikh children in different ways. In this sense the difference between London and the provinces is important in light of the greater presence and therefore the higher visibility of the Sikh community within London (Office for National Statistics, 2012). In this context the contact hypothesis may suggest that the greater presence and higher visibility of the Sikh community may lead to wider acceptance and to less prejudice.

The contact hypothesis (or intergroup contact theory) proposes that changes in belief about or attitude toward particular groups may come about from direct contact with members of those groups. By bringing people from different backgrounds together and encouraging collaboration, prejudice may be reduced and more positive attitudes toward the other result. The contact hypothesis was originally developed by Gordon Allport. Allport (1954) asserted that prejudice arose because of negative assumptions made about entire groups of people. He suggested that interpersonal contact between members of different groups, if undertaken in appropriate situations, could help to reduce prejudice and improve relations among groups that are experiencing conflict. To be beneficial in reducing prejudice and hostility it has been proposed that the contact situation must be characterized by positive intergroup relations, what Allport (1954, p. 489) termed, the 'optimal' conditions: equal status, intergroup cooperation, common goals, and support by social and institutional authorities. An extensive critique of contact theory can be found in Vezzali and Stathi (2017) with an in-depth review of this work provided by Lytle (2018).

10.2 Research Aim

Against this background the aim of the present study is to test the power of the contact hypothesis to explain individual differences in the levels of anti-Sikh attitudes expressed by 13- to 15-year-old students who participated in the Young Peoples Attitude to Religious Diversity project. Specifically, the study needs to develop and to test a measure of anti-Sikh attitude and to propose a measure of contact with Sikhs in order to operationalize the contact hypothesis.

In light of the accumulated findings from the Young People's Attitude to Religious Diversity project, the pressing research question (concerning the connection between contact with Sikhs and anti-Sikh attitude) needs to be contextualized within recognizing the potentially contaminating effects of school factors (schools with a religious character or schools without a religious foundation), geographical factors (England, Wales, and London), personal factors (sex and age), psychological factors (employing the Eysenckian three dimensional model of personality), and religious

factors (differentiating among the three factors of self-assigned religious affiliation, religious belief, and religious practice). In line with other analyses that have explored the effects of predictor variables on attitudes toward minority religious groups (see, for example, Francis & Village, 2014; Francis et al., 2017) the present analyses will be conducted on the data provided by participants who identified their religious affiliation either as Christian or as no religion.

The control variables identified above have been selected for the following reasons. Differentiation between schools with a religious character and schools without a religious foundation has been noted on both theoretical and empirical grounds as potentially influencing attitudes toward religious diversity (see Francis & Village, 2014). Differentiation among the three geographical locations has been noted in light of the evidence of the 2011 census showing the different proportions of Sikhs present in Wales, England, and London (see Office for National Statistics, 2012). Personal and social factors have been noted in light of the significant sex differences consistently found in religion-related spheres (see Francis & Penny, 2014) and the significant changes that occur in religion-related spheres during adolescence (see Kay & Francis, 1996). Psychological factors have been noted in light of the consistent findings that the Eysenckian three dimensional model of personality (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975, 1991) predict individual differences both in social attitudes (see Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975, 1976) and in religion-related attitudes (see Francis, 2009). Religious factors have been noted in light of the controversy regarding whether religious commitment promotes or frustrates acceptance of religious diversity (see Francis et al., 2015). Religious factors differentiate between self-assigned affiliation, public practice, and personal belief in light of the different effects of these diverse experiences of religiosity (see Francis & Village, 2014).

10.3 Method

10.3.1 Procedure

The Young People's Attitude to Religious Diversity Project set out to obtain responses from at least 2,000 13- to 15-year-old students attending state-maintained schools in each of five parts of the UK: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, *and* London. In each nation half of the students were recruited from schools with a religious character (Anglican, Catholic, or joint Anglican and Catholic) and a half from schools without a religious character. Within the participating schools, questionnaires were administered by the religious education teachers within examination-like conditions. Students were assured of anonymity and confidentiality and given the option not to participate in the project.

10.3.2 Participants

The present analyses were conducted on a sub-sample from the Young People's Attitude to Religious Diversity project, drawing on information provided by 5,811 students from schools in England, Wales, and London who self-identified as either 'no religion' or as Christian and who completed all the items in the Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude. In terms of sex, 2,733 were male, 3,050 were female, and 28 were of undisclosed sex; in terms of the school year, 2,925 were in year nine, 2,875 were in year ten, and 11 were of undisclosed school year; in terms of self-assigned religious affiliation, 3,663 self-identified as Christian and 2,148 as of no religion; in terms of geographical location, 2,072 were from England, 2,048 from Wales, and 1,691 from London; in terms of school type, 3,276 were from schools with a religious character and 2,535 from schools without a religious foundation.

10.3.3 Measures

Anti-Sikh attitude was assessed by the newly proposed five-item Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude (SASA). This instrument combines items concerned with social distance, acceptance of religious clothing in schools, and wider affective response. An example of social distance is provided by the item, 'I would not like to live next door to Sikhs'. An example of acceptance of religious clothing is provided by the item, 'Sikhs should be allowed to wear the Turban in school'. An example of wider affective response is provided by the item, 'A lot of good is done in the world by Sikhs'. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale: agree strongly (5), agree (4), not certain (3), disagree (2), and disagree strongly (1).

Psychological factors were assessed by the abbreviated version of the Junior Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised (JEPQR-A) developed by Francis (1996) who reported the following Cronbach alpha coefficients: extraversion = .66; neuroticism = .70; psychoticism = .61; lie scale = .57.

Religious affiliation was recorded by a checklist of world faiths and Christian denominations in response to the question, 'What is your religion?' For the current analysis all the Christian categories were collapsed into a single group and those affiliated with other world faiths were omitted, producing a dichotomous variable: no religion = 0, and Christian = 1.

Religious attendance was assessed by the question, 'Apart from special occasions (like weddings) how often do you attend a religious worship service (e.g. in a church, mosque, or synagogue). Responses were recorded on a seven-point scale: never (1), sometimes (2), at least once a year (3), at least six times a year (4), at least once a month (5), nearly every week (6), and several times a week (7).

Belief in God was assessed by the statement 'I believe in God'. Responses were recorded on a five-point scale: disagree strongly (1), disagree (2), not certain (3), agree (4), and agree strongly (5).

Contact hypothesis was assessed by the statement, 'I have friends who are Sikhs'. Responses were recorded on a five-point scale: disagree strongly (1), disagree (2), not certain (3), agree (4), and agree strongly (5).

Personal factors were recorded as two dichotomous variables: male (1) and female (2), and year nine (1) and year ten (2).

School type was recorded as a dichotomous variable: schools without a religious foundation (1) and schools with a religious character (2).

10.4 Analysis

The data were analyzed by the SPSS package, using the frequencies, correlation, reliability, and regression routines. In the regression models school location (distinguishing among England, Wales, and London) was operationalized as dummy variables with England and London entered into the model against Wales as the point of comparison.

10.5 Results and Discussion

Table 10.1 presents the scale properties of the five-item Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude (SASA) in terms of the correlations between the individual items and the sum of the other four items, and in terms of the item endorsements with the agree strongly and agree responses combined as 'yes', and the disagree strongly and disagree responses combined as 'no'. These statistics demonstrate variability in item discrimination and a level of negativity toward Sikhs. One in five of the young participants feel that Sikhs should not be allowed to wear the Kara (19%) or the Turban (18%) in school or disagree that a lot of good is done in the world by Sikhs (22%). One in eight of the young participants would not like to live next door to Sikhs (12%), and half of them show no interest in finding out about Sikhs (48%). Table 10.2 presents the alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951), mean and standard deviation for the Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude. The alpha coefficient confirms a good level of internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .73$). Table 10.2 also presents the alpha coefficients, means, and standard deviations for the three scales proposed by the abbreviated version of the Junior Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised (JEPQR-A). These data demonstrate that the extraversion scale and the neuroticism scale both achieved alpha coefficients in excess of the threshold of 0.65 proposed by DeVellis (2003). The lower alpha coefficient achieved by the psychoticism scale is consistent with the recognized difficulties in operationalizing this dimension of personality (see Francis et al., 1992).

Table 10.3 presents the frequency responses for the three single-item measures concerned with belief in God, worship attendance, and contact with Sikhs. These data demonstrate quite a high level of church attendance, with nearly one in five

Table 10.1 Scale of Anti-Sikh attitude: psychometric properties

	r	Yes %	? %	No %
A lot of good is done in the world by Sikhs⁺	.42	23	54	22
I am interested in finding out about Sikhs⁺	.39	29	23	48
I would not like to live next door to Sikhs	.31	12	22	67
Sikhs should be allowed to wear the Turban in school⁺	.68	58	23	18
Sikhs should be allowed to wear the Kara in school⁺	.67	54	28	19

Note ⁺ These items are reverse coded to generate the scale score
r = correlation between individual item and sum of other four items

Table 10.2 Scale properties

	N items	Alpha α	*M*	*SD*	Scale range	
					Low	High
Anti-Sikh attitude	5	.73	13.49	4.16	5	25
Extraversion	6	.69	4.70	1.54	0	6
Neuroticism	6	.68	3.13	1.80	0	6
Psychoticism	6	.58	1.14	1.29	0	6

of the young participants attending services weekly (18%) and quite a high level of belief in God, with 44% identifying as theists, 26% as agnostics, and 30% as atheists. These figures reflect the sampling strategy, whereby half of the participating schools were schools with a religious character that received higher populations of students from churchgoing backgrounds (see further Francis & Village, 2020). These data demonstrate that fewer than one in five of the young participants consider that they have friends who are Sikhs (18%).

Table 10.4 presents the correlations among the main variables later to be employed in the regression models. These data demonstrate that, when the bivariate correlations are being considered separately, higher levels of anti-Sikh attitudes are associated with one of the two personal factors: being male rather than female. Higher levels of anti-Sikh attitudes are associated with all three psychological factors: higher scores on the psychoticism scale, higher scores on the extraversion scale, and lower scores on the neuroticism scale. Lower levels of anti-Sikh attitude were associated with all three religious factors: self-identifying as Christian rather than as of no religion, believing in God, and attending worship service. Lower levels of anti-Sikh attitudes are also associated with having friends who are Sikhs.

The bivariate correlations presented in Table 10.4 also demonstrate the complex patterns of association among the range of predictor variables (personal factors, psychological factors, religious factors, and the measure of contact). For example, not only is sex significantly correlated with scores recorded on the Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude (with males recording higher scores), but also with psychoticism scores (males recording higher scores), with neuroticism scores (females recording higher

Table 10.3 Frequency statistics

	%
I have friends who are Sikhs	
agree strongly	8
agree	10
not certain	25
disagree	23
disagree strongly	34
I believe in God	
agree strongly	24
agree	20
not certain	26
disagree	10
disagree strongly	20
I attend religious worship services	
several times a week	2
nearly every week	16
at least once a month	6
at least six times a year	5
sometimes	18
at least once a year	11
never	43

scores), with extraversion scores (females recording higher scores), and with all three religious measures of affiliation, belief in God, and worship attendance (females recording higher scores). Scores recorded on the single-item measure of having friends who are Sikhs are also significantly related to the three religiosity factors. Having friends who are Sikhs is more likely among those who score high on belief in God, and high on worship attendance, and who also self-identify as Christian. Moreover, the three religious measures are themselves highly intercorrelated. It is for these reasons that it is wise to focus the research question within the environment of a series of regression models.

Table 10.5 presents a series of six regression models in which scores recorded on the Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude serves as the dependent variable and contact with Sikhs is entered as the final step. The increase in the variance accounted for by the models shows that, while the first model was not statistically significant, each of the following five steps added further significant explanatory power to the model. Step one entered first the distinction between schools with a religious character and schools without a religious foundation. On its own this factor was insignificant. Step two entered England and London as two dummy variables against Wales as the reference point. This step added significant explanatory power to the model. Step three entered the two personal factors of sex and age (conceptualized as school

Table 10.4 Correlation matrix

	SASA	SF	Be	At	Ch	Ps	Nu	Ex	Sy
Sex	$-.18^{***}$	.01	$.12^{***}$	$.06^{***}$	$.05^{***}$	$-.25^{***}$	$.27^{***}$	$.06^{***}$	.00
School year (SY)	.02	$-.03^{*}$	$.03^{*}$	$-.04^{**}$	.00	.00	.01	$.05^{***}$	
Extraversion (Ex)	$.06^{***}$	$.04^{**}$	.01	$-.07^{***}$	.00	$.08^{***}$	$-.14^{***}$		
Neuroticism (Ne)	$-.10^{***}$	.01	$.07^{***}$	$.03^{*}$	.00	.01			
Psychoticism (Ps)	$.30^{***}$	$-.03^{*}$	$-.17^{***}$	$-.14^{***}$	$-.09^{***}$				
Christian (Ch)	$-.11^{***}$	$.06^{***}$	$.56^{***}$	$.51^{***}$					
Attendance (At)	$-.23^{***}$	$.13^{***}$	$.51^{***}$						
Belief (Be)	$-.27^{***}$	$.12^{***}$							
Sikh Friends (SF)	$-.25^{***}$								

Note * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

year). This step added significant explanatory power to the model. Step four added the three psychological factors (extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism). This step added significant explanatory power to the model. Step five added the three religious factors. This step added significant explanatory power to the model. Step six added to the model the variable designed to test the contact hypothesis (having friends who are Sikhs). This step too added significant explanatory power to the model. The main conclusion drawn from this sequence of regression models is that having friends who are Sikhs is significantly correlated with lower scores on the Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude, even after the type of school (religious or not religious), the geographical location (England, Wales, and London), personal factors (sex and school year), psychological factors (extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism) and religious factors (self-assigned affiliation as Christian, belief in God, and worship attendance) have been taken into account.

Four other features of the final regression model also deserve comment in terms of the beta weights. Given the size of the sample and the number of variables engaged, interpretation will be based only on beta weights that reach the one percent level of probability. First, when all other factors are in the model, students in England,

Table 10.5 Regression models

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
School type						
Religious character	−.02	−.01	−.00	−.01	.05***	.03**
School location						
England		.00	−.00	−.01	−.01	.02
London		−.09***	−.08***	−.08***	−.04*	.01
Personal factors						
Sex			−.18***	−.09***	−.08***	−.09***
Age			.02	.02	.01	.00
Psychological factors						
Extraversion				.03*	.02*	.04**
Neuroticism				−.07***	−.06***	−.06***
Psychoticism				.27***	.23***	.23***
Religious factors						
Christian affiliation					.08***	.07***
Church attendance					−.23***	−.11***
Belief in God					−.19***	−.18***
Contact hypothesis						
Sikh friends						−.22***
Total R^2	.001	.009	.039	.113	.164	.210
Δ	.001	.008***	.031***	.073***	.052***	.045***

Note * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

London, and Wales do not record significantly different scores on the Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude. The religious question in the 2011 census demonstrated that there was a higher proportion of Sikhs in London than in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2012). While London is associated with lower scores on the scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude in the earlier regression model, the influence of London is removed in model 6 when Sikh friends have been added to the model. Second, when all other factors are in the model, male students record higher scores than female students on the Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude. This finding is important because it indicates that the difference between males and females cannot be explained in psychological terms as a consequence of different personality predispositions but needs to be explained more in sociological terms. The different inculturation of anti-Sikh attitudes among male students and among female students requires further investigation. Third, when all other factors are in the model, the psychological factors remain highly significant. In particular scores recorded on the psychoticism scale are important. Students recording high scores on the psychoticism scale may be particularly susceptible to endorsing anti-Sikh views. This is consistent with Eysenck's (1975, 1976) pioneering research that originally linked low psychoticism scores with tenderminded social attitudes and high psychoticism scores with toughminded social attitudes. Fourth, the pattern of beta weights alongside the three religious factors is particularly revealing. When all other factors are in the model there are significant negative paths from both worship attendance and belief in God to scores of anti-Sikh attitudes. Students who attend church and/or believe in God tend to record significantly lower scores on the Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude. On the other hand, there is now a significant positive path from self-assigned Christian affiliation to scores of anti-Sikh attitudes. In other words, cultural Christians (those who claim the Christian designation but neither attend worship services nor believe in God) tend to record significantly higher scores on the Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude, compared with those who are religiously unaffiliated.

10.6 Conclusion

The present study set out to test the power of the classic contact hypothesis to account for individual differences in the levels of anti-Sikh attitudes expressed by 13- to 15-year-old students who participated in the Young People's Attitude to Religious Diversity Project. The analysis progressed in four steps and leads to four main conclusions.

The first step involved designing and testing a new measure of anti-Sikh attitude. The five-item Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude (SASA) devised from the Young People's Attitude to Religious Diversity Project has good face validity, drawing together items concerned with social distance, acceptance of religious clothing in school, and wider affective response, and good internal consistency reliability, reflected in an alpha coefficient of .73. The conclusion is that this instrument may be commended for use in further studies.

The second step involved proposing a measure of contact with Sikhs in order to operationalize the contact hypothesis. The Young People's Attitudes to Religious Diversity Project contained the following item: 'I have friends who are Sikhs'. This item has good face validity and in the present study displayed good construct validity in the sense of achieving the hypothesized correlation with lower anti-Sikh attitude. The conclusion is that this single-item measure may be commended for use in further studies.

The third step involved contextualizing the primary research question (concerning the connection between contact with Sikhs and anti-Sikh attitude) within a network of potentially contaminating effects of school factors (schools with a religious character or without a religious foundation), geographical factors (England, Wales, and London), personal factors (sex and age), psychological factors (extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism), and religious factors (differentiating among the three factors of self-assigned religious affiliation, religious belief, and religious practice). The conclusion supported the wisdom of such contextualization and drew attention to the effects of geographical factors (anti-Sikh attitude was higher in England and Wales than in London), of personal factors (anti-Sikh attitude was higher among male students than among female students), of psychological factors (anti-Sikh attitudes were associated with higher psychoticism scores, higher extraversion scores, and lower neuroticism scores), and of religious factors (anti-Sikh attitudes were associated with non-churchgoers, atheists and people who self-identified as Christian but neither practiced nor believed).

The fourth step involved structuring a set of regression models with the Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude as the dependent variable and with Sikh friends entered as the final step after taking into account school factors, geographical factors, personal factors, psychological factors, and religious factors. The conclusion is that the regression analyses supported the contact hypothesis. The young participants who count Sikhs among their friends score significantly lower on the Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitudes.

The limitations of the present study arise from the way in which the present analyses were conducted on a dataset designed to address a number of related, but distinct, research questions. The Scale of Anti-Sikh Attitude (SASA) could have been enriched by including a larger number of more diverse items. The findings generated by this five-item scale clearly support the value of future research investing in the development of a more highly nuanced instrument. The operationalization of the contact hypothesis through a single-item measure could have been enriched by the development of a multi-item scale. The findings generated by this single-item measure clearly support the value of future research investing in the development of a more sophisticated instrument. In spite of such limitations, the findings carry important implications for religious education.

Note

Young People's Attitudes to Religious Diversity Project (AHRC Reference: AH/G014035/1) was a large-scale mixed-methods research project investigating the attitudes of 13- to 16-year-old students across the United Kingdom. Students from a variety of socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds from different

parts of England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland, with the addition of London as a special case, took part in the study. Professor Robert Jackson was the principal investigator and Professor Leslie J. Francis was the co-investigator. Together they led a team of qualitative and quantitative researchers based in the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit, within the Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick. The project was part of the AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Programme and ran from 2009 to 2012.

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Chapter 11
Disgust and the Limits of Reason: Countering the Fear of Contamination and Resistance to Education in a Post-modern Climate

Stephanie Lovett

Abstract In times of rising nationalism and partisan tensions, the natural response of conscientious educators is to want more people to have more information, assuming that more knowledge will counter the ignorance that must be at the root of hate and fear. Yet we can easily see that information does not create acceptance, and a number of neurological studies might shine a light on this irrational intransigence. In these studies, researchers discovered an overwhelming correlation between subjects' high disgust response and their political and social conservativism. Examining this subconscious knowledge of the danger of what is "wrong" and "unclean" gives educators valuable perspective on the desperately personal gut-level knowing driving students who feel existentially threatened by "unnatural" people, ideas, values, and practices. The post-truth era has widened this gap between intellectual knowing and gut-level knowing into a canyon: when all knowledge is equally true and equally suspect, resistant students have less reason than ever to accept contradictions to their innate worldview, and more reason than ever to trust their own worldview, which feels reliable and natural since it doesn't come from suspect outside sources. This is a very real pedagogical problem for education, with its traditional commitment to the irresistibility of reason and the impartiality of information, and educators must respond with different tactics to create a place of safety and inquiry, so that students naturally prone to policing boundaries can be helped to expand their own sense of what is natural and normal for humanity.

11.1 Introduction

Critical interfaith education, whether done from an in-faith perspective or presented more informationally in an academic or community setting, would seem to be a robust and healthy response to divisiveness, nationalism, racial and religious supremacy

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movements, and other social and political phenomena that resist cooperation, peace, and harmony. This impulse is apparent in Modesto, California's well-known required World Religions class for ninth graders, created in an attempt to address bullying and harassment incidents; in the existence in many communities of interfaith organizations that offer talks, tours, and other activities; and in countless instances of public rhetoric claiming that intolerance and hate crimes are the result of ignorance about religions other than one's own (and even of the precepts of one's own). On the one hand, there are individual instances where education and experience has changed people's minds—for instance, the case of Derek Black, raised in the heart of white supremacy, the son of Don Black, founder of Stormfront.com, whose college education and multicultural relationships led him to renounce his former beliefs and in fact to become a Ph.D. candidate in Islamic medievalists at the University of Chicago (Flannery, 2018).

On the other hand, it is easy to look around in an era in which people have access to much of the knowledge and experiences of all of humanity through a handheld device that never leaves their sides and witness the polarization and rage at the Other that dominates politics and culture in America, as well as many other nations where nationalism and sectarianism is on the rise. Does a lack of information about religion really explain why America has banned travel from some Muslim-majority countries, why a violent Hindu nationalism threatens both the lives and the citizenship of Muslims in India, why the Buddhist majority in Myanmar has successfully exterminated through death and deportation the Rohingya minority, why Turkey is increasingly positioning its Christian citizens as dangerous collaborators with the West, or why China's Uyghurs are in concentration camps?

The tragic reality seems to be that religious education is far more powerful in the service of creating religious identity than of generating openmindedness and acceptance. President Erdogan is spending a fortune on Islamic schools in order to raise up a generation to have only one idea of what it means to be a Turk, while decades of secular education in America and France do not seem to have created a definitive national narrative of inclusiveness and diversity. While it is true that there are many factors that make education more or less effective and that in-faith and academic religious education can and has definitely given many people a more cosmopolitan outlook on their own and others' religions and the place of religions on the world stage, it is necessary to look elsewhere to understand why there is so much hostility to other religions, a hostility so emotional and sure of itself that it regularly expresses itself in oppression, dehumanization, and violence.

The irrationality of this intransigence, the surprise that information does not create acceptance, suggests that this hostility springs from the very opposite of that which can be addressed by education—something deep in the human psyche that drives this resistance to reason, persuasion, and knowledge. If this fear and hatred of the Other were hardwired in every single person, though, it would seem superhuman, saintly even, for so many people to demonstrate comfort, acceptance, and love towards a variety of Others in their private, public, and political lives. What makes one person burn a cross on their neighbor's lawn, while another brings them a casserole; one family fight their school system for support for their transitioning child, while another

throws their trans child out onto the street; one Christian congregation adopt a Syrian refugee family, while another runs a letter-writing campaign against immigration? A number of neurological studies might shine a light on why some people are more open to difference while others are highly resistant to anything that violates their personal norms.

In these studies, researchers discovered an overwhelming correlation between subjects' high disgust response and their political and social conservativism. This suggests that deep and irrational feelings about the danger of what is "wrong" and "unclean" could be the silent dynamo driving a desperate and often violent battle against "unnatural" people, ideas, values, and practices that are perceived to threaten the safety, cleanliness, order, and normality of one's own self, family, and community.

Under ordinary circumstances, one might deduce that this unspoken difference in worldviews would create a serious division between those who are less threatened by a variety of circumstances and those who have a narrower view of what is acceptable. It should certainly interest religious educators that some people are hardwired to reject difference and that therefore focusing on providing information is not pedagogically adequate to encourage a more inclusive outlook. However, the fact that this is now a post-truth world compounds this dichotomy—and the educator's challenge—tremendously. If someone who craves clear boundaries between healthy and unhealthy and who experiences a powerful need for safety and cleanness is constantly told that news is fake, that facts can be alternative, that videos are deep fakes and so visual evidence is untrustworthy, and that those who are different from them are working to create a value-free world of chaos and license, they have only one place to turn—within, to that strong and reliable inner sense of what is right and wrong. Paradoxically, then, the post-truth environment both drives these people to embrace their gut feelings because of their fear of post-truth's relativity and ambiguity (meaning that the post-truth environment is experienced as frightening), while also enabling the valorization of their gut feelings, because their sense of what is true is just as good as someone else's data that it is not (meaning that the post-truth environment is experienced as liberating). All of humanity is living in the world predicted by Hannah Arendt, a world in which fascist leaders deliberately demolish people's perception that facts exist, scorching the earth for what they want to plant. Her "defactualization" is Stephen Colbert's "truthiness" (with its specific reference to one's gut as reliable) and is today's post-truth (Arendt, 1972, 1976; Colbert, 2005). Post-truth, those who have a deep, emotional need to live in a pure and certain world and feel inordinately threatened by anything "disgusting" are both threatened by today's relativism and empowered by it.

This chapter will look more closely at the data that demonstrate correlations between disgust sensitivity and political and social attitudes and behaviors, and will examine the perception that disgust is a reliable path to moral truth, and thus evaluate the validity of this idea that religion instructors, and all educators, are endeavoring to educate students whose beliefs about the world and whose response to instruction are deeply counter to our paradigm of the enlightening power knowledge. Sect. 11.4 will then focus on ideas about purity and revulsion in a specifically religious context, as viewed through the lens of different academic disciplines, and finally Sect. 11.5

will explore what a religious educator faces in today's classroom. Resistant students are nothing new to teachers, but that very familiarity can easily lead us to overlook this unprecedented collision of factors. Framing one's visceral reactions as a hotline to Platonic truth and furthermore believing they are the *only* reliable path to truth in a frightening world where all information is equally unreliable changes how religious educators have to approach initiatives of openmindedness and acceptance. If overwhelming faith in one's gut reactions and not a lack of knowledge is what is driving religious and cultural exclusivity and hostility, than educators need to understand how this functions in order to counter it rather than simply continue to dispense information.

11.2 The Disgust Studies

The easy understandability of the word "disgust" can mask its power as a source of information for humans. "Disgusting" doesn't just mean "unpleasant" or "horrible"; it means that something is completely unacceptable to the digestive system, that it is dis-gustatory. Something disgusting makes one want to vomit, and therefore cannot be taken into the body. Rotten meat would be a prime example of something disgusting—the smell and sight induce both physical revulsion and the sure knowledge that this is something that cannot and should not be incorporated into one's corpus, one's body. This is a remarkably clear communication from one's physical self, and it is easy to appreciate the power of having one's own body tell one a truth about what is safe to take in and what is dangerous and must be shunned, a power magnified when other potential sources of truth are suspect.

Quantifying and documenting the connection between innate biological imperatives and social behavior is a burgeoning field. In the area of disgust in particular, a group of neuroscientists who were interested in previous work touching on the connections between emotion and cognition conducted studies at Virginia Tech, publishing their results in the journal *Current Biology*. Their hypothesis was that "nonpolitical but affectively evocative images elicit brain responses that predict political ideology as assessed by a standard political ideology measure" (Ahn et al., 2014, p. 2693). Subjects in an fMRI scanner looked at a spectrum of images from a standard bank, then rated the images using a nine-point scale, and lastly completed a questionnaire "assessing their political attitudes, disgust sensitivity, and state/trait anxiety level." They had thought that threatening images might be predictive, but their findings were clear that "Disgusting images, particularly those related to animal-reminder disgust (e.g., mutilated body), generate neural responses that are highly predictive of political orientation even though those neural predictors do not agree with participants' conscious rating of the stimuli". In fact, machine analysis of the data showed that connection between disgust and ideology was so strong that "responses to a single disgusting stimulus were sufficient to make accurate predictions about an individual subject's political ideology." In discussing their results, the researchers are clear that cause and effect factors cannot be demonstrated in this study and that

much work remains to be done in linking genetic and environmental factors and in considering the role of self-regulation in breaking out various kinds of political behaviors. However, there is no doubt that their study demonstrates a very high correlation between the strength of one's disgust response and the degree to which one is politically conservative, and that the use of the fMRI data provides a particularly objective and quantifiable measure.

Similar results were found by Inbar et al. (2012a, 2012b) in a series of much larger studies, which included focusing on the United States separately from groups from other regions of the world. The researchers were able to use large populations who had previously been evaluated on the standard Disgust Scale and investigate their voting behavior. "In the U.S. sample, we found that DS [disgust sensitivity] predicted intentions to vote for John McCain (the more conservative candidate) over Barack Obama in the 2008 U.S. presidential election, and that a state's average level of contamination disgust was positively associated with McCain's vote share in that state" (Inbar et al., 2012a, 2012b). In their study that included Asia, Europe, Australia, the Middle East, and Latin America,

We found that the relationship between DS and political orientation held across every major world region for which we had a sufficient number of respondents, showing the robustness of the DS-conservatism relationship. Although there are undoubtedly meaningful differences in the cultural and political landscape across these countries that cannot be captured in the current study, these results strongly suggest that the DS-conservatism relationship is not a product of the unique characteristics of U.S. (or, more broadly, Western democratic) political systems. Rather, it appears that DS is related to conservatism across a wide variety of cultures, geographic regions, and political systems (Inbar et al., 2012a, 2012b).

Many other studies uphold these results and explore specific aspects of these connections, including not only correlations between disgust and conservativism and moral judgments, but also between inducing disgust and temporarily increasing condemnation of outgroups (Brenner & Inbar, 2015; Crawford et al., 2014; Helzer & Pizarro, 2011; Inbar et al., 2009; Inbar et al., 2012a, 2012b; Miller et al., 2017; Skinner & Hudac, 2017). Helzer and Pizarro's work, involving such subtle prompts as asking participants to use hand sanitizer before completing the questionnaire, draws conclusions that "political orientation may be, in some measure, shaped by the strength of an individual's motivation to avoid physical contamination (whether measured as a stable, individual difference or triggered temporarily as a response to environmental reminders of cleanliness and contamination) and that resulting vigilance for threats to purity may serve to reinforce a politically conservative stance toward the world" (Helzer & Pizarro, 2011).

This work connects to the related theory that humans have a "behavioral immune system" (BIS), which "consists of a suite of psychological mechanisms that (a) detect cues connoting the presence of infectious pathogens in the immediate environment, (b) trigger disease-relevant emotional and cognitive responses, and thus (c) facilitate behavioral avoidance of pathogen infection" (Schaller & Park, 2011). The contention is that the body and mind generalize this useful avoidance of disease and create false positives, the common metaphor for this being a smoke detector, which

cannot distinguish between a scorched dinner and smoldering curtains. There is a vast literature demonstrating connections between the BIS and prejudice against all kinds of perceived Others: the ethic outgroup, the obese, the racially different, the gender nonconforming, the elderly (Murray et al., 2013; Schaller & Neuberg, 2012; Schaller & Park, 2011). However, focusing on the disgust reaction in particular is extremely useful for the religious educator, because it is specific and, thanks to the Virginia Tech studies, observable and quantifiable. Furthermore, while threat- and contamination-based fear, avoidance, and prejudice might be conceived as having a greater rational component, in the sense of involving thought, not of being actually reasonable (e.g., generalizing a fear of AIDS into avoidance of gay men, or even generalizing a fear of attack into a persecution of an ethnic minority), true disgust is more about wrongness in the thing per se, regardless of the actual danger it could present. With less cognition involved, it is, most saliently, in every sense, visceral, that dependable path to truth in an age of fabrications and manipulations. Understanding how much of what students bring to the classroom is outside their conscious control or even recognition, and so less subject to explaining or even arguing, enables educators to prepare pedagogically to anticipate where students are and to develop strategies that might short-circuit the barriers to cosmopolitanism.

11.3 Disgust as Truth

The idea that visceral revulsion is a hotline to eternal verities that transcend culture and fashion is not only an unexamined popular assumption but also has a history in academic theory. This point of view is for instance clearly expressed in the title of the article “The Wisdom of Revulsion” (Kass, 1998), published in response to the cloning of Dolly the sheep. Although he makes a lengthy argument involving heterosexual reproduction as definitive of what separates humans from other animals, Leon Kass’s real brief is that, as the title says, revulsion is how people can be sure, in the tsunami of relativism washing away all social and sexual mores, that some things are genuinely wrong. “To pollution and perversion,” he says, “the fitting response can only be horror and revulsion; and conversely, generalized horror and revulsion are *prima facie* evidence of foulness and violation” (Kass, 1998, p. 689). That is, your disgust is your evidence of true perversion. Philosopher Fischer (2016) constructs a more complex heuristic that allows for the role of disgust in recognizing moral issues but which requires further steps involving the opinions of others to determine the actual wrongness of something. He asserts that his heuristic “is well-suited to dodging the criticisms of disgust skeptics. First, disgust does admit false positives, but we can learn not to trust the disgust heuristic in those domains. Second, disgust can be used to dehumanize, which probably flows from the way it draws a line between the in-group and out-group. But my claim is just that disgust is a heuristic, not that it carves the moral universe at its joints” (Fischer, 2016).

Wright and Baril (2013) take a more neutral view of the human propensity to give moral weight to impulses that have a biological origin, observing this as part of the

complex and inevitable conditions of being embodied beings. Niemelä (2011) moves farther along the spectrum of whether humans should embrace or resist these apparently moral biological signals, with the contention that the mechanism at work here is really the human tendency to essentialize, to form broad categories in order to handle the complications of life. Inevitably, individual cases will violate some aspect of the category to which they belong, and thus produce the "yuck" of disgust. Rather than granting this reaction the power of truth, Niemelä is very clear that "these reactions are a sign that one has encountered something that is not automatically understood by the natural, evolved intuitive systems of causal reasoning. Although the resemblance of the 'mental reflexes' outlined here to actual reflexes is analogical at best, it can be reasonably argued that they have just as much to do with wisdom or ethical thought as a knee-jerk reflex" (Niemelä, 2011). Continuing with this idea that disgust is a physical reflex and not a higher moral function, Kelly and Morar (2014) are certain that "there are no defensible uses for disgust in legal or political institutions. We think that disgust is ill-suited to do any moral or social work whatsoever, and hold rather that the ideal role for disgust in such contexts is no role at all" (Kelly & Morar, 2014). Like Fischer, they have examined recent psychological research through the lens of philosophy, and they are sure that disgust is a completely unreliable indicator of morality, as sure as Kass was that disgust is the voice of eternal truth.

11.4 Religion and Purity

Religion scholars might well look through their own lens at this research on the human disgust response and its probable causes and functions and recognize a long-standing component of the study of religion: the role of purity and the policing of boundaries. In her groundbreaking 1966 work *Purity and Danger*, Mary Douglas formulated key concepts for religious studies, arguing that religions, whether "primitive" or "advanced," create symbolic systems around ideas of pollution, "and that the difference between pollution behavior in one part of the world and another is only a matter of detail" (Douglas, 1966, p. 35). Dispensing with folk explanations of the purity laws of Leviticus, her argument lifts perceptions of earlier humans' efforts to encode practices that prevented disease and literal contamination to a much more nuanced framework of categories and the polluting qualities of anything that violates boundaries. Her view is still rooted in biology—humans are disgusted by many things connected with bodily orifices and life transitions, for instance, and this feeling that "all margins are dangerous" generalizes to the concept that "any structure of ideas is vulnerable at its margins" (Douglas, 1966, p. 121). Her focus as a religion scholar frames the concepts apparent in the disgust lab as the idea that "The polluter becomes a doubly wicked object of reprobation, first because he crossed the line and second because he endangered others" (Douglas, 1966, p. 139). Douglas is, of course, describing how the human rage for purity shapes religions, not endorsing it; as she says, purity is ossifying and unproductive, and denies essential facts of death and renewal (Douglas, 1966, p. 162 ff.).

There is a vast literature within religious studies concerning purity, boundary policing, pollution, revulsion, etc., but psychology has also been considering the role of disgust and related impulses in responses related to religion. Ritter et al. (2016) tested subjects' disgust response to heretical statements, using both self-reporting metrics and EMG data on facial muscles. They concluded that "self-reported disgust to heretical thoughts was associated with harsh moral judgement of those thoughts, indicating that disgust is used as a moral emotion" (Ritter et al., 2016), confirming observations that people understand their disgust as a reliable indicator that something is wrong. Furthermore, by focusing on heresies rather than behaviors, they distinguished thoughts per se as dangerous: "these studies show that people can treat the content of mind as something that can be contaminated, that marks those thoughts as aversive and a threat to moral well-being" (Ritter et al., 2016). This tells us that people are capable of using their disgust as sure knowledge that others are inherently dangerous due to their beliefs and identities, regardless of what they actually do, further confounding the religious educator who wants to focus on religious identity rather than on sensational current events.

In findings that bring the work of Ahn et al. (2014), in which fMRI data demonstrated the high correlation between disgust and conservatism, into the realm specifically of religious conservativism, Choma et al. (2016) discovered that intergroup disgust response "emerged as the stronger and more consistent predictor of interfaith threat, faith-based policy attitudes, and Islamophobia," compared with religious identification (Choma et al., 2016). In three studies, they broke out different types of religious expression and policies, such as interfaith activities and faith-based schooling, and examined the relative roles of the strength of subjects' religious identification and their intergroup disgust response [ITG-DS] in their attitudes to those activities. Their findings showed that "Whereas ITG-DS predicted greater prejudice and opposition to all of the interfaith policies and practices, Christian religious identification predicted support for faith-based schooling and opposition to banning religious symbols (i.e., a policy promoting religious freedom and expression)" (Choma et al., 2016). This juxtaposition highlights the nonrational nature of religious attitudes, the inconsistencies expressed by people, and the potential variance in their receptivity to religious education. The researchers acknowledge that many factors could in the future be broken out for more specific study, but that their data show that "higher ITG-DS-individuals' tendency to experience disgust and revulsion toward outgroups predicted support for policies and practices that restrict religious outgroups' religious expression and customs, and limited 'contamination' via intergroup contact" (Choma et al., 2016).

Interestingly, just as research cited above demonstrated that disgust responses can be temporarily induced and influence attitudes, Ritter and Preston (2011) found that Christians could be made to find a lemon beverage more disgusting after copying out a passage from the Qur'an or Richard Dawkins, while copying out a passage from the Bible or a dictionary had no effect. However, if they washed their hands between the copying and the beverage, the effect was eliminated. The researchers found these results especially significant because rather than having a mediated stand-in for disgust, such as a questionnaire, their subjects were literally, bodily, disgusted. In

broad terms, none of this would be surprising to researchers focusing on religion as an embodied phenomenon and not a purely cognitive process, such as psychologists Soliman et al. (2015), and many scholars of religion are active in work focusing on the embodied qualities of religious belief and practice. However, there is some crucial news here for those who educate others about religion.

11.5 Religious Education in a Post-Truth Era

Religious scholars are familiar with the academic idea that a lust for purity and a fear of contamination are crucial characteristics of religions, and with the idea that religion is a full-body, experiential, and supracognitive phenomenon for practitioners. In the classroom, though, educators chronically position learners as recipients of information and not as embodied practitioners of religions or even as humans immersed in their culture and its multivalent messages. While instructors may acknowledge that students come into the classroom with ideas and feelings that make them resistant to what is being taught—i.e., information the instructor is transmitting—and therefore causing the instructor difficulty, there is a general belief that good students should be able to bracket their personal lives while in the classroom to learn facts. This willful ignoring of what is known to be true about our students as embodied human beings has tremendous new significance in light of what research into disgust and conservatism is telling us—resistant learners look different when viewed as neuropsychologically committed to their stances, acting on a biochemical truth that feels like an obvious moral fact, rather than simply as uneducated and in need of more and better information about those they dislike.

The current post-truth environment transmutes the disgust/conservatism mechanism that has always been innate in people, even before biological and social science began to understand it, into a much more intransigent characteristic. Religious educators who are intent on connecting with students have always worked to understand what unexamined and passionately held beliefs they bring into a far-from-neutral space. It has never been the case that students are blank slates for educators to fill with knowledge, and religion has never been effectively taught through facts alone. Now, though, when students enter the classroom believing that all facts are suspect and all opinions have equal merit, unequipped to critically evaluate ideas and information, religious educators will not play much of a role preparing people to engage each other with understanding and acceptance if they believe hostility and repression are best remediated by data—that people are prejudiced because they are ignorant.

Research demonstrating that a powerful innate disgust reaction drives people to police boundaries and reject the other and dehumanize difference should not, however, cause religious educators to despair of engendering more tolerance and inclusivity in a religiously and culturally conservative person. While disgust is hardwired, clearly the ways in which it is expressed are culturally conditioned. As the data in this chapter and ordinary observations of humanity show, contradictory manifestations of the disgust reaction, such as whether it is cows or pigs that are hopelessly

unclean, tell us that it is the emotional response itself that is so intransigent, not the particular thing that is regarded as unacceptable or revolting. Therefore, the job of religious education in this post-truth era, an era that has so tragically legitimatized the overweening confidence in one's own subcognitive, visceral messages, is not to pile on the data and the charts and the lectures and not to demonize people as haters and bigots, confirming the conservative sense of a desperate war between "us" and "them" but rather to widen the circle of "us." All over the world, humans accept an astonishing variety of food, practices, and lifestyles as "normal" and not disgusting, while other humans are revolted on a gut level by those practices and are positive that those things are unnatural. The answer cannot possibly be to reason people into accepting that which is not normal to them. It has to be to position people as members of the human race and to cultivate a commitment to humanity as "us" and then to explore some of the many ways there are to be human, with the goal of demonstrating that there is no "them," no Other whose practices are unclean and transgressive. Liberatory and inclusive pedagogies will counteract and disrupt the battle of "us" versus "them," while facts and earnest lectures on tolerance will only fan the fires of a belief that higher education is a swamp of relativism.

College and university students—and high school students, and students in an in-faith setting—need a religious education that does not position them as the normed explorers of the exotic, that does place them on a level landscape of multiple human cultures. This has to be communicated constantly with the instructor's choice of language, as well as with how the curriculum is organized. If, for instance, a Christian-majority group of students learns about other religions using a Christian-normed curriculum categories, such as "sermons," "liturgy," and "scripture," they are going to be prone to seeing other religions as a faulty version of their own. One example of an apparently more successful tactic of creating an atmosphere of equality is that used by the ninth-grade World Religions course in Modesto, California. This unique class has been studied by several researchers, and the key tactic is beginning the course with a unit on the First Amendment, which created a demonstrably greater receptiveness to then learning about a variety of religious traditions (Lester, 2011). Spending time creating student commitment to the concept that all Americans share religious freedom as a value and a right seems to be a strong move in the project of widening the circle of who constitutes "us." By far the most powerful message, however, comes in constant messages originating from the instructor's worldview, which makes it difficult to produce a curriculum and a pedagogy that can be disseminated and reproduced.

11.6 Summary

There clearly is no simple fix for religious educators, but a pedagogical and curricular leap forward at least becomes possible once the true nature of the situation educators face becomes visible. A significant portion of any group of students, who will go on to be citizens of our nations and of the world, have every reason to believe that

what their embodied selves are telling them about the world is true, and very little reason to trust their teacher. The post-truth environment has destabilized everything and destroyed trust in any apparently objective source of information, driving people to look inward to their own certainty—and disgust, the wisdom of repugnance, feels very certain. The cosmopolitanism that a religious educator might well express in an effort to counter the ignorance and fear that students bring to the class is read by them as liberal opinion-mongering, just the kind of dangerous relativism that has led us to such frightening instability. The more a traditional educator deploys facts and information, believing in the Enlightenment doctrine that knowledge is power, in their fight against ignorance and fear, the more today's students trust their gut, their visceral reactions, as an honest lifeboat in a stormy sea of competing but equivalent opinions. The knowledge that will give religious educators power is understanding what biology naturally makes us believe and what today's political culture forces us to valorize so that educators can be realistic about what they are facing and intentional about developing strategies and language that constantly widens the circle of who constitutes "us."

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Part III
Critical Thinking, Social Justice and Enlightened Autocracy

Chapter 12
Teaching About the Religious and Non-religious Other: Three Paradigms and an Islamic Perspective

Najwan Saada

Abstract This theoretical research examines the exclusivist, inclusivist, and critical paradigms of religious education and their possible implications for religious education in Islamic schools. The article relates to the religious and non-religious other in the teaching of Islam in Western and democratic societies. It is assumed that religions in faith-based schools play a dominant role in how students interpret, give meaning, and act in the world. Teachers of religious education in these schools are responsible for developing students' religious, civic, and autonomous/personal identities. Application of the exclusivist, inclusivist, and critical paradigms in religious education achieves these goals, respectively. In this article, the author suggests applying these paradigms in elementary, middle, and high schools correspondingly. The religious others are defined here as believers of different traditions within one's religion, and believers of religions other than one's own. The non-religious other includes agnostics, atheists, and secular citizens. The application of exclusivist paradigm in elementary schooling achieves the religious and communitarian purpose of religious education. The inclusivist paradigm at middle school level achieves the civic purpose of religious education and the critical paradigm at the high school level achieves the educational and liberal purpose of religious education. Examples from an Islamic perspective are provided.

Keywords Exclusivist paradigm · Inclusivist paradigm · Critical paradigm · Islam · Interreligious education

12.1 The Exclusivist Paradigm of Religious Education

This paradigm relies on the argument that "one religion is mostly right, and all the other religions go seriously wrong or that only one world religion is correct, and all others are mistaken" (Basinger, 2002, p. 4). According to Eck (1993, p. 173) "the exclusivist position has been most extensively developed by the monotheistic

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Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions and they have been uncompromising in their emphases on the Oneness of God, the Oneness of truth, and the exclusivity of the way to truth and the community of truth".

Teachers, following this paradigm, may reject the teaching about religions, other than the dominant one in their classroom/community arguing that this may lead to the converting of their own students, the anger of faith-based communities, or "confuse some [students] about the truth of their own faith commitment" (Court & Seymour, 2015, p. 518). This may also lead to the fear of making the conflict between different religious groups more intractable, or not being able to deal with issues of power and privilege embedded in interreligious conversations (Court & Seymour, 2015). Other teachers may find it difficult to teach about other religions in a fair, unbiased, or neutral manner; they may feel unqualified to teach about other religions that they barely know or experience; or simply reluctant to acquire new knowledge (Milner, 2003) or to engage in a serious self-critique of their beliefs (Merchant, 2017; Subedi, 2006). One more scenario is to teach about the religious other for apologetic purposes—to find new ways to defend or highlight the superiority of one's own faith and religious truth; to show that all things true or good in other religious traditions are already present in Islam itself; and to learn about opponent religious doctrines to be able to refute them.

The exclusivist paradigm might be justified following the communitarian theories of education which appreciate the child's relationship, personal connection and loyalty to his initial community and primary culture (Feinberg, 1995; Merry, 2007). Feinberg (1995) elaborates "the self is thereby seen in communitarian thought as constituted through the practices of the group, deriving from it meanings, capacities, and moral character" (p. 36). Alexander (2017) adds that "lives worth living can be discovered through identifying with learning communities devoted to visions of a higher good" (Alexander, 2017, p. 324) and Kymlicka (1995) contends that ethnic minorities' access to their societal culture (and religious traditions) facilitates their members' personal autonomy and choice. Put simply, this access, enables individuals to understand "meaningful ways of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational and economic life" (1995, p. 76). Following these arguments, the exclusivist paradigm might be appropriate for educating students at the elementary level (1st-6th grades); this is because students at this age need to "live within a stable and coherent primary culture and because of the children's psychological needs for belonging and significance of consistency in the relationship between home and school environments" (Saada, 2020a, p. 76).

However, scholars argue that this paradigm is very limited in preparing Muslim students to live democratically in a pluralist and multi-faiths society or to develop their skills of critical thinking, reflection, and religious reasoning (Aslan, 2019; Panjwani, 2014; Saada & Gross, 2017; Sahin, 2017; Selçuk, 2017; Tan, 2008; Waghid, 2011; Wilkinson, 2015). In other words, it does not provide students the basic knowledge, religious literacy, and skills to communicate and live peacefully with people who belong to other religions. Hobson and Edwards (1999) add that exclusivism "eliminates one important way of assessing the validity of one's own beliefs, namely that of comparing them to the opposed beliefs of others" (p. 49).

Scholars of Islamic religious education agree that this paradigm is prevalent in Islam-based schools in western societies (Abbas, 2018; Halstead, 1995; Ramadan, 2004; Saada & Magadlah, 2021). Indeed, Muslim parents support the devotional and exclusivist paradigm of Islamic religious education because they want to preserve their children's religious and moral identities against processes of secularized assimilation (Saada, 2017). However, Sahin (2017) argues that exclusivism is a matter of a rigid religious interpretation rather than God's desire or the intention of the scared scripture. He elaborates that Abrahamic faith traditions have acknowledged and appreciated the issue of diversity and human dignity. They enabled them to create "a broad social ethics for public life, whereby, the well-being of all is protected and served" (p. 47). Waardenburg (1999) adds, from an Islamic perspective, that "the definitive Qu'ranic judgement of Jews and Christians appears to be eschatologically suspended. It is simply left for God's final judgement at the end of history" (p. 9).

In short, exclusivist religious education is appropriate for elementary schooling in terms of establishing the students' core religious identity which becomes later a springboard for exploring alternative views and a sphere for personal/religious development and reflection. This leads us to the inclusivist and critical paradigms of religious education.

12.2 The Inclusivist/Liberal Paradigm of Religious Education

According to this paradigm different religions represent different but complementary revelations of the divine, they are equally effective and successful in bringing their followers to truth, peace, and salvation—"all religions are equally valid in its own way by their internal self-determination and conditioned in their responses to the Divine/God/Reality, etc." (Miranda, 2010, p. 16)—and the belief in the superiority of one religion or any efforts to convert religious adherents from one religion to another will necessarily lead to religious intolerance (Hull, 1992). Accordingly, "positive social outcomes will be achieved by teaching pupils in schools that every religion mediates the presence of God and salvation" (Barnes, 2014, p. 146). This paradigm is different from the exclusivist one in terms of not viewing diversity of religions as threats to one's religious faith. It has the advantage of promoting intercultural understanding, interfaith dialogue, mutual respect, social cohesion, partnership and the working on common projects, a culture of peace, and the addressing and prevention of misconceptions, discrimination and violence based on religious bigotry and ignorance (Court & Seymour, 2015; Jackson, 2014; Byrne, 2011; Puett, 2005; Subedi, 2006).

The purpose of inclusivist religious education is to initiate students into the religion of their own faith community—as suggested in the exclusivist paradigm—and to advance their religious literacy which is crucial for reducing the sweeping generalizations, prejudices, and stereotypes against other religions (Lahnemann, 2017;

Miedema, 2006; Moore, 2010; Yablon, 2010) or non-religious worldviews. Religious literacy means understanding 1) "the basic tenets of the world's religious traditions; 2) the diversity of expressions and beliefs within traditions that emerge and evolve in relation to differing social/historical contexts; 3) the profound role that religion plays in human social, cultural, and political life in both contemporary and historical contexts." (Moore, 2006, p. 1).

The inclusivist paradigm resonates with Robert Jackson's interpretive approach of religious education which view religion as a lived experience and therefore students need to recognize its internal diversity and different relationships with culture; the self-reflection on one's own way of life and the "ways of life that are different in some respects from their own" (Jackson, 1997, p.112); and that it is important to learn about other religions as part of interreligious dialogue. The self-reflection mentioned here, which is explained further in the critical paradigm is perhaps the most challenging exercise for faith-based communities because students through exposure to the religious and secular Other are encouraged not only to affirm some elements of their religious upbringing but also to re-examine and revise others as well. In essence, it is important to contextualize the meaning of a belief and practice, to understand its role in a wider system of beliefs and actions, and to identify "the role of the individual in appropriating, constructing and reshaping religious traditions to produce both new connections with different aspects of culture and new religious meanings" (Barnes, 2014, p. 200).

Interfaith education, following the inclusivist paradigm, aims to help students recognize and appreciate the ideological and religious diversity of their society and the need to negotiate shared values dedicated to coexistence across deep differences. Interfaith dialogue, in this regard, must preserve each religion's right to internal coherence and to possibly concentrate on the "shared connection and insights about creation, community, and future" with other religions (Court & Seymour, 2015, p. 522). By the same token, civic values such as forgiveness, empathy, humility, and peace in the encounter between students and believers/non-believers of other religions are highlighted. It is argued that students at the middle school level are mature enough to view their religions and those of others as "products of dynamic, historically contingent, and often…incommensurable cultures and traditions" (Alexander, 2015, p. 232). Teachers in this paradigm are responsible not only for educating their students into one religion but also to become informed and tolerant citizens.

Panjwani (2014) finds that teachers of Islam in faith-based schools approach the issue of religious diversity as a social and cultural fact—the preparing of "children to develop bridging social capital by creating a positive image of the followers of other religions, particularly Christianity and Judaism, and by attempting to create an affiliation of these religions with Islam" (p. 154). Moreover, there are plenty of examples from the Quran which confirm the inclusive understanding of Islam and other religions. For instance, God says in the Quran (49, 13) "O humankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is the most mindful of Him. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)". It says also (Quran, 30,

22) "Among His signs are the creation of earth and heavens, and the diversity of your languages and colors. There truly are messages in these for those who know" (30. Rum, 22). The Quran (2: 62) also says "Those who believe, and those who are the Jews, and the Christians and the Sabians any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve" (Quran 2:62).

Historically, Aslan (2019) adds, the Constitution of the Medina which was established by Prophet Muhammad did not consider believers of other religions as others. They are considered part of the Islamic Ummah (larger community). In addition, the Islamic moral code was not imposed on believers of other religions, and they had the right to obey and function according to their own ethical systems. That is, "the Prophet Muhammed saw himself as the guardian not only of Islamic morality (law) but also of Jewish and Christian morality" (p. 439). Another important ayah (verse) in the Quran (22:40) recognizes the issue of religious diversity as the will of God "If God had not enabled people to defend themselves against one another, [all] monasteries and churches and synagogues and mosques—in [all of] which God's name is abundantly extolled—would surely have been destroyed [ere now]."

This paradigm might be criticized for first leading to an epistemic relativism and skepticism (Tan, 2008)—that all religions to be taught as if they are true and that there is no objective knowledge independent of the knower. In other words, each person's religion is as good as another's and there is no way of judging between them other than by personal preference (Hobson & Edwards, 1999). Second, this paradigm is not compatible with how many religious believers perceive their cherished religious values and convictions and particularly the minimizing of the doctrine and the content of the scared scripture in determining the nature of religious identity; and third, it avoids a serious dealing with religions' truth claims or the ultimate order of things (Wright, 2009) and therefore will miss the educative purpose of religious education (the promoting of moral and intellectual autonomy). This critique leads us to the third and critical paradigm of religious education.

12.3 Critical Paradigm of Religious Education

This paradigm is also called as post-liberal or critical religious education (Barnes, 2014; Wright, 2003, 2004) and it assumes that religions, as they are self-understood by religions' adherents, are in competition with each other, and that "there is no good reason why religions should renounce their [normative claims or] claims to uniqueness" (Barnes, 2014, p. 153). The existing of conflicting religious claims pertains to "different (largely culturally and socially determined) ways of expressing a common set of core belief [and the] lack of certainty [about the ultimate order of things] should be reflected in the degree of belief accorded to such conflicting propositions, which should remain open for ongoing appraisal and critical analysis" (Hobson & Edwards, 1999, p. 38, 40). According to McLaughlin (1990, p. 116) there is "a range of possible responses to a conflicting belief beyond the response of

judging it false". What is important then is the relative degree of confidence and the rationality of holding beliefs and not the truth or falsity of a given religion (Forrest, 1986; Quinton, 1985).

Accordingly, there must be a place in religious education to let teachers run an "open dialectical and critical inquiry into religious [and secular] truths" (Barnes, 2014, p. 241) if some religions or secular commitments might sound more plausible in justifying moral values and discourses (Saada, 2015). If this is the case, then what is the criteria or the rational ground for deciding between religious claims? Hobson and Edwards (1999) suggest to evaluate religions or religious claims according to the extent that they "serve to fulfill social, psychological, and spiritual needs" (p. 76); the consistency of its arguments and metaphors; its ethical value and its esthetic satisfaction; the openness to and seeking alternative interpretations that are compatible with contemporary scientific, political, and spiritual views of the world; and the ability to deal with anomalies (for instance, the existence of evil and suffering in the world). Instead of judging whether religions are true or false, students are encouraged to judge the rational justification for religious propositions from within and from outside their religious tradition (Alexander, 2017; Aslan, 2019; Saada, 2018).

According to Wright (1993) the main aim of religious education, no matter if students are believers, agnostics, or atheists, should be "allowing pupils to become religiously literate, to be able to think, act and communicate intelligently about the ultimate questions that religion asks" (p. 64). Accordingly, students come to decide "that some beliefs are better based or more rationally defensible than others, are more consistent both within themselves and with other branches of knowledge, and lead to a more personally meaningful world view. While exploring such issues it would be quite rational for students to work from their existing primary paradigm or home religion (or nonreligion) unless or until they feel there is sufficient reason to change to a new belief system" (Hobson & Edwards, 1999, p. 57). In the end, it is important to promote the students' reflective knowing, and the developing of one's religion and identity in a critical manner. (Alexander, 2017; Miedema, 2017; Puett, 2005; Saada, 2020a, 2015; Saada & Magadlah, 2021; Tan, 2008). It is here that religious education achieves the educational and not only the religious or civic purposes of religious education. It is worth noting that developing students' capacities of critical evaluation and perhaps disagreeing with aspects of particular and different religions does not mean that they are educated to disrespect the believers of these religions. In fact, "respect for persons has primacy over respect for beliefs" (Barnes, 2014, p. 244).

Arguably, students at the high school level are mature enough to learn about their own religion and Others from a critical stance. The purpose of this paradigm, as I have argued elsewhere, is to equip students the intellectual skills so that they become intelligent "consumers" of their religion and not fall into essentialized, dogmatic, literalist, apologetic, affective, or extremist understanding of their own faith (Saada & Magadlah, 2021). Students at the high school level are ready cognitively and emotionally to (1) question the meanings and possible implications of religious ideas and concepts; (2) reconsider the contributions of religion authorities and scholars (for instance, they may ask who speaks in the name their religion, for what purpose and why?); (3)

reflect critically upon the spiritual and moral aspects of their religion and develop their own religious identities; and (4) rethink the place of religion in the public space and its possible contribution to the common good.

The skills described above are crucial for helping young Muslims in western countries negotiate their religious and civic identities and to navigate the demands of living in democratic, modern, and pluralistic societies (Aslan, 2015; Saada, 2015). Exposing students to the religious or secular Other through critical inquiry has the potential of developing Muslim students' religious, democratic, and self-reflective identities. For instance, critical teachers of Islamic education may encourage their students to explore the ethical dimensions of other major religions in their society, how they are similar or different from their own, the rationale behind them, and how they contribute to the welfare of all people (Kunzman, 2006; Saada, 2015). Muslim students (and students of other religions) in multi-faith and democratic societies should be educated to communicate, present, or debate with others their theological and moral creeds, the meaning of good life and good society, in respectful, peaceful, and critical manner.

As argued by Saada and Gross (2017), Muslim students are expected to understand that

(1) Islam is not a static religion, and Muslims have developed, throughout history, different traditions, and schools of thought.
(2) They can use philosophical, scientific, and moral reasoning to justify their moral and religious claims and to think how they may contribute to the well-being of all citizens.
(3) We are living in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world where ideas, ideologies, and people transfer across nations and cultures. Muslims, consequently, should be able to explain their own religious and moral attitudes to other Muslims, non-Muslims, and non-believers.
(4) It is reasonable for students to question the teachings of Islam and to continue defining and redefining their religious identities by seeking more evidence and solid arguments to support their understanding of Islam.

12.4 Summary and Educational Implications

The following table summarizes the three paradigms explained earlier in this essay. (Table 12.1) The three paradigms described here are helpful for Muslim minority groups living in western and religiously diverse societies who would like, on the one hand, to preserve the religious identity of their children and on the other hand to let them integrate peacefully and successfully in the societies they belong to. Note that these are not mutually exclusive paradigms and teachers of religious education may incorporate more than one paradigm in their classes.

Table 12.1 A summary of the three paradigms of religious education

The paradigm	The exclusivist	The inclusivist	The critical paradigm
The purpose of religious education	The developing of students' religious identity and belonging	The developing of students' religious and civic identities	The developing of students' religious, civic, and autonomous and reflective identities
The students' age	Elementary level (1st–6th grades)	Middle school level (7th–9th grades)	High school level (10th–12th grades)

Interfaith education in exclusivist Islamic education at the elementary level is very limited because parents and school community want them to establish their core religious identity—for instance, learning the five pillars of Islam, its creed, rituals, and the moral code as it is represented in the Quran and prophetic tradition (sayings, deeds, and life story of Prophet Muhammad), and because students' capacities of rational and critical reasoning have not developed yet.

Interfaith education in inclusivist Islamic religious education entails, for instance, the recognizing of the tolerance message of Islam towards Christian and Jews as well as non-believers as it is articulated in the life story of Prophet Muhammad and several verses in the Quran. Also, students may learn the spiritual function of different religious rituals and practices; to tolerate religious and secular disagreements on moral matters; and to appreciate the diversity of moral/religious reasoning. For instance, observant Muslims and Jews have their own reasons for eating Halal and Kosher food and students may want to learn what these dietary laws are and why Muslims and Jews believe in them.

Applying interfaith education through a critical paradigm of Islamic religious education promotes deconstructing the dichotomies established in orientalist writings about the relationship between Islam, western and secular democracies (Said, 1997); learning about the variety of constructing and enunciating Islamic religious identities as they intersect with class, ethnicity, and gender (Panjwani & Moulin-Stozek, 2017); the meaning and possible implications of *ijtihad* (rational thinking on ethical issues) while dealing with contemporary social issues and the possible contributions of Islamic ethics or interpretations to the common good; a critical analysis and reflection on controversial topics as they manifested in the writing of Muslim scholars (issues may include, for instance, the historicizing of the revealed text, the question of human rights, the male-oriented interpretation of the Quran, and the status of the apostate (Cesari, 2004). In addition, Muslim teachers and students may discuss the manipulation of religious knowledge as it is practiced by extremist groups such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda, by exploring how agendas of social justice and human rights may inform the interpretations of the Islamic primary sources (the Quran and the Sunnah) (Davids & Waghid, 2016; Saada, 2020a).

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Chapter 13
Muslim Education and Claims of Justice in a Global Post-modern World

Yusef Waghid

13.1 Introduction

As with any form of education, the literature is replete with multiple understandings of Muslim education. For purposes of this contribution, the focus is on *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) and its concomitant link with claims of justice (*'adl'*). In this contribution, justice is examined in relation to the cultivation of human action that interrelates with reasonableness, responsibility, and cosmopolitan action. In this way, it is argued that education as associational knowing without reasonableness, responsibility and cosmopolitanism would not enhance defensible human action in a global world, where there exist many forms of truth, in particular the truth of denial and unbridled scepticism. By making a cogent argument for *ta'arruf* (Waghid, 2020) as a living theory of Muslim education, the possibility is always there to cultivate reasonableness, responsibility and cosmopolitan action—those virtues of education that move understandings away from obtaining a singular truth, and a denial of plausible truths of difference and diversity.

13.2 Towards *Ta'arruf* (Associational Knowing) as a Theory of Muslim Education

Theories of Muslim education have been guided by notions of *tarbiyyah* (rearing or socialisation), *ta'lim* (individuation) and *ta'dib* (justifiable education) (Waghid, 2011). To be socialised into the Muslim tradition implies that Muslims are initiated into understandings of the Qurān, *Ahādīth* (Prophetic sayings) and the *Sharī'ah* (Islamic law). Having been socialised into a rich tradition of Muslim thought and

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practice, Muslims have developed the capacity to think about that which they have been initiated into. They can make judgments about their education on account of having been socialised with a tradition of thought and practice. In this regard, the idea that *tarbiyyah* (socialisation) only implies that Muslims uncritically acquire knowledge of the Qurān and *Sunnah* (Prophet life experiences) seems indefensible on the basis that Muslims are expected to engage with understanding and questioning in and about matters that concern their beliefs and practices. In this way, *tarbiyyah* as socialisation involves an initiation into understandings of Muslim thought and practices in a critical way. It is not that a Muslim is socialised into the teachings of Islām without any critical engagement with its ideas and practices. Rather, on the basis of *tarbiyyah* (socialisation) Muslims are obliged to think for themselves and to take into controversy those thoughts and practices that constitute Muslim education. There is a misconception surrounding the idea of *tarbiyyah* as a socialised form of Muslim education in the sense that merely adhering to ideas and practices without critique undermines the very notion that education is always enframed by a capacity of humans (Muslims) to take into critical scrutiny that with which they are obliged to engage with. Of course, humans have the capacity to not engage critically with thought and practice but what makes their socialisation and act of education summons them to think critically about what they are confronted with. If not, the Qurān would not encourage Muslims to use their reason and intellectual expertise.

Moreover, Muslim education as *ta'lim* (individuation) is grounded in an understanding that Muslims (as humans) have the capacity to speak their minds. They are autonomous agents of rationality and critique underscored by a willingness to alter undesirable situations. Put differently, Muslims have the potential to bring about change in their situations on the basis of reasonableness and criticality. They are reasonable beings who remain open and reflexive to what they are confronted with. Similarly, they are critical in the sense that they are hopeful to bring about a change in their lives. What makes them individuated beings is their capacities for reasonableness and criticality such that they work towards alterity. In other words, on the basis of *ta'lim* (individuation) there is always the possibility that humans will undergo some change in the pursuit of living together as humans. The Qurānic dictum that Allāh Almighty will not change the condition of a people unless they change within themselves corroborates the claim that individual and collective change are guided by the autonomy of persons. When Muslims embark on *ta'lim* (individuation) they do so on account of reasonable and critical actions—those actions that draw them towards altering themselves in light of changing contexts. When the early Muslims were encouraged to transform their lives towards righteousness and justice they were provoked to do so on the basis of their reasonableness and criticality—that is, *ta'lim* (individuation).

When Muslims are inclined towards *tarbiyyah* (socialisation) and *ta'lim* (individuation), the possibility is always there for their education to be critical and autonomous respectively. And considering that criticality and autonomy do not necessarily accentuate the explicitness of their actions, the concept of *ta'dīb* (justifiable education), pronounced by Syed Mohammad Naquib Al-Attas (1991), foregrounds the notion that education is invariably linked to the attainment of truth and justice in an orderly

manner. If education for Muslims does not result in truth and justice for human living, there is no point in such a form of education. In other words, although previous forms of Muslim education primarily focussed on autonomy, criticality and reasonableness, *ta'dīb* (justifiable education) seems to be equally geared towards the cultivation of truth and justice in humans' lives. The point is, inasmuch as Muslim education needs to have a socialising and individuating potential, so such a form of education also has to be geared towards the cultivation of just human actions. Whereas *tarbiyyah* (socialisation) and *ta'lim* (individuation) seem to be directed towards enhancing human autonomy and criticality, *ta'dīb* (justifiable education) seems to be internally connected to the advancement of equality and justice in human relations. It is for this reason that Al-Attas (1991) was adamant that education cannot be unrelated to the cultivation of just humans action as the latter invariably underscores not only the autonomous and critical nature of Muslim education but also its quest to establish justice in human actions.

Yet, cultivating forms of Muslim education that advance notions of autonomy, criticality and justice through *tarbiyyah* (socialisation), *ta'lim* (individuation) and *ta'dīb* (justifiable education) are enabling but not necessarily sufficient conditions for bringing about global change and or justice. The acts of socialisation, individuation and justification seem to be linked to the actions of Muslims only and any attempt to confine education to *tarbiyyah*, *ta'lim* and *ta'dīb* might not necessarily have implications for global concerns and truths. Consequently, I am attracted to the Quranic idea of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) as a form of Muslim education on the grounds that such a form of education connects internally with autonomous, critical, and cosmopolitan actions. It is the notion of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) that seems to advance the idea of a Muslim theory of education on the grounds that it (*ta'arruf* or associational knowing) offers the possibility for the following interrelated human actions: firstly, the Qurān in Chap. 49 verse 13 encourages Muslims to engage with all other humans (*nās*) on the basis that such a form of engagement leads people to *ikrām* (respect) and that they hold one another accountable with restraint (*taqwā*). Why *ta'arruf* (associational knowing) seems to be an extension of three forms of Muslim education—*tarbiyyah*, *ta'lim* and *ta'dīb*—is that the latter forms of education seem to be biased towards only Muslims in the sense understood by many. What *ta'arruf* does is to link one's educatedness to virtues of respect and restraint rather than solely to one's Muslimness. One does not have to be a Muslim in order to be in service of *ta'arruf*. What determines one's educatedness and by implication one's degree of engagement with all others is a theory of *ta'arruf* that transcends homogenous human action; secondly, educatedness is constituted by the virtue of respect. This implies that without the presence of respect any possibility for human engagement would be undermined. What makes Muslim education what it is a concern and respect for all humans irrespective of their different cultures, traditions and societal affiliations. The notion of *ta'arruf* accentuates the importance of humans' respect they ought to have for one another on the grounds of being human. Their level of educatedness is for once determined by how honourable and respectful they treat one another on the basis that any form of dishonour and disrespect would constrain the possibility of desirable human engagement. Muslims, through *ta'arruf*

are encouraged to engage with all other humans irrespective of their differences and diversity. In this sense, being Muslim has some connection to being a cosmopolitan being on the grounds that the latter is drawn to all other humans on the basis of their common humanity; and thirdly, pluralist human engagement as advanced through *ta'arruf* can only materialise on the basis that humans practice restraint. Restraint does not mean that humans internalise a disposition to tolerate others for that would imply that humans exercise a skewed sense of authority over others without invoking their (other humans') authority. When Muslims practice restraint they open themselves up to being moved by the reasons of others without simply imposing their reasons uncritically on others. When this happens they allow themselves to engage reflexively with the thoughts of others so that the possibility is always there that they could learn mostly from others.

In sum, unlike *tarbiyyah*, *ta'lim* and *ta'dīb,* a living theory of Muslim education that seems more plausible is the notion of *ta'arruf* on the grounds that the concept extends beyond an exclusivist Muslim identity, humans are summoned to engage respectfully with one another, and that they would be provoked by a restraint that collaboratively opens themselves up to reflexively think again and again about matters of public concern. It is such a living theory of Muslim education as *ta'arruf* that I now examine in relation to the cultivation of global justice.

13.3 *Ta'arruf* and the Pursuit of Global Justice for All

Global justice is undoubtedly a very noble phenomenon. Who would not want to bear testimony to justice being done to all humans and non-humans, the environment, and the universe? Hence, it does not seem to be inconceivable for humans to aspire towards justice for all others. Yet, the continuous struggles of many peoples, especially those subjected to incessant religious persecutions, migrations to more developed countries than their own, and the ongoing suppression of many marginalised groups in unequal and repressive societies are instances that suggest the yearning for justice on the part of many people in the world is real and long overdue. One cannot imagine a world without justice for all humans to be stable, peaceful and equal. And, a global world in which justice seems to remain elusive only aggravates tensions and contestations among humans. In relation to three real global concerns, I want to make a case for *ta'arruf* as an educational practice that can enhance global justice for all humans.

Firstly, the ubiquitous presence of xenophobia, Islamophobia and anti-semitism is a stark reminder that the global world remains in need of theories of education that can constrain and undermine that which violates the presence of all humans, irrespective of their pluralist differences and cultural persuasions. *Ta'arruf* offers an invitation to all humans not only to consider others as worthy of engagement but also to recognise them especially in light of their differences and diverse claims to truth. One does not have to relinquish one's cultural preferences in order to be recognised by others. Rather, *ta'arruf* is an inherent human responsibility to recognise all others as they are

and not as one expects them to be. In this way, *ta'arruf* is a practice that summons the individual self to engage with all others irrespective of their different cultural orientations. What makes *ta'arruf* a plausible living theory of Muslim education is that it considers all humans as equal irrespective of their status and or social orientation. Human cooperation and engagement transcend individual and collective identities so that humans are bound together by their humanness to act together.

Secondly, *ta'arruf* is an educational practice that summons Muslims to act with dignity in advancing their ways of being and acting. It is not enough merely to insist that humans work together but that their working together be inspired by a willingness to act without violence and aggression. Here, *ta'arruf* seems to work against any human action that reifies domination and exclusion. In many parts of the world today, dissent and dissonance are opposed especially when the legitimacy of states are under scrutiny. And, when the military juntas continue to rule by force the possibility for any form of political engagement and or agreement would be thwarted. When any state authoritatively prevents its citizens from showing dissent through protestations then such a state does not take seriously the art of summoning people to engage in deliberation about matters of public concern.

Thirdly, the human quest for global justice is underscored by a need for equality among humans. In other words, to achieve global justice among citizens in the world, the possibility should always be there that they exercise their right to speak out against that which constrain their co-living. Nowadays, poverty, hunger and starvation seem to affect many undeveloped nations all over the world with especially sub-Saharan African nations being affected the worst. In sub-Saharan Africa, mostly women and children are adversely affected by fragility, conflict and violence. The dire situations in countries like Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Madagascar are exacerbated by the risk of floods and climate change. *Ta'arruf* obliges all humans to speak out against abject poverty and extreme living conditions exacerbated by climate change that especially impact poor nations in the world. More recently, poorer nations in the world seem to suffer the most due to the lack of vaccination opportunities to fight the coronavirus pandemic. In my own country, South Africa with a population of roughly 55 million people, a vaccination plan is still being contrived and the threat of coronavirus looms even larger at the time of authoring this section. What *ta'arruf* advocates is that humans not only speak out against global injustices but that something actually be done to avoid an escalation in the vulnerabilities of those humans who suffer most. Although the World Health Organisation has contrived a vaccination plan for African nations, there seems to be a lack of support among more affluent nations to actually invest in a vaccination strategy for poorer African nations. What *ta'arruf* obliges humans to do is to act in service of those most vulnerable to the risks of poverty, hunger, starvation and death. It is not just that humans are urged to speak out against global injustices but that they actually do something about correcting undesirable living conditions of vulnerable communities in particular.

What has been argued for is that global injustices should be addressed through the educational practice of *ta'arruf,* in particular that humans be summoned to cultivate their common humanity, engage through deliberation about public matters that

concern them, and that they actually pursue actions that can alleviate and eliminate undesirable human conditions that affect them, mostly those conditions that seem to affect the most vulnerable communities everywhere in the world. The point I am making, is that *ta'arruf* is not an educational practice that prejudices some people over others, for instance, Muslim over non-Muslim, and or affluent over non-affluent. Rather, *ta'arruf* and its cultivation involves summoning all humans to act in the interest of one another with the most vulnerable having to be attended to especially during times of crises. Next, I examine the implications of *ta'arruf* as a living theory of Muslim education for the notion of world citizenship as global injustices seem to be on the incline.

13.4 *Ta'arruf* and the Cultivation of World Citizenship

Already I have alluded to the fact that global communities that endure the most vulnerabilities due to climate change, and an escalation of violence, and rising poverty, hunger and starvation especially among southern African nations are in need of the attention of those more privileged than them. When privileged communities and or nations do not seem to bother about the marginalised other, especially those living under severe conditions of poverty, hunger, starvation, conflict and violence, and the risks of floods and drought, there seems no point in talking about any theory of education for that matter. What is the point about a theory of education if such a notion has little, if any bearing on improving the living conditions of all humans anywhere in the world? A theory of education cannot be separated from its potential to enact real change in the world, especially alleviating the plight of desperate communities at any time and everywhere. For this reason, it seems more plausible to speak about a living theory of education because it seems as if a theory of education might not necessarily summon humans to action. The very idea of a living theory of education is inseparable from its potential to actuate real change in societies. If not, such a theory is merely an imaginary fiction that has no real influence over the human condition. This is where I want to remind ourselves to begin to rethink our understanding of what it means to be human. And, considering that I am making a case for a Qurānic conception of *ta'arruf,* I want to offer some elucidation of how to think of the term 'Muslim' differently.

My reading of the primary source of Muslim education, that is, the Qurān, is that the term 'Muslim' and concept Islam invariably refer to niversalist conceptions of being human. The term 'Muslim' derives from the Arabic root word *aslama* which means to submit to God's will (Al-Attas, 1995: 53). The noun 'Muslim' refers to the person who performs the act of submission which in itself is a recognition of such a person's humility to submit herself to God's will (Lane, 1863: 1413). Now to associate a Muslim with an unpretentious and self-conscious person implies that such a person has a decency and modesty to act as a human being. In recognising her humility to submit to Allāh's (God's) will such a person consciously and willingly acknowledges an indebtedness to Allāh for having brought her to life. According to

Al-Attas (1995: 53), humans live in a state of indebtedness (*dīn*) when they recognise that they need to be at peace with themselves at all times—a matter of internalising their Islam. What follows from the above elucidation of the term 'Muslim', is that such a person is, firstly, a human being who submits herself willingly and consciously to Allāh's will; secondly, her indebtedness (*dīn*) is real, sincere and comprehensive; and thirdly, she is at peace (Islām) with herself and by implication in her relations with other humans. By implication, Muslims and Islām involve the capacity of humans to act conscientiously and with conviction along a path of justice they pursue. Whereas the term 'Muslim' involves a committed agent, Islām depicts the path of truth and justice the agents embark on in the interest of all of humanity.

When a human submits herself to Allāh's will she endeavours to serve other humans with dignity, honour and respect in such a way that she does not violate their rights to be human as well. Put differently, being Muslim implies that there exists an internal recognition that a human serves others on the basis of respect and dignity as in this way she shows her indebtedness to God's creation. Muslimness is therefore associated with a relational act of engaging with other humans on the basis of humility and unpretentiousness. Of course, humans have a choice in separating themselves from other humans but what makes them Muslim is in fact their intrinsic capacities to engage with other humans for the latter in itself is a recognition that they owe God this responsibility to serve others. Without the act of serving humanity by virtue of one's indebtedness to Allāh, the claim of being Muslim and enacting Islām would come under scrutiny and the possibility is there that one would not necessarily live a life as a Muslim despite bearing such an identity or outward commitment to be Muslim. Being Muslim resides in the intrinsic act of engaging with other humans on account of one's indebtedness to Allāh's will. Equally, it could be that one might not necessarily possess a Muslim identity but then the act of being Muslim goes along with the relationality with other humans in particular how one engages with them in service of what Allāh ordains—that is, to sustain good relations with humans and to ensure that their association results in acts of justice for all humans and towards the environment as well. One would not necessarily associate the term 'Muslim' with those humans who irresponsibility causes environmental degradations or who extrajudicially murders other humans. It is not irrelevant to know that the Qurān is replete with exhortations reminding its readers that they are in fact *khalā'ifa al-ard* (inheritors of the earth) on the basi of which they should remain environmentally conscious in the preservation and conservation of the earth, in particular its forests and trees, oceans and living organisms, and mountains and fossil fuels. Undeniably humans impact the physical environment on earth through overpopulation, pollution, burning of fossil fuels and deforestation—all changes that have given rise to climate change, soil erosion, poor air quality and undrinkable water that negatively impact human behaviour. To be environmentally conscious is to act in preservation and conservation of the earth and the environment.

To show real and sincere indebtedness to Allāh is a matter of turning oneself in community towards all other humans, non-humans and the environment. In this way, to remain reflexively open about one's own practices and to work towards advancing the interests of one's own concerns and aspirations in relation to others' interests

would be a genuinely communitarian practice associated with those referring to themselves as Muslims. So, as the world community bears testimony through the agency of the United Nations to the conflict and suffering endured by several peoples all over the world, the act of being Muslim implies a readiness and willingness to alleviate and eradicate the unbearable conditions of war, criminality, human suffering and deprivation. For instance, the Yemeni Civil War that began in late 2014 mainly between government forces and Houthi dissidents along with their supporters and allies has been ongoing without any resolution in sight. In the meantime, more than 100,000 people have been killed in Yemen, including more than 12,000 civilians, and an estimated 85,000 more civilians died due to famine, hunger and starvation caused by the war and already referred to by the United Nations as the worst famine in the world in 100 years. Yet, Muslim people are involved in this untenable humanitarian disaster (Gasim, 2021) or are they?

Likewise, if being Muslim is internally and externally connected to living in peace with all other humans, then the continuous persecution of religious and ethnic minorities should not be a situation whereby the world only looks on without acting decisively to end such heinous crimes against humanity. The very act of *ta'arruf* is a quest towards a common humanity in which all humans can live peacefully and in recognition of one another's differences and commonalities. And, for the latter to manifest, there has to be an earnestness among all humans to remain open and flexible towards ways of resolving world problems especially when violence is perpetrated continuously against religious minorities all over the world such as the suppression in China of over a million Uighurs, a Muslim minority ethnic group, being held in detention centres; anti-Christian violence in Sri Lanka that resulted in at least 290 Christians killed inside churches in 2019; the continuous exclusion of Muslims in India, in particular religious discrimination against some Muslims who are being declared as foreigners in their own country; and the Rohninya genocide in Mayanmar, a Buddhist-majority country, where thousands of Muslims are massacred by military forces (Jain, 2019).

The point about *ta'arruf* as a living theory of Muslim education is constituted by the notion that being Muslim is connected to the act of serving the cause of humanitarian justice so that the violation of the rights of others, opposition to dissent and dissonance, and the quelling of religious and cultural discrimination and persecution be dealt with decisively by a world republic in which all humans would advance the interests of all others. What a theory of *ta'arruf* proposes is that all humans should become internally connected to all others on the grounds of a common humanity in which discrimination, persecution, oppression and a disregard for dissent and dissonance be tackled with renewed enthusiasm and commitment. *Ta'arruf* cannot just be recognised as a theory of education for Muslims that exists for the betterment of one exclusive group over another. Instead, *ta'arruf* as a living theory of education for those serious about the lifeworlds of all other humans should be harnessed so that humanity's purpose of co-existence, collaboration and co-living be advanced in a spirit of recognising all humans' commonalities and differences. If *ta'arruf* were to impact human thought in any realistically meaningful way, it cannot be reduced to the lip services of Muslims or at least those who have committed their lives to advancing

global justice for all of humanity. Rather, *ta'arruf* should become a living theory of humanity which claims to justice for all concomitantly with the advancement of dissent and difference would become a much vaunted deliberative educational practice. In my concluding remarks, I offer a renewed perspective of Muslim educational theory that can hopefully summon humans to think and act in deliberative fashion about global injustices that confront them.

13.5 Towards a Conclusion

The notion of a theory of Muslim education I have argued for in this contribution centres around the cultivation of the Qurānic concept of *ta'arruf* (associational knowing). As the name implies, *ta'arruf* manifests as a consequence of humans' engagement or encounters with one another. This, in the first place, is a vindication that *ta'arruf* constitutes interrelational acts of human engagement. Humans are internally connected to one another by virtue of their common humanity and they interact with one another as a manifestation of their responsibility to serve and respond to one another's situations. In a different way, *ta'arruf* constitutes a concept of global citizenship education in which individual persons are required to look beyond their own interests and accept moral responsibilities towards the whole of humanity (Bosio, 2021).

Moreover, what has been argued for in defense of a living theory of education for Muslims is that such an idea of education is aimed at responding to crises in a global community. Here, I specifically refer to the way in which a living theory of (Muslim) education ought to confront increasing inequality, rising populism and nationalism, and more specifically, post-truth politics accompanied by hatred and fear of the other—all aspects to which a global citizenship education is considered as an apt paradigm of education to respond to real-life and practical issues in the world (Bosio, 2021: xix). In this regard, a living theory of Muslim education as *ta'arruf* is relevant for contending with a post-truth politics in which hatred, fear, subjugation and exclusion seem to flourish. This in itself makes *ta'arruf* a living social theory of human action whereby practices and institutions are reconceived to transform ourselves and the world where we live in.

Finally, the notion of *ta'arruf* argued for in this contribution does not only involve humans as Muslims to advance their own personal and cultural dispositions. Instead, as Emiliano Bosio (2021: xix) aptly puts it, they are summoned to conscientise their actions in context of reading the world instead of just reading the word. When humans read the word they focus primarily on that which affects their own ways of seeing the world—a matter of their own ways of being and acting. Instead, a living social theory of (Muslim) education ought to be directed to a post-enlightened reading of the world in which human predicaments are attended to in highly constructive and critical ways. In other words, humans through *ta'arruf* make sense of the world and endeavour to transform it through conscientised readings of how liberated the world can be or should become. It is not as if they only wish to see change in the world,

but their reading of the world encourages them to act anew and to imagine a world where human co-living is a real possibility. Thus, a living theory of Muslim education couched within the parameters of *ta'arruf* allows humans to legitimately and genuinely act as Muslims as they endevour to serve the world's peoples, environment and resources—all Allāh's creation. It is through *ta'arruf* as a real living theory of Muslim education that the possibility for sustainable and substantive global justice would invariably manifest in our human practices in renewed ways perhaps never thought of before.

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Chapter 14
The Totalitarian Imagination Revisited: State Religious Education at the 'Worldviews' Watershed

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Abstract The Totalitarian Imagination Revisited examines the origins and ends of religion in education at the 'worldviews' watershed. It does so against a personal academic life journey which has assessed state religious education in the light of modern autocracy, dictatorship and totalitarianism. Drawing on the specific context of developments in the United Kingdom, the chapter shows this watershed epistemological and linguistic shift—from a subject defined by the study of religious traditions to the designation of that of teaching and learning about 'worldviews', a putatively inclusive approach framed in its thinking to incorporate religious and secular outlooks—through an etiology which has its pathogenic roots in a range religiously sceptical, secular epistemologies. This epistemological-philosophical trajectory, with its modern beginnings in the Eighteenth-century Enlightenment and the revolutions of that period, is, it is shown, rooted in an outplaying of a centuries-long, specific historical-political context which has now made itself manifest in contemporary state religious education.

Keywords Totalitarianism · Liberal autocracy · Secularism · State religious education

14.1 Introduction

In the mid-2000s I was giving a keynote lecture in Canterbury, England, on human rights in the United Nations system. Drawing on the historical perspective I had elaborated in the recently published *The Human Rights Handbook: A Global Perspective for Education* (Gearon, 2003), it was this very historical perspective that had been highlighted in a laudatory review by the editor of Harvard Educational Review (de Forest, 2004):

> Gearon has successfully condensed a vast amount of information and an array of details into his 181-page Handbook. He offers a crash course in human rights treaties, UN [United

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> Nations] history, and international organizations. Moreover, Gearon's *Handbook* places HRE [Human Rights Education] squarely in its institutional and historical context and elucidates the way human rights are best taught in that context.

Jennifer de Forest concludes

> As Gearon illustrates in his *Handbook*, the educative potential of human rights is best released by teaching the subject in a way that emphasizes the link to the human rights system and its structures. It is this editor's hope that, as the decade for human rights education comes to a close in 2004, curriculum developers and teachers will follow Gearon's lead and adopt a framework for teaching human rights that does not ignore the movement's history or its institutional context (de Forest, 2004).

I was thus quite confident in the historical analysis at this lecture, detailing, necessarily in outline, how the United Nations' 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights had dramatically emerged as an ideological counterweight to the decades of totalitarianism that preceded it, the ideological nuance of which Schlesinger's (2003) *Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations* carefully details. It is an originating and subsequent history which is not without its enduring problematics (Gearon et al., 2019; Gearon, 2016, 2019a, b). I emphasized how, for educators it was the stress the newly established United Nations placed on teaching and learning of these universal values as rights which made human rights education so important, framing, as the document states, 'a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society', where nation states should be institutionally and legislatively supported pedagogical endeavours 'strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance' (UDHR, 1948). As I would write over a decade later, 'the UDHR is thus both a founding statement of universal human rights *and* a foundational statement which marks the origins and presents the stated ends of human rights education' (Gearon, 2016), or, more recently, these are 'the origins and ends of human rights education' (Gearon, Kuusisto & Musaio, 2019).

Yet, returning to that lecture in Canterbury, it was a single, well-framed question which was posed to me, which through the years which have followed made me think more deeply about the correspondence between autocratic, dictatorial and totalitarian systems and those national and global democratic systems which emerged as State Communist, Fascist, Nazi, and variant regimes modelled thereof, fell. The question also made me look more closely at the historical origins of democratic governance, from classical Greece and Rome through to the eighteenth-century revolutions of America and France which followed millennia later, through to movements of democracy, so espoused, in more recent centuries and decades, including those through we now live. The question was this: 'Are you saying that the United Nations resembles a totalitarian regime?' I had not realised I was—and replied as such, prompting a constructive discussion around this theme—but I have remained grateful to the unknown questioner who raised the issue.

Re-reading the literature which I had cited so often, yet always cautious not to make direct comparisons between the open liberal societies of the West and those

totalitarian societies that had also arisen in the West, the following years for me highlighted the core problematics of a global institution not only framing law but values, and values for which education is the critical means of ideological conversion. Over the years, there are several authors who have been critical here, and remain so: Isaiah Berlin, particularly 'Two Concepts of Liberty' (Berlin, 1958); Karl Popper's 1946 *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Popper, 2015); Friedrich and Brzezinski's (1967) *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy.* There is also the wider literature on totalitarianism: Roberts' (2006) *The Totalitarian Experiment in Twentieth Century Europe: Understanding the Poverty of Great Politics*; Schapiro's (1972) *Totalitarianism*, and the immensely helpful critical over of Isaac's (2003) 'Critics of Totalitarianism'.

Two books, however, which had argued the same, and which had influenced my thinking were volumes published in close temporal proximity to each other, already in the early 1950s: Arendt's (2004) *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and the lesser known and sadly over-shadowed work by Talmon (1961) *History of Totalitarian Democracy*, Hannah Arendt, Isaiah Berlin, Karl Popper, J.L. Talmon, hold still for me a particularly enduring importance. In a time when as never before the issues of slavery and emancipation, oppression and empire, are to the fore, no work is arguably now of more abiding significance amongst this brief survey of historical literature than Arendt's (2004) *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, a work which provides not simply an historical reminder of how autocratic, dictatorial and totalitarian regimes, particularly those of twentieth century, had their origins—so she argues in her magisterial volume—in anti-Semitism, colonialism and imperialism. Talmon had taken a similar line of argument, but, writing at the Hebrew University, in an only newly established State of Israel, his main focus for attention was in reminding readers that the French Revolution, a defining event of modern political history (Hobsbawm, 1988) was a revolutionary democracy attained through bloodshed, oppression and terror (Talmon, 1961). In terms of political values, the emergent ideals of citizenship and human rights which shaped, in ideological and legislative framing and format, the documents of the United Nations in its early years mirror precisely in framing and format those of the French and American Revolutions of the eighteenth century—just look to how the respective documents are presented (Yale, 2020). It would be Eric Voegelin who would see most profoundly in religious terms the consequences of such political systems in their totalitarian form become 'political religions', a manifestation of 'modernity without restraint' (Henningsen, 1999).

Like Arendt and Talmon, in the past decade it was Wolin's (2008) *Democracy Inc: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism* which forwards most prominently similar arguments, this time however with a focus on the controlling aspects of modern democracies. These arguments now are not uncommon in the pandemic present. The matter lies in difficult tension. If the UN and its institutions have totalising tendencies which lead critics to suspect move towards global governance in the most negative of senses, one wonders what the world be like if the genocidal intents of totalitarian regimes had flourished utterly unchecked; and here Samantha Power's (2010) *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* presents the realpolitik of horror with which, since its inception, the United Nations and the leading nations of the UN's Security Council have been faced.

14.2 The Totalitarian Imagination Revisited

I did not cease but rather intensified my academic focus on human rights education. At my old University of Roehampton, I was still directing the Centre for Research in Human Rights, the first of its kind in a Faculty of Education at a UK university. There, too, along with others, indeed, we established a major cross-disciplinary, University-wide centre for learning and research in citizenship, social justice and human rights, with substantial funding of around £4.5 million. I contributed, too, at the time, to some significant work with UNESCO on intercultural understanding, being part of a select expert group which would devise a documentation on intercultural understanding (UNESCO/Ade-Ajayi et al., 2007), still cited today (see OSCE/PISA, 2018). The pinnacle of this work for me was accepting the invitation by UNESCO to act as General Rapporteur for a commemorative event attended by representatives of five continents to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That was in 2008, at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, and the resultant document was UNESCO's *Contemporary Issues in Human Rights Education* (2011, and now freely available online). It is no accident that UN strategic programmes on human rights and human rights education with strategies for developing intercultural education (UNESCO, 2007). On the seventieth anniversary of the UDHR, we see global moves to incorporate such human rights values with educational efforts at integrating these with cultural understanding, as evidenced by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) and the Programme for International Student Assessment's (PISA) significant moves to supplement emphases on educational achievement now with the scales of 'global competence' (OECD/PISA, 2018), defined as

> …the capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues, to understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others, to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development (OECD/PISA, 2018).

Yet long before such developments, I was feeling some increasing disquiet. I recall now, over a decade later, with absolute clarity, one of my life's most powerful experiences, the morning after my closing address in Paris, 2008. It was December—the UDHR had been instituted on 10 December 1948, the day after the UN had promulgated its first convention against genocide—and I visited Notre Dame Cathedral. It would be inappropriate in an academic collection to detail my experience there, but suffice to say it was sufficient for me to postpone my imminent flight back to England.

It was on arrival at Oxford in October 2010, taking on the post latterly held by my old friend Professor Terence Copley, to oversee religious education at the University of Oxford's Department of Education. Not immediately but from thereon in, I would through teaching and scholarly work, alter the course of my thinking on the political and especially human rights components of religious education. In earlier works, particularly *Citizenship through Religious Education* (Gearon, 2004) I had seen human rights as a natural epistemological and pedagogical bridge between

education in religion and citizenship. This has all been grounded in research on the interconnectedness between religion and human rights (Gearon, 2002). It was not, as some critics have asserted, that my position meant a disavowal of the importance of the political and human rights dimensions of religion in education, its agenda for social and community cohesion, for cultural understanding, and so forth (Gearon, 2018; 2019a; Jackson, 2015).

Then, the same year in which I started at Oxford, in a major four volume collection on inter-religious education (De Souza et al., 2010b), I published my own chapter (my volume, the fourth, was specifically examining human rights in inter-religious contexts): 'The Totalitarian Imagination: Religion, Politics and Education' (Gearon, 2010a: 933–947). I reprint, in extenso, the extended abstract, important here in revisiting the theme precisely, as the idea has been so foundational to my thinking over so many years. Thus:

> 'The Totalitarian Imagination' presents an outline analysis of the inter-relationships between religion, politics and education in three critical phases of modern history. In 'Revolutionary Democracy' (1789–1916), I introduce some commonplace reminders about the nature of eighteenth-century revolutions based on citizenship, democracy and human rights, the changing roles of religion and politics which this initiated, including a new relationship between politics and education, so closely as even to presuppose a correlation between politics and pedagogy. Resolutely and increasingly secular in outlook, eighteenth-century revolutionary democracy nevertheless retained many of the 'totalizing' features of religion, and laid the basis for more systematic philosophical and political attacks on the latter.

Under the heading 'The Totalitarian Imagination' (1917–1945), I argue that eighteenth-century revolutionary democracies (and the philosophies which followed in the nineteenth) therefore provided a militantly anti-religious ground for early twentieth-century 'totalitarian' politics, which made the State sacred, which attempted to remove any residual acknowledgement of religion, which broke down boundaries between public and private life and which used education as a means of inculcating totalitarian ideology.

Under the heading 'Liberal Autocracy' (1945–present), I argue that the formation of the United Nations at the end of the Second World War—with the end of Nazi totalitarianism and the start of the Cold War which was the beginning of the end for Soviet Communism—was an attempt to globalise the principles of citizenship, democracy and human rights emergent in the eighteenth century. The post-Cold War period marked a perceived victory of liberal democracy based on equal citizenship and universal human rights which manifested itself in an 'end-of-history' hubris. Here, from the avowedly secular inception of the United Nations, education was regarded as of central importance to the inculcation of these political values—and from the post-Cold War period onwards has involved a coordinated international renewal of educational programmes to further citizenship, democracy and human rights. This post-Cold War triumphalism was short-lived, however, coinciding with manifold cultural challenges to the adequacies of liberal democracy, notably with an unexpected resurgence of religion in political life, and as a result, new political interest in *religious* life. This latter move, I argue, shows that religions are increasingly subject to the dictates of secular democratic politics and that educational systems—however

benign in outward appearance—are instrumental in the conscious or unconscious breakdown of public and private life characteristic of totalitarianism. If this might be defined as the emergence of a 'liberal autocracy', twenty-first-century democracy may have begun to replicate the very totalitarian structures they were intended to combat (Gearon, 2010a, 2010b).

Perhaps, in re-reading this now, I had over-played some of the parallels. There is, I have come to realise, so much that is positive in the secular liberalism I had critiqued, and not least in the positives is freedom of religion. For example, though the French state has long been mired in anticlericalism (Réville, 1905), as have many other movements across Europe—the anticlerical horrors of the Spanish Civil seem the most forgotten (Preston, 2015)—today's European Community and its member states uphold at least the institutional and legislative means for the flourishing of religious faith. However, such freedoms seem still to me today to be less apparent in education. And I began to see in the framing of state religious education distinct epistemological and political roots and orientations.

I began to see such patterns in the most curious of places. Thus, in education, particularly state religious education, the involvement of political doctrine is not new, I began to see it further ingrained in histories of colonialism and imperialism, itself a revisiting earlier work which continues to this day (Gearon, 2002; Gearon et al., 2020). One of the curious and underexplored facets of this I elaborated in the 'The King James Bible and the Politics of Religious Education: Secular State and Sacred Scripture' (Gearon, 2013), the four-hundred-year history of the King James Bible from its 1611 publication onwards had considerable international impact precisely in this period of British colonialism and was a critical adjunct in its support. Yet it was also critical in those fleeing a lack of religious freedom in Act of Uniformity Elizabethan England. The Pilgrim Fathers who would sail from Plymouth and settle in America were the vanguard of religious forces who would establish there 'a light on the hill', found seventeenth-century colleges such as Harvard, instil the Puritan values of moral industry that showed God's favour through the flourishing, including the material fruits, of Christian labour in a new land. The fundamental unifying principle of all the now disparate Protestant denominations was doctrine of sola scriptura, scripture alone, necessitated the reading of the Bible as a means of attaining knowledge of God's word and attaining salvation. One of the longer terms and unexpected consequences was that this Protestant literacy engendered a more basic literacy, particularly through the reading of the Bible in English. The global prevalence of the English language even today arguably has its roots in the Bible.

In this academic shift, the more substantial of subsequent works most significant here were the *MasterClass in Religious Education* (Gearon, 2014) and *On Holy Ground: The Theory and Practice of Religious Education* (Gearon, 2015). The central problem I had realised in contemporary religious education was how to find teaching and learning in religious education, when religious education was no longer founded in the religious life. I was, naturally, focused specifically on religion in state-funded schools, or rather more explicitly (as many religious-oriented schools also receive, certainly in the UK, state funding), schools were secular orientation necessitated an

all-encompassing inclusivity where pupils and students held a diversity of religious beliefs or none, and came from a plurality of cultural backgrounds.

Without rehearsing the contents of these books, their task was the same, namely a systematic examination of the epistemological foundations of contemporary state religious education. In the *MasterClass* work I introduced the now much cited, and contested notion of the paradigms of contemporary religious education. I specifically focused, and most systematically, in *On Holy Ground* on the post-Enlightenment histories of a number of disciplines and their respective relationships with religion, and the subsequent modern-day adaptation of contemporary religious education. In a later co-authored, Joseph Prud'homme and I, undertaking a comparative international study between the UK and the USA drew on a foundational paper—'European Civil Religion and European Religious Education' (Gearon, 2013)—to develop the theme of how avowedly critical forms of state religious education was an unexplored and likely contributory factor in the increased secularity of children and indeed thereby of their nations (see also Gearon, 2017; Lewin, 2017). The book resulting from this thesis was *State Religious Education and the State of the Religious Life* (Gearon and Prud'homme, 2018). The idea was much contested (Jackson, 2015). Yet it seems, these years on, all the more difficult to contest that religion in education has taken on yet further political agendas. And epistemological, to me, clearly always and everywhere, here is integrally political. These are now further accentuated and consolidated with a specific and ever more explicit epistemology.

14.3 The Landscape Ahead: State Religious Education at the 'Worldviews' Watershed

This political shift is not least evident in the quite sudden emergence, in only the past few years, of moves to attaint for state religious education a terminological from religious to 'worldviews' education. This move in nomenclature is more than linguistic. It is fundamentally epistemological. In the origins of the term 'worldview' itself we see, however, the close interconnectedness of the linguistic in eliciting an epistemological shift. With young people, state religious education at this 'worldviews' watershed will undoubtedly have its secularising influence. One of the main reasons here for such a supposition is that term 'worldview' originates precisely in the religiously sceptical, transcendent-discarding, notions of Enlightenment philosophy.

The origins of worldview as a concept are thus rooted firmly in the late eighteenth-century efforts at rationalistic autonomy of the individual over and against inherited religious, specifically Christian, authority and tradition, evidenced in Immanuel Kant's notion of *Weltanschauung* in *The Critique of Pure Reason* (Guyer & Wood, 1992). Within only years of Kant's ascendancy in the pantheon of European philosophy, he began in the 1780s also to elaborate for popular understanding what this movement of secular rationalism was and what it entailed. I have thus often cited the opening lines of Kant's (1784) paper 'What is Enlightenment?'. Here he states

the principles of rationalistic autonomy which still today permeate certainly western political and educational institutions:

> Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage. Nonage is the inability to use one's own understanding without another's guidance. This nonage is self-imposed if its cause lies not in lack of understanding but in indecision and lack of courage to use one's own mind without another's guidance. *Dare to know!* … 'Have the courage to use your own understanding', is therefore the motto of the enlightenment. (Kant, 1784: 1)

This essential and too often neglected paper concisely defines, for those perhaps who had neither education nor inclination to read his first *Critique*. His second work on practical or moral philosophy, the *Critique of Practical Reason*, shows in its opening lines what Kant had left of the transcendent, and as I have remarked (Gearon, 2020), so apt for the fearsome thinker that these opening lines would be inscribed on his tombstone: 'Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.' The third *Critique of Judgement*, on aesthetics, has always to me shown how much Kant seems to have missed the transcendent, a work suffused with praise of the natural world and suffused, too, talk of the power of individual genius in representing and reconfiguring this world. As I detail at more length in the eighth chapter of *On Holy Ground*, this wonderful work, my personal favourite of Kant's, shows the philosophy sharing in a spirit so characteristic of the Romantics who had risen to oppose the seemingly harsh reductionism of Enlightenment rationality, a world stripped of emotion in favour of instrumental reason. It would be Max Weber, another German, who, in his 1918 Munich lecture curiously titled 'Science as a Vocation' would show the consequences of this intellectualism as 'a disenchantment of the modern world'. The origins of this intellectualism emerge before the Enlightenment in the Renaissance' rediscovery of pre-Christian Greek and Roman thought but the expression of this Enlightenment call for freedom from biblical and clerical authority is there in Kant's (1784) short essay.

This period was of course defined not simply by philosophical Enlightenment but political revolution, pivotally in America and in France (the primary documents are critical, again see Yale, 2020). Indeed, many of the philosophical freedoms—particularly to critique religion—were themselves facilitated by political events which enshrined in new constitutions the rights of citizens. Civil and political rights were unarguably thus as equally framed by philosophical freedoms as by the liberties engendered by political revolution. Maintaining these new systems of thought and governance was at the core as educational as it was institutionally or politically systemic.

Thus, the defining of modern education as autonomy of thought and a direct experience of the world—rather than an authoritative imposition of knowledge—thus predated Kant, but only by a matter of a few small years, with Jean Jacques-Rousseau's 1762 *Emile*. The political correspondence of these ideals is in a work of the same year, Rousseau's *Social Contract*. It is here, as I have shown elsewhere, that Rousseau denigrates Christian religion (Catholic and Protestant) in the penultimate

chapter of this work, advocating what he calls 'civil religion', one which is stripped, like Kant's 'religion of humanity' of the transcendent, whose 'one law' is 'tolerance', and whose manifestation of intent is self-evident in modern state religious education (Gearon, 2013, 2015, 2019a). No one better elaborates Rousseau's influence in educational terms than Dewey (1916) in his 'introduction to the philosophy of education', and nowhere is the integral link between contemporary education and modern politics better illustrated than in the main title of this important and influential work: *Democracy and Education.* The origins of worldview are, then, as political and societal as they are conceptual and epistemological. Kant might thus have been well pleased with the ascendancy and application of 'worldview' in modern state religious education; as would Rousseau and Dewey (Heater, 2004).

Weltanschauung itself remained a heightened feature of German philosophy, retaining a specific philosophical locale in Hegel, later modified by Wilhelm von Humboldt *Weltansicht* (Gundersen, 2002). Thus, yet another German, the philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey revived the term, with the sixth volume of his collected works showing his systematic historical-philosophical analysis of worldview was in essence the culmination of his contribution to philosophy (Dilthey 2008). Makkreel's (2020) 'Wilhelm Dilthey' provides the most authoritative introduction here, detailing a critical feature of Dilthey's work as distinguishing between the natural and human sciences, the latter including arts, humanities and social sciences. If the objective of the former was to provide laws which explain the natural world, the arts, humanities and social sciences as, Makkreel has it, 'projected the core task of the human sciences to be that of providing an understanding of the organisational structures and dynamic forces of human and historical life'. Here, 'Dilthey's aim was to expand Kant's primarily nature-oriented *Critique of Pure Reason* into a *Critique of Historical Reason* that can also do justice to the social and cultural dimensions of human experience'. The influence of such thinking is plain in Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Ernst Cassirer, Han-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur.

Of all these latter, Gadamer has been, for me, the most important, at least methodologically. Thus when looking at the development of worldviews as a 'value learning trajectory', Arniika Kuusisto and I (Kuusisto & Gearon, 2017) make considerable usage of Gadamer's (2004) distinction between the regulatory laws characteristic of the natural sciences and the messier assemblage of knowledge in the human sciences: '… the specific problem that the human sciences present to thought is that one has not rightly grasped their nature if one measures them by the yardstick of a progressive knowledge of regularity' (Gadamer, 2004: 4). Here, for Gadamer, the 'sociohistorical world' shares the same physical environment, the physical world of the natural sciences, but its methodological approach and interpretive frames are of necessity different, forwarding an ideal 'to understand the phenomenon itself in its unique and historical concreteness' (Gadamer, 2004, 4). Gadamer's *Truth and Method* is important, too, here in elaborating how for such reasons the social sciences bear as much if not more resemblance in approach to aesthetics than to the natural sciences. In imitating more closely than ever the scientific method of the latter, it is arguable that most modern social scientists do not hold to Gadamer's view at all, favouring the ever-closer imitation of the social to the natural sciences (Pring, 2015). In religious

education terms, pedagogically, it is always the messy sociohistorical world which is the focus, and as often—as per Gadamer—in terms of arts and humanities, the rough edges of aesthetics. I have often found this dual tension interesting—and in the final chapter of the *MasterClass* I show how in the classroom religious education remains dominated by the humanities and yet in research terms by the social sciences which closely responds to no doubt laudable political policy agendas (Berglund et al., 2016; Davis & Miroshnikova, 2017). The worldviews approach in its epistemological orientation is similarly so placed, firmly rooted in a philosophy and the humanities, though touched, as we shall see, by numerous other social sciences disciplines, particularly psychology.

The academic literature specific to worldview in historical-philosophical analysis is often abstruse and there are involved scholarly discussions about the differences between, for instance, Kant's *Weltanschauung* and Humboldt's *Weltansicht*; the former more conceptual, ideological, philosophical, and the latter being defined more geo-spatially as a linguistic entity of cultural identity shared by national communities of native speakers. These refined discussions could be informed by a reminder of Wittgenstein's notion that there is no such thing as a private language, that language in all its conceptual and grammatical complexity, is defined by community. These thoughts are preliminary and worthy of further extended analysis but for the moment we need to return to the specifics of how the discipline closest to religious education—religious studies—is following in many instances precisely the same worldviews trajectory.

In thus showing how important all of this is—conceptually, methodologically and theoretically—for religious education, one critical element in all of this are the increasing applications of the notion of worldview to the study of religion itself. Taliaferro (2019) shows how this inclusion of worldview marks a new inclusiveness in the philosophy of religion: 'Philosophy of religion also includes the investigation and assessment of worldviews (such as secular naturalism) that are alternatives to religious worldviews.' Evidence of this worldview shift, of similar relevance, is demonstrated by Droogers and van Harskamp's (2020) edited collection, *From Religious Studies to Worldview Studies.* Itself part of an importantly innovative series, *Methods for the Study of Religious Change*, the editors fashion an approach which no longer sees pertinence in using 'Christianity as its measure, still frames the world through the model of five world religions, still largely avoids analysis of key issues around power, poverty, violence, pollution, science, and social conflict, and still looks to highlight differences rather than commonalities' (Droogers & van Harskamp, 2020). *Methods for the Study of Religious Change*, by contrast, 'aims to redefine the study of religion as the study of worldviews, of ideas which are active in shaping the world', arguing 'that the study of religion should focus on people's worldview-making capacities and should contribute to the critical analysis of global problems and the promotion of cultural and spiritual respect across religions' (Droogers & van Harskamp, 2020).

In sum, as per Mascolo's (2014) definition of 'worldview': 'A worldview consists of a comprehensive set of philosophical presuppositions, beliefs, and values about the nature of physical and social world.' Here,

> A worldview consists of a generic set of presuppositions and about the fundamental nature of the physical and social world. At its most basic level, a worldview serves as a kind of *organizing structure*. The concept of worldview is founded on the epistemological principle that observation of the physical and social world is a *mediated* rather than *direct* process. From this view, understanding does not occur by fixing the spotlight of attention onto a pre-structured reality. Instead, observation proceeds as the active process of interpreting and organizing the world in terms of some sort of already existing system or conceptual framework. Without such existing frameworks, observation is simply unintelligible (Mascolo, 2014).

Such inclusivity is mirrored in the contemporary interface of psychology and the study of religion. Taves (2019) 'Psychology, Meaning Making and the Study of Worldviews: Beyond Religion and Non-Religion' aims to 'get beyond the solely negative identities signalled by atheism and agnosticism' by conceptualising 'an object of study that includes religions and non-religions'. They 'advocate a shift from "religions" to "worldviews" and define worldviews in terms of the human ability to ask and reflect on "big questions" (… e.g., what exists? how should we live?)'. Here, from a 'worldview' perspective, 'atheism, agnosticism, and theism are competing claims about one feature of reality and can be combined with various answers to the BQs [Big Questions] to generate a wide range of worldviews'. The intention of the authors is here to 'lay a foundation for the multidisciplinary study of worldviews that includes psychology and other sciences' grounded in human beings' 'evolved world-making capacities'.

Taves (2019) naturalistic premises are self-evident in their argument that 'the language of enacted and articulated worldviews (for humans) and worldmaking and ways of life (for humans and other animals) is appropriate at the level of persons or organisms and the language of sense making, schemas, and meaning frameworks is appropriate at the cognitive level (for humans and other animals)'. With all the marking of what has come to be called a 'posthuman' philosophy (here, just as the Enlightenment shifted worldview from God to humanity, posthumanism oriented human beings as one element of the natural world): 'Viewing the meaning making processes that enable humans to generate worldviews from an evolutionary perspective allows us to raise new questions for psychology with particular relevance for the study of nonreligious worldviews' (Taves 2019). All this, as they write, 'presupposes a critical realist ontology, which embeds constructivism within a naturalistic perspective, and enables a variety of accounts of why things are the way they are that can be grounded (at least distally) in evolutionary theory (Taves 2019). Taves' (2019) 'From religious studies to worldview studies' elaborates these matters further for the study of religion to re-define the latter as a form of 'goal directed action', one 'defined in terms of big questions, in order to offer an even-handed basis for comparing religious and nonreligious worldviews' (Taves 2019). Perhaps ironically, this move cannot be attained without some form of epistemological power shift, one which relegates religion to a subservient position in the pantheon of worldviews, in disciplinary terms a shift which 'locates Religious Studies as a subset of Worldview Studies'.

With partial acknowledgement of these terms and approaches—but characteristic of policy necessity, without reference to the nuance of such epistemological

developments—in the UK the Final Report of the Commission on Religious Education, *Religion and Worldviews: the way forward. A national plan for RE* offers a 'national entitlement' which 'reflects a new and inclusive vision for the subject, fully embracing the diversity and richness of religious and non-religious worldviews'. The Commission's evidence-base of three thousand submissions and consultations with 'a wide-range of concerned parties including pupils, teachers, lecturers, advisers, parents and faith and belief communities', defines 'worldview' precisely as 'a translation of the German *Weltanschauung*, which literally means a view of the world':

> A worldview is a person's way of understanding, experiencing and responding to the world. It can be described as a philosophy of life or an approach to life. This includes how a person understands the nature of reality and their own place in the world. A person's worldview is likely to influence and be influenced by their beliefs, values, behaviours, experiences, identities and commitments. We use the term 'institutional worldview' to describe organised worldviews shared among particular groups and sometimes embedded in institutions. These include what we describe as religions as well as non-religious worldviews such as Humanism, Secularism or Atheism. We use the term 'personal worldview' for an individual's own way of understanding and living in the world, which may or may not draw from one, or many, institutional worldviews. (CoRE, 2018).

Educationally, the Commission authors suggest, it 'is one of the core tasks of education to enable each pupil to understand, reflect on and develop their own personal worldview'. The dynamic interaction of cultural, social and political factors is 'a whole-school responsibility' of which 'the explicit, academic study of worldviews is an essential part':

> Through understanding how worldviews are formed and expressed at both individual and communal levels, the ways in which they have changed over time, and their influence on the actions of individuals, groups and institutions, young people come to a more refined understanding of their own worldview – whatever this happens to be – as well as those of others (CoRE, 2018).

Such an approach is interdisciplinary—as with studies such as Taves et al.—where

> Studying religious and non-religious worldviews gives young people the opportunity to develop the knowledge, understanding and motivation they need to engage with important aspects of human experience including the religious, spiritual, cultural and moral. It provides an insight into the sciences, the arts, literature, history and contemporary local and global social and political issues (CoRE, 2018).

The necessity for such a report and its findings and recommendation are explicately reference in a seeming shift in religious and secular demographics amongst young people:

> Non-religious worldviews have also become increasingly salient in Britain and Western Europe. According to the most recent British Social Attitudes survey, over 50% of adults identify as not belonging to a religion, with 41% identifying as Christian. The proportion of adults identifying as not belonging to a religion has increased from 31% in 1983 and has remained fairly stable around 50% since 2009. While some of these individuals may identify with non-religious worldviews such as Humanism, many have looser patterns of identification or do not identify with any institutional worldviews (CoRE, 2018).

In an even more recent, and further supporting development, a new Theos report, *Worldviews in Religious Education* (Cooling et al., 2020) support the Commission's conclusions as 'a way of reinvigorating the subject by reframing it with a focus on "worldviews"', acknowledging, however, that this 'proposed paradigm shift generated considerable debate and has not yet been adopted by the government'. Cooling et al. (2020) thus argue that a 'world religions' approach to Religious Education 'is no longer fit for purpose', framing the case as one of focus, 'a different way of framing how that content is introduced' to students. As Theos present in an executive summary:

> They argue that the exploration of both 'organised' worldviews, such as Christianity, Islam and Humanism, and also 'personal' worldviews, the beliefs and hidden assumptions which shape how each individual sees the world, should be at the heart of the subject going forward. RE should focus on pupils' understanding their own worldview through their study of the worldviews of others (Cooling et al., 2020).

All of this, to my reading, represents another iteration of a decades-long, self-perpetuating cycle of self-doubt in religious education. It is often interspersed with periods of confidence, as indeed a decade ago seemed evident from the latter's lead author for another publication with THEOS, Trevor Cooling's (2009) *Doing God in Education*. It was the same year that Micklethwait and Wooldridge (2009) had argued, *God is Back: How the Global Revival of Faith is Changing the World*. My own retort was more sceptical, suggesting that God may be back but if so were back in the terms of a narrow, secularist agenda framed within a specific 'spectrum of value' by specific liberal political definition (Gearon, 2012). The premise that 'God is back'—like the unintentionally blasphemous *Doing God in Education*; theologically, God is not the instrument of anyone—is itself a belated secularist notion that religious traditions cannot be so confined by political agendas.

It is one which began with the most laudable of aims in the 1970s to include world religions themselves in a Christian dominated religious education. I was privileged enough to have been at Lancaster in the early 1980s in the days following such developments, taught by the man who instigated most of its philosophical groundwork through a then new phenomenology of religion, Professor Ninian Smart. I also began my teacher training in the very year in which the 1988 Education Reform Act instigated the legislative inclusion of the 'other principal religions represented in Britain'. Christianity, in the UK at least, still does hold legislative primacy, but on paper only, for the practice of state religious education in schools holds to an equality of outlook in approaching the major world traditions, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, as well as Christianity. While Ninian Smart's approach was itself open to the possibilities of including secular worldviews—his and mine was the era then of the Cold War and the United Nations in 1979 had already initiated moves designed to respect the rights of religion or belief to reflect the secularism of China and Russia's state communist systems, and their official stance of atheism (Amor, 2001)—this 'worldviews' watershed represents a further step in inclusivity, or rather making it pedagogically and in policy terms more explicit.

14.4 Conclusion

Religious education will continue in the paths it has now taken for several decades, intensifying its political goals along with a plethora of other ethical, moral and social ends, taught to classrooms in which for many children and young people religion has seemingly little relevance, and yet in existential reality the significance of religion, or the importance of religion in education, itself has not diminished in the least (Burleigh, 2006, 2007; Casanova, 1994; Davis et al., 2005; De Vries & Sullivan, 2006; Scott & Cavanaugh, 2004). This chapter has shown this watershed as an epistemological and linguistic shift—from a subject defined by the study of religious traditions to a more inclusive approach (one which incorporates religious and secular outlooks), or 'worldviews'—which has its roots in a religiously sceptical secular a etiology. This epistemological-philosophical trajectory, with its modern beginnings in the Eighteenth-century Enlightenment as well as the revolutions of that period, is rooted in an outplaying of a centuries-long, specific historical-political struggle which has now made itself manifest in contemporary state religious education. It does, I think, at least provisionally, still have about it the feel of a totalising move, simply by its attempts at a universal inclusivity, and these based on a spectrum of human rights values which are themselves far from universally accepted by the religious traditions themselves. Whether we define this, as I had done previously, as a liberal autocracy, is of little import, but one might wisely be aware of the political underpinnings and risks of such a seemingly innocent epistemological shift.

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Part IV
Spirituality, Prayer, and Affective Learning

Chapter 15
Prayer in Schools: In Search of a New Paradigm

Julian Stern and Eli Kohn

Abstract Prayer and schools have an uncomfortable history together. Prayer is therefore a useful 'test' of various aspects of schooling. Empirical research on prayer in schools is used here to develop a new paradigm—a new way of understanding prayer in school, in terms of particular theories of spirituality, and a new way of understanding schooling, in terms of prayer and spirituality. The paradigm that we present reflects the views of young people studied in various recent research projects, and it also reflects well-established religious and philosophical positions. It proposes a model of 'mundane' spirituality inspired by the work of various Jewish and Christian scholars, notably Kook, Buber, Macmurray and Hay. This is exemplified by research on young people in Israel and the UK. Implications of this work for schools are described, noting the value of uncertainty and the as yet unknown, the plural, the open. The chapter does not reject education—or religion—as a search for 'truth': it recognises that truth is still emergent, and that there is room for the mysterious, the ineffable.

> Such certainty is beautiful, but uncertainty is more beautiful still.
> (Szymborska, 1998, p 244).

15.1 Introduction

Prayer and schools have an uncomfortable history together. In the USA, prayer in school is seen as constitutionally problematic (Nord, 1995, p 114–116), notwithstanding the religiosity of the population and the perceived need for a better understanding of and engagement with spiritual and religious issues (Prothero, 2007;

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Purpel & McLaurin, 2004). In India and Sweden, boundaries between the religious and secular are drawn in quite different ways, with prayer and other religious practices treated in contrasting ways in two nominally 'secular' states (Niemi, 2018). In the UK, all community schools—not just those of a religious character—have been required since 1944 to start every day with an act of collective worship (Armstrong, 1948). And in Israel, prayer is central to the practice of religious schools, but the school system as a whole reflects a challenging relationship between religious practice and 'secularity' (Künkler & Lerner, 2016). Prayer is therefore a useful 'test' of various aspects of schooling.[1] Empirical research on prayer in schools has led us, as authors, towards developing a new paradigm—a new way of understanding prayer in school, in terms of particular theories of spirituality, and a new way of understanding schooling, in terms of prayer and spirituality. Following research in the UK, Hong Kong and Israel (Kohn, 2018, 2019; Stern, 2009; Stern & Kohn, 2019a; Stern & Shillitoe, 2018), we wish to commend the mundane in schooling, without giving up on spirituality, and we wish to commend the unknown, uncertainty and pluralism in schooling, without giving up on truth (including religious truth).

The paradigm that we present not only reflects the views of some of the young people studied in various recent research projects, but also reflects well-established religious and philosophical positions. In this chapter, we will focus initially on the philosophical positions, whilst referring as appropriate to other publications with a more empirical bias. There are four sections to this chapter. Starting with an account of overlapping theories of what we wish to call 'mundane spirituality', we go on to explore how this is related to empirical research on prayer. In the third section, an account is given of the possible implications of such work for prayer in school—both the practice of prayer, and education about prayer. Finally, in the conclusion, the wider implications are explored—implications for religion and education, religious education and education as a whole.

15.2 Some Mundane Spirituality: Kook, Buber, Macmurray and Hay

Prayer suffers from a number of easy stereotypes, when it comes to children and young people (hereinafter 'young people'). One stereotype is of young people only concerning themselves with everyday matters (such as illnesses or broken friendships) and especially with requests for material possessions—such as a new bike. The second stereotype is of a more 'heavenly' or 'spiritual' approach to prayer, the religiously conventional prayer that is generally restricted to praise of God and requests for good or noble things (as represented by prayer books from many religious traditions, such as Groner et al., 1993, Ibrahim, 2010, Rock, 2003, St John, 2004, and

[1] We do not attempt to define 'prayer' in this chapter, theologically or sociologically, and in the reports of empirical research we accept the contextual uses of the word 'prayer' used in the UK and Israeli schools, respectively.

Scindia, 2009). Typical attitudes to both the inappropriately 'non-spiritual' mundane prayers for new bikes and the religiously approved divinely spiritual prayer such as those praising God/gods,[2] both make the same distinction between the mundane and the spiritual. However, there is a risk that by rejecting the spiritual significance of the mundane, and associating it with selfish materialism, will miss out on an important—it seems to us, increasingly important—mundane aspect of spirituality.

Here, we explore the importance of the mundane in young people's prayer, bringing *together* the 'worldly' and the 'divine' rather than seeing them as in opposition. Young people's prayer should take account of what might be called 'mundane spirituality', as in Wong's account:

> [T]o me spirituality is the capability of and the disposition to transcendence and raised awareness, including relational consciousness (and human qualities and their manifestations associated with transcendence and raised awareness), with these terms being understood both in their mundane and profound senses. (Wong, 2006, p 76.)

Wong focuses on 'mundane' spirituality as he is concerned with addressing 'most people' and 'not just … a few spiritual geniuses' (Wong, 2006, p 76). We are going further, and exploring what young people's views of prayer tell us about the spiritual significance of the mundane itself, with 'mundane' implying both 'worldly' and 'everyday'. This exploration draws on spiritual traditions that find spirituality in or through, not beyond, the mundane and material world, making use of the writings of four twentieth-century philosophers from different religious and cultural traditions.

The first scholar we are presenting on the mundane is a somewhat counter-intuitive choice. Kook was a rabbinic scholar, philosopher, Kabbalist and the first Chief Rabbi of Palestine, who had a distinct understanding of what spirituality means. His was a view that seems to stress transcendence and direct understanding (and fear) of God. In his view, 'the holy marks life's ultimate purpose' (Kook, 1981, p 13), and the spiritual is 'the Universal radiance that transcends nature' (Kook, 1981, p 13). In an airborne metaphor, he says this: '[w]hen we soar on high as on eagles' wings in the spiritual world, our soul stirs us to speak and to think about the most universal themes' (Kook, 1988, p 160). However, he continues, saying that in such flight, 'all things are joined in a more comprehensive whole, different worlds are united' and '[t]he holy and the mundane stand facing each other' so that '[t]he mundane is filled with joy and delight, and it rejoices to serve as an aid to the holy … [being] filled with its majesty, and … adorned with its splendor' (Kook, 1988, p 160–161). Kook also notes how spirituality should not involve a rejection of the physical world, in a political-religious move against those who would reject worldly involvement. 'Every philosophy which renounces the perfection of the physical world and the proper order of society, and floats in the spiritual realm alone, priding itself only in the perfection of souls and their success', he says, 'is based on a falsehood that has no link with reality' (Kook, 1988, p 195–196).

[2] 'God/gods' might be best used throughout the chapter, but we use 'God' for convenience, recognising that the majority of participants in the research were Christian or Jewish. To make more general points, we also use 'sacred or divine', and this was used, in particular, in reports on the UK-based research.

Communion with God, the goal of much religious mysticism, is often expected to imply the negation of the finite as a precondition of man's union with the infinite. However, Kook emphasises that rather than confining oneself to the transcendental, man is called to worship God with all the natural forces granted to him. 'At times', he says, 'the holy spirit does its work quietly within the body and soul' as '[i]t links all the concerns hidden in them with all the higher realms beyond them' (Kook, 1988, p 155). In his view the holy and the mundane are indisseverable: 'The holy and the mundane jointly inspire and enrich the spirit of man, by the specific contribution of each: the holy illumines life's inner essence, while the mundane provides the instruments and outer dimension' (Kook, 1981, p 67). Spirituality is the act of bridging the chasm by elevating the totality of the mundane to the holy. Lamm (1995) uses the term 'harmonism' to describe Kook's thoughts regarding spirituality. Whilst Rosenzweig, he says, viewed the world as dissonant and fragmented (albeit contingently so), Kook saw it as a whole: '[t]he highest heavens and the bowels of the earth form one unit, one world, one existence' (Kook, 1981, p 144). 'It is not difficult', Lamm says, 'to hear the echoes of this teaching of Kook in Buber's famous statement that there is no holy and mundane, only the holy and not-yet-holy' (Lamm, 1995, p 168). Indeed, Kook is seen as being in the tradition of Hasidism in 'blurring … distinctions between the sacred and the profane' (Lamm, 1995, p 168).

Bergman (1991) describes how Kook's understanding of spirituality impacts the purpose of prayer. In Kook's writings, prayer has the important aim of consolidating nature by fusing the sanctified with the natural world. Most religious thinkers generally regard a person as a creature completely distinct from his creator. Kook's concept of prayer is quite different since, for him, there is no abyss between the creator and the created. He writes, echoing something of the philosophy of Spinoza (2000):

> The gulf between God and the world is solely a factor of man's knowledge, his perception and the way that he lives. As knowledge advances, mankind and the world come nearer to the divine. In man's most exalted condition and in his most perfect insight, he finds that everything is contained in God. (Kook, Orot hakodesh 8:1, quoted in Bergman, 1991, p 69.)

Since everything is within God, one can say that prayer is also within God. In a profound sense, prayer can be thought of as God's discourse with himself. Thus, Kook declares that everything prays: prayer is a universal phenomenon. The rose, opening its delicate petals to greet the dew or rays of the sun, prays.

> Prayer is the ideal of all worlds. All of existence longs for the source of its life. Each plant and bush, each grain of sand and clod of earth, everything in which life is revealed, everything in which life is hidden, all of the smaller works of creation and all of the larger ones, the skies above and the holy angels, all the minute detail in all of existence as well as its totality, *everything* yearns, strives, pines and longs for the perfection of the high source living, holy, pure and mighty. (Kook, Orot hakodesh 8:1, quoted in Bergman, 1991, p. 70.)

In such ways, Kook bridges the mundane and the spiritual, the profane and the sacred. His approach is also connected to that of the philosopher Buber, in the Jewish tradition, and to those such as Macmurray and Hay, in the Christian tradition. For Buber, 'to learn more precisely what spirit is … [i]t must … be sought out where it is still a *happening* … [f]or the spirit in its original reality is not something that is

but something that happens' (Buber, 2002, p 229). The 'happening' of the spirit, in Buber as in Kook, bridges.

> Spirit is not in the *I*, but between *I* and *Thou*. It is not like the blood that circulates in you, but like the air in which you breathe. Man lives in the spirit, if he is able to respond to his *Thou*. He is able to, if he enters into relation with his whole being. Only in virtue of his power to enter into relation is he able to live in the spirit. (Buber, 1958, p 57–58.)

This relational sense of spirituality, bridging people (in the example given), is described by Friedman as held in common by writers such as Marcel, Camus, Jaspers and Rosenzweig, writers who, like Buber, see 'dialogue, communication, and the I-Thou relationship not as a *dimension* of the self but as the existential and ontological reality in which the self comes into being and through which it fulfils and authenticates itself' (Friedman, in his introduction to Buber, 2002, p xv). Dialogue between people is central to Buber's idea of humanity and spirituality, but the sense of dialogue goes well beyond the human. He writes, albeit briefly, about the relationship of a person to a tree (Buber, 1958, p 19–20), and to a horse (Buber, 2002, p 27), in a sense that suggests these are edging towards the dialogic. And he talks of people's relationship with God as being the end-point of all dialogue. *I and Thou* starts with a quotation from Goethe:

> *So, waiting, I have won from you the end: God's presence in each element.*
> (Buber, 1958, p vii.)

Smith, in his introduction, says that the main concern for Buber is 'how may I understand my experience of a relation with God?' (Smith, in Buber, 1958, p 4) and not with 'the now familiar categories of *I-Thou* and *I-It*', as the latter are 'pointers' to God (Smith, in Buber, 1958, p 5). So all the 'mundane' relationships in the world are also (or can also be) sacred, for Buber. Buber's approach is echoed in the philosophy of Macmurray, with Buber himself saying of them, 'I see no difference between us … [i]t is simply that you are the metaphysician and I am the poet' (quoted in Costello, 2002, p 322). Macmurray, like Kook and Buber, blurred or bridged the mundane and the spiritual.

> My early religion had built a wall between the spiritual life and the material life; between this material world and another spiritual world. It is that wall that has been razed to the ground. Now I think there is only one world, and that religion is about this actual world we live in; and about the common experience that we all have in it. I have come to think that a purely spiritual experience is just an imaginary experience; and that a purely material world would be a dead mechanism in which there could be no human beings and no human experience. (Macmurray, 1945, p 31.)

He rejects materialists, who, he says, 'seem to me to have left the wall standing', whilst he describes the world as 'no longer a mere material world, or a mere world of Nature; it is a personal world' (Macmurray, 1945, p 31–32). The personal for Macmurray (as for Buber's dialogue) points towards God, as '[i]n its full development, the idea of a universal personal Other is the idea of God' (Macmurray, 1991, p 164). Interpersonal relationships between people point to, and in turn are therefore possible because of God. 'Man' [*sic*], he says, 'must return to God freely of his own

will, because only in this way can a real community of men arise' (Macmurray, 1995, p 77).

> Through the love of men and women our individual selves reach out to fellowship with the whole infinite otherness of the world which is not us, yet in which we live and move and have our being. If this fellowship is to be possible—and its possibility is the condition of our own reality—then the infinity that stands over against us must needs be a personal God. For God is the postulate of our own being; and our self-realization is the realization of God. (Macmurray, 2004, p 162.)

Self, relationships (amongst people) and God are linked here—are linked, indeed, to all of the world. The sort of religious idealism rejected by Kook and Buber is likewise rejected by Macmurray, who says idealism refers to '*another* world, a spiritual world with which we can have occasional communion' which 'is excellent Platonism' but 'is not Christian at all' (Macmurray, 1995, p 59). He goes on to say that he has 'grave doubts, indeed, whether idealism, in any form, is compatible with religion' as '[r]eligion is concerned in its reality with two things—with action and with community' whilst '[i]dealism seeks to escape from action into meditation; and from the tensions of life in common into the solitariness of one's own spirit' (Macmurray, 1995, p 59). The 'purely spiritual' is the 'purely imaginary, a ghost world without substance or shadow' (Macmurray, 1995, p 59). The material and the mundane more generally are of one world with the sacred and divine—not merged in a vague pantheism, but in action, in active relationships amongst and between, bridging or linking the apparently separate.

Within education contexts, attempts to promote spirituality and spiritual development have taken many forms. Within the UK, in which 'spiritual development' has been established as required in all state-funded schools since the 1944 Education Act,[3] the influence of forms of relational spirituality has been significant, in particular due to the work of Hay. Hay himself has linked his views to those of Macmurray. 'What has been disclosed from a disciplined and prolonged immersion in children's conversation is the notion of "relational consciousness" as the most fundamental feature of their spirituality' (Hay, 1998, p 10), and his views 'were converging on an understanding of the nature of spirituality and hence religion that seemed remarkably close to [Macmurray's] vision' (Hay, 1998, p 11). Hay's view of spirituality is also explicitly linked to those of Buber and Levinas, so, for example, '[u]sing the language of Emmanuel Levinas, the privatising of spiritual awareness makes it easier to lose touch with the "face" of the other and hence of the sense of unconditional obligation' (Hay, 2006, p 231). He describes awareness of the hear-and-now, awareness of mystery and awareness of value, and he 'summarised the concept that linked all the units of meaning as *relational consciousness*' which involves 'the experience of being in relationship—with other people, with the environment and with God, and in an important sense, in touch with oneself' (Hay, 2007, p 13–14; see also Mason, 2015).

Linking Kook, Buber, Macmurray and Hay, this chapter does not attempt to describe them as agreeing on all matters spiritual. Far from it. Hay distinguishes

[3] http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/7-8/31/contents/enacted.

spirituality and religion, in a way that would be rejected by Kook, certainly, and probably by Buber and Macmurray too. And two of the writers were writing out of Jewish traditions, and two out of Christian traditions—although all but Kook had somewhat troubled relationships with their respective traditions. We do, however, wish to note some similar features of all four accounts: we should not 'build walls' (in Macmurray's phrase) between spiritual and material worlds, but should recognise possibilities to bring them into relationship (in Hay's terms) through forms of dialogue (in Buber's terms) and in doing so we may be able to experience the holy through communion with God (in Kook's phrase). This is why we have suggested—in our introduction—the possibility that children and young people (and adults) are not choosing between the material and the spiritual but may—for example through prayer—experience a kind of 'mundane spirituality' (Wong, 2006, p 76).

15.3 How is Mundane Spirituality Expressed in Prayer in School?

During 2017–2019, we had the opportunity to research the prayer experience of young people in two different geographical, cultural and political contexts. One was in Jewish religious high schools for boys in Israel and the other in a prayer spaces project in English schools with heterogeneous populations of both religious and non-religious young people. Participants were interviewed in both contexts. Notwithstanding the contrasting school and national contexts, we believe that the young people themselves described in their own ways what we have described in the previous section as forms of mundane spirituality. We heard the desire of young people to find spiritual routes that bridge the divide between the sacred and the mundane. Or rather, express their understanding that there is, in fact, no such division. Our intention here is not to share the research findings in full (with these examples taken from fuller accounts in Stern & Shillitoe, 2018, 2019b, Kohn, 2018, 2019, and Stern & Kohn, 2019a), but to give some examples of how mundane spirituality, as discussed in the previous section, is expressed in the words of young people in these schools.

In Israel, Steinsaltz (1996) suggests that schools do a good job of teaching prayer literacy but do not do enough in developing the spiritual world of young people, leading to a dissonance between the formal act of prayer and the spiritual world of the young person. This idea was evident in the discussions with young people in Israeli research (Kohn, 2019; Stern & Kohn, 2019a), involving 20 young people between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. These young people describe prayers in school as the opportunity for a spiritual experience in which they strive to connect to God.

> In most prayer services I don't feel close to God—I feel it was hardly worth it but occasionally it does it for me—and that is awesome.

Prayer may however seem to use the ‘wrong words’ and be directed at an ‘unknown’ being:

> I really have difficulty praying to God. To whom am I actually praying? Who is this invisible being I am talking to? … I am saying words I don’t connect with to a Being I don’t connect to.

And words may in any case not be enough.

> I remember the time we prayed together on the top of a mountain during a school trip. It was amazing. We all got up early to see the sunrise, climbed together to the top of the mountain and prayed—I felt close to God, perhaps the first time in my life. I wish we could do these trips more often. I know I can’t pray like that in school every day but a few times a year in a different environment would be great.

The mundane physicality of a mountain, with its awe-inspiring views and at special times, seemed to enable the young person to reach the ‘high places’ in his search for God in prayer. Another talked about the positive relationship with a religious studies teacher, in his search for a deeper connection to God through reflection and interpersonal engagement.

> For the first time I feel I am being listened too, my teacher is trying to understand where I am coming from, what questions I have both in understanding the text and about God and most importantly he is not forcing me to do anything … I have some time for myself … that for me means everything.

These thoughts are similar to those of this young person:

> I need time to reflect and think about myself, about what sort of person I can be. My teachers understand that I need my space—that is great

The mundane not only involves the world (a physical world) but human relationships—with sensitive others, and with oneself.

Such a conclusion links explicitly to the second piece of research exploring spiritual development experienced in ‘prayer spaces’ in the UK (Stern & Kohn, 2019a; Stern & Shillitoe, 2018, 2019b). These were projects set up in more than 30 countries with the support of the *Prayer Spaces in Schools* organisation. Prayer spaces were temporary events set up, typically, in a school classroom, with activities often led by young people, intended to ‘enable children and young people, of all faiths and none, to explore … life questions, spirituality and faith in a safe, creative and interactive way’ (https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/). There is ‘a range of creative activities that encourage personal reflection on issues such as forgiveness, injustice, thankfulness, big questions, identity and stillness’, and the prayer spaces are ‘run by a trained team of local Christians from a church or an organisation as a service to the school’ (Togwell, 2018). Activities include ‘prayer walls’, ‘thankful play dough’, ‘fizzy forgiveness’, ‘forgiveness stones’, ‘letting go’, ‘name that feeling’, ‘mirrors’, and ‘cardboard home’ (from the ‘top ten’ prayer activities, at https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/topten). These and similar activities have been used in different ways in schools, over many years, and exemplify the history of ‘experiential’ work (and therefore typically ‘mundane’ work, in our sense) in both religious education

(as in Hammond et al., 1990) and spiritual development (as in West-Burnham & Huws Jones, 2007).

The research set out to evaluate the contribution of the activities to the spiritual development of young people, based the 'relational' spirituality of Hay on 'relational consciousness' (Hay, 2007, p 14, and Hay & Nye, 2006) and to the advice given by some UK-based curriculum and inspection bodies such as the work on young people's 'relationships with one another, with the natural world, and with God' (QCA 2004, p 14) along with '[a]n awareness of oneself' and '[r]ecognising and valuing the worth of each individual' (SCAA 1995, p 3–4). The working definition of spiritual development was therefore that spiritual development helped to enhance relationships with the self, with other people, with the world (in constituent parts or as a whole), and, as appropriate, with the sacred and divine (Stern, 2009, p 1–21). A questionnaire was responded to by 555 young people aged 7–16 in 24 schools, and there were interviews with 71 young people (Stern & Shillitoe, 2018). Similar numbers of young people described themselves as (variously) religious or non-religious, and they were distributed across similar numbers of community schools and schools of religious character.

Examples of self-reflective experiences include this young person who explains the very idea of relationships with the self, in a way echoing Arendt's description of solitude as 'that human situation in which I keep myself company' (Arendt, 1978, p 185):

> I think it's like a conversation that you're having with yourself because it sort of saying one thing in one half of your mind and you're saying it again in your other half which I quite like

When asked what they thought about and with whom they had conversations in the prayer spaces, 46% of young people referred to themselves—more than to any other category (i.e., other people, 'the world', or the sacred and divine).

> I can't remember what it was called but [one activity] had lots of mirrors in, and it was asking us questions about ourselves and what we thought of ourselves. … I think that helped a lot of people, and it helped me because … it made you think of the good things about you. … A lot of the time you think about what's bad about you and what's good about other people, but it helped you think about what is good about yourself.

The second biggest category of responses referred to relationships with other people—35% of all responses. Young people described thinking about 'My Aunt who previously died', 'my grandad who has long gone in 2015' or 'missing my mum's uncle because he is dead'. They also talked about living people and their relationships with them: 'forgiving lucy for always falling out with her', 'I thought about my parents and how I've let them down sometimes', 'Dear mum I just want to say sorry because I said I hate you' and 'I thought about my Nan who has Alzheimer's and … those who don't have as much as me and my brothers and sisters'.

Less often mentioned, but still significant, were mentions of relationships with 'the world' (in part or as a whole), apparent in 8% of all responses, and the sacred and divine, mentioned in 6% of responses. The world was comprehensively addressed by one respondent:

> I was wondering about saving the world. saving animals and dog, cat.[4]

Animals and pets (alive as well as dead) also emerged as the most significant of the 'world' themes in the research on prayer spaces.

> My mum my dad my whole family and of course my friends and cat!! I love my cat

In the study of religion and spirituality, the study of materiality has gained an established place (Meyer et al., 2011). Young people often reflected on the material dimensions of prayer spaces, such as food used in activities—mentioned by a number of young people ('I thought how delicious the bread was'). Objects such as beads and stones were also highlighted as what made prayer spaces good for them:

> I liked the stone activity because I wanted to keep my thoughts and that way I was able to keep them.

> The beeds were a good stress reliver and the sand helped me think.

Interestingly, there was no mention of manufactured 'possessions'—phones, computers, money, clothes—it was all *personal* or *natural*. Hay and Nye (2006) also observed an appreciation for the 'natural' material world with their participants. A number of young people also reflected on 'the world' more broadly:

> I had a conversation in my head with myself thinking about what I can do in the world. I asked myself: What can I do to help my community and the whole of the world? My response was endless some small things, some big things, some religious, some not and some of them I realised that I do any way for example: give money to the homeless, sponsor people for runs or charity events and even as small as picking up mine and other peoples litter.

Mentions of the sacred or divine, God or gods, were reasonably common but certainly did not dominate either the questionnaire responses or the interviews, and represented a significantly smaller category of responses than had been expected—a small minority of responses even of those self-identifying as religious. Only 1% mentioned the sacred or divine as 'the best thing' about the prayer spaces. Stringer, in his work on prayer in contemporary society, observed how his participants spoke to the 'non-empirical other'—at times God, and at other times, a deceased relative or other being. Stringer found that the communication style of such prayers was often informal, intimate and conversational, so he wants to move away from analyses of prayer that suggest 'that intimacy inevitably leads to immanence, or that transcendence implies intensity' (Stringer, 2015, p 79). That might be thought to be in contrast to the experience described above of the Israeli young person for whom (rather rare) connection with God was described as 'awesome'. Young people in the prayer spaces research seemed to describe prayer as both mundane (in either or both the material and everyday senses) *and* transcendent in character. Responses involving the sacred or divine typically reflected an 'everyday', informal, relationship with God. One described the best thing about prayer spaces:

[4] Written responses are transcribed as written, rather than corrected.

> Mine would probably be like it's there every year probably, … you write down a question that you would ask God if He could actually answer back to you … Why did you pick some people instead of the trillions of others that could have been placed onto earth? And like—what was the creation of jellyfish for, because they do nothing … What's the meaning of life so a question you would ask God if you could really ask Him and He could answer you.

Another said 'it's just like you and God are just like you can relax and you can then just go out feeling more relaxed about things'. One reflected on how the prayer space encouraged a different way to communicate with God.

> It's like you don't you're not necessarily putting your hands together and praying normally you find different ways to show that you are talking to God a bit like more active ways of doing it, so it's not necessarily just sitting in your room all night and praying before you go to bed, it's basically if you need it in schools it's there for you.

A small number also mentioned how engaging in prayer spaces has changed their practises or beliefs, noting they may attend church more, pray more or confirm their faith.

> I have changed by going to church more and by praying every night before I go to bed.

> I have started to think about god.

> I now think about other people's feelings, I believe in god, Jesus.

> I've got on better with my sister, not argued so much and really feel like I understand the bible a bit better

In summary, the young people in these schools—a mixture of schools with and without a religious foundation—relatively rarely described what might be thought of as the stereotype of prayerful activities, and yet were positive about their experiences and described in various ways what might appropriately be called 'spiritual development'. Prayer spaces stimulated activities that were predominantly mundane in their focus on self-understanding and relationships with (living and dead) friends and relatives, with a smaller but important group of responses referring to nature in general, and animals in particular, along with responses mentioning positively other material aspects of their practices. It is not possible, from this evidence, to describe in detail the extent to which such mundane thoughts were understood as routes to the divine or sacred, but there is a sense of a 'sacrilising' or 'enchanting' of the mundane, something that conventional 'collective worship' activities in the UK seem to have failed to do (Pirrie, 2005, although Cheetham, 2000 is more positive about the spiritual potential of UK-based 'collective worship'). The evidence is significant of an experience of mundane spirituality being recognised by young people in these UK schools, through engagement with relatively informal and voluntary, mostly self-directed, activities of various kinds.

15.4 Implications for Prayer in School

What are the implications[5] of all this for those concerned with prayer in school? Notwithstanding the geographical, cultural and religious differences in contexts, we believe that our research findings can contribute to a new paradigm for meaningful consideration of prayer in school, and for the relationship between religion and schooling (and education as a whole) more broadly.

Whilst Israeli religious schools tend to focus on the concept of prayer as a 'high-flying experience', many young people are struggling to find this spiritual route meaningful or accessible. They find praying using a fixed text, much of which was written thousands of years ago, spiritually unsatisfying and irrelevant to their own experiences. Teachers approaching young people with established 'certainties' has a great value, but, as Szymborska says, 'certainty is beautiful,/but uncertainty is more beautiful still' (quoted in the heading of this chapter), as 'the book of events/is always open halfway through' (Szymborska, 1998, p 244–245). A more dialogic approach to prayer would—in Buber's view—be characterised by surprise, as all true 'lessons' should be characterised by surprise. He says that 'a real lesson' is 'neither a routine repetition nor a lesson whose findings the teacher knows before he starts', as it is 'one which develops in mutual surprises' (Buber, 2002, p 241; see also Stern, 2013). How can the act of prayer become a meaningful experience for these Israeli young people? We found that they try to provide meaning in 'mundane' ways, through dialogue and reflective relationships (with themselves, with peers and with teachers), and through physical mundane objects that would help them in their spiritual quest. Those participating in the UK prayer spaces shared similar experiences to those engaging in prayer in Israel. What was common to all was an understanding of what we, inspired by Wong (2006), have referred to as mundane spirituality: finding the spiritual in and through the earthly and everyday world of objects, nature, people and relationships—including exploring 'mundane' relationships with the sacred or divine.

What is particularly interesting is the character of the developing relationships, whether in Israel or the UK. Some of the Israeli young people, from a Jewish religious orthodox background, talked about prayer within the framework of a dialogue with God, but it is a dialogue of an 'everyday', mundane, kind. The UK young people participating in prayer spaces described a wider range of relationships, including with the world of animals and nature. But both groups emphasise relationships, and even the relationship with the divine is described in mundane terms—to talk to God as a friend, to be in dialogue with Him. This dialogical nature of prayer is reminiscent of Buber, for whom 'the spirit in its original reality is not something that is but something that happens' (Buber, 2002, p 229, quoted in full above).

There are several implications of this theorising and the evidence from the empirical research that could be helpful to educators. Firstly, it seems that allowing or encouraging young people to move away at times from the fixed liturgy and assist them to focus on themselves as reflective individuals may be a helpful exercise

[5] Some of these implications have already been reported in Stern and Kohn 2019.

in transforming prayer into a more spiritual experience. In the Israeli context, this was expressed in part through frustration at 'regular' prayers, whilst in the UK, contrasts were made between the more informal prayer spaces and more formal 'collective worship' (Stern & Shillitoe, 2018, 2019a). Secondly, utilising the physical world around the young person is a powerful form of the spiritual. Kook, as we have discussed, declares that everything prays: prayer is a universal phenomenon. Convening prayer services in a venue in which the young people can marvel at the mysteries of nature and reflect, as Kook did, how each plant and bush, each grain of sand and clod of the earth has a Godly core, could be a spiritual experience that would make the services more meaningful for them. Mountain-top prayer was suggested in Israel, whilst the physical organisation of the prayer spaces in the UK was commented on positively by many.

Thirdly, encouraging and fostering the possibility of such 'ordinary' or 'mundane' relationships, amongst young people and between young people and their teachers, can be a catalyst for more meaningful prayer within any school environment. Giving young people greater agency, when it comes to prayer, seems to have been important to Israeli and UK respondents alike. The choice for schools, it seems, is not between the mundane and the spiritual, but between a passive, isolated, unconnected unspiritual experience of young people (even whilst praying) and an active, relational and therefore variously transcendent spiritual experience (perhaps through prayer). The mundane may itself be the means by which spirituality is experienced.

And fourthly, allowing or encouraging young people to be able to talk to their God, to be in a state of dialogue and relationship with Him, can be another avenue for making more meaningful spiritual experiences. The development of the relationship is not only from human to divine. We have seen how connecting to the sacred or divine can also be experienced as active—as interactive—by a number of respondents, describing what might be called a spiritual quest both in relation to what is described as God but also in relation to other people. Encouraging and fostering the possibility of such relationships, amongst young people and between young people and their teachers, can be a catalyst for more meaningful prayer services within the Israeli religious school system and the UK school system. Giving young people greater agency, when it comes to prayer, seems to have been important to Israeli and UK respondents alike.

15.5 Conclusion: Implications for Religion and Education

In summary, in this chapter we have tried to show how the spiritual philosophies of Macmurray and Hay (finding spirit through relationships), Buber (exploring the spiritual through dialogue) and Kook (raising the mundane to commune with God) can be the philosophic basis of a new paradigm for how prayer in schools could be made a more meaningful experience for their young people. This, we have demonstrated, is variously reflected in our research on the prayer experiences of Israeli and UK young people. It is no simple matter, and will be different for different young people and

schools around the world. But our choice of empirical data—from the religious to the non-religious, from schools with and without a religious character—is intended to 'hammock' the argument. We are raising the importance of the mundane in school *because of*, not as a *contrast to*, our concern for spiritual development. It is hoped that this presentation of 'mundane spirituality' can offer a way forward for all those seeking a new paradigm in the planning and effective implementation of meaningful engagement with prayer in school.

Beyond prayer, there are implications for schools and religion, and education, more broadly. For all the value in certainty, in knowledge and pre-determined syllabuses and the passing on of religious and broader cultural and scientific heritage, there is an additional value in the uncertain and as yet unknown, the plural, the open. We are not rejecting education—or religion—as a vital and legitimate search for 'truth': we are recognising that truth is still emergent, that there is room for the as yet unknown, the mysterious, the ineffable. Through our work on prayer in school, we are affirming this importance. In plural societies (are there any non-plural societies?), even those people who are committed 'insiders' to a particular religious or philosophical tradition, by commending genuinely dialogic and open relationships amongst people and between people and 'the world' and the sacred and divine, we are leaving open the possibility of uncertainty and of the continuing search for the truth not yet discovered. If schooling were to be entirely dependent on the passing on of established knowledge, it would not—in Buber's terms—be filled with real lessons, but merely instruction. As the educational writer Durka says, amongst all the wonderful, vital, knowledge to be passed on, we must also encourage the 'learned uncertainty of teachers' (Durka, 2002, p 1). This is an important lesson for prayer in schools, for religious education, for religion and education, and for education as a whole.

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Chapter 16
The Holocaust as a Source for Religious Education and Reflection Among Adolescents in Israel

Zehavit Gross

Abstract The purpose of this study is to examine how students attending a religious Zionist girls' high school in Israel decipher and interpret—in religious terms—the Holocaust, an event that constitutes a Jewish national trauma. The study will focus on how an examination of aspects of the Holocaust as a Jewish historical event, which constitutes a reality-changing event, can form a basis of religious education. The study will propose to examine the issue through the implementation and use of an innovative six-stage structured pedagogical technique called a reflective culture of Holocaust remembrance (RCoHR), which shall be analyzed below. We will begin by explaining the theoretical background of the topic, then describe the research process and findings and conclude with an analysis of the pedagogical implications of the method for religious education and how Holocaust education could constitute a reflective means of enrichment for religious education.

16.1 The Role of Remembrance in Jewish Tradition

The Torah (Five Books of Moses) views memory as a religious duty: "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them to thy sons, and thy sons' sons" (Deuteronomy 4: 9). This abstract commandment is translated into actions and ceremonies within the Jewish faith tradition, because the Jewish sages understood that abstract memory was liable to be forgotten. For memory to be preserved, those who intent on preserving it must feel as though they themselves had undergone that experience. Shaping the national memory is intended to influence the creation of a specific action or consciousness (Gross, 2014).

The two major historical Jewish memories incorporated into Jewish education and traditions are the exodus and the destruction of the Temples. For example, on the Passover holiday, the sages chose a family meal as the framework for imparting

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historical memory. The ceremonies associated with the meal allow for an experiential re-enactment of the exodus from Egypt, the foundational narrative of the Jewish people. Served at that meal is unleavened bread—the *Matzah*—symbolizing freedom and the escape from the tyranny of the Pharoah, Ramses II, while bitter herbs are eaten to recall that we were slaves in the land of Egypt. The head of the family is obligated to tell his children the story of the exodus, which is presented as a significant historical event with moral and religious implications. The story of the exodus portrays the transformation of an oppressed and enslaved people into a free people who chose the G-d of the Jewish People. Without memory, freedom loses its meaning (Gross, 2016).

While the Torah and the Book of Lamentations, read on Tisha B'Av, the fast day commemorating the destruction of the two Temples, provide religious texts that can be cited in order to analyze and deal with the memory of the exodus and the destruction of the Temples, there are no official religious texts to memorialize the Holocaust. Moreover, one of the greatest problems is the inconceivability of its enormity and the difficulty of finding words to articulate this memory and build a religious understanding of how such destruction of the Jewish people could occur.

16.2 The Relationship Between Holocaust Memory and Religious Education

The Holocaust is considered one of the main issues that causes people to think about God. The principal question posed in religious literature about the Holocaust, which is asked by religious and non-religious Jews, is "Where was God during the Holocaust?". Ephraim Meir (2006) argues that theology changed after the Holocaust. He maintains that "In the wake of the Holocaust, we must fundamentally renew our thinking. The old way of thinking about the range of basic assumptions is no longer helpful" (p. 13). Other theologians contend that after the Holocaust it is not possible to hold theistic beliefs, but only naturalistic interpretations. Belief in divine omnipotence has been replaced by belief in God's impossibility.

One approach to understanding the theological basis of the Holocaust is that it was a punishment from God. Ultra-Orthodox Rabbis argue that the Jews were punished due to the emergence of Reform Judaism and the processes of secularization and assimilation, particularly in Germany. In contrast, ultra-Orthodox Rabbi Teichtal (1999), in his book *Em HaBanim Semeicha* (A Joyous Mother of Children), argued that the Holocaust was a punishment for the Jews for opposing the Zionist movement and not immigrating to the Land of Israel. Many Jews strongly oppose this explanation, because of the six million who perished, one and a half were innocent children, who did not deserve such a punishment.

A different theological interpretation was that of Rabbi Soloveitchik (2006) who perceived the Holocaust as *Hester Panim* (hiding of the divine face), that is, we do not know how to explain the absence of God in certain periods of history such

as the Holocaust, but the establishment of the State of Israel immediately after the Holocaust, he argued, is undoubtedly proof of the existence of God. In contrast, the theologian Rabbi Berkovits (2004) argues that God does not intervene in history since he created man with the freedom of choice. Hence, the destruction of European Jewry was a result of man's evil inclinations, and not of God's doing.

The secular response perceives the Holocaust as the death of God as argued by Richard Rubinstein (1966). In his book, *After Auschwitz*, he posits that after the Holocaust, Judaism should be autonomous in nature, with the eradication of the heteronomous dimension "without heaven and without God." The obvious conclusion from this perception is the disengagement from God and religion as a logical response to the absence of God in the Holocaust.

A recent and even more radical addition to this approach was expressed by the young author Yishai Mevorach (who is religious) in his book *Theology of Absence* (2016). This work presents a theological tractate of a hopeless post-Holocaust world based on an analysis of postmodern theology. In contrast to Franz Rosenzweig's book, *The Star of Redemption*, in which postmodern nihilism leads to hope, in Yishai Mevorach's analysis, nihilism leads to the abyss of oblivion, despair and nonexistence. It is worth noting that Mevorach does not offer religious operative suggestions stemming from the crisis approach that leads to utter despair. Instead, he leaves the practical side up to each individual.

The question is how can a teacher utilize these different theological explanations in the classroom? In response to this question, I would like to suggest a new concept entitled "Reflective Culture of Holocaust Remembrance (RCoHR)", which can assist students to understand the complexity of dealing with the difficult aspects of teaching the Holocaust from a religious perspective. This could be a new stage of reconstruction, following the four stages of development discussed in the next section.

16.3 Stages of the Development of Holocaust Memory and Holocaust Education in the Educational System in Israel

Gross (2010) analyzes four stages in the periodization of the development of the scholarship of Holocaust education and Holocaust memory in Israel, marking a transition from ontology to epistemology. The four stages are public silencing (1943–1961); public acknowledgement (1961–1980); knowledge construction (1980–2000); and knowledge deconstruction (2000-present). From the beginning, Holocaust education in Israel grappled with both ontological and epistemological approaches.

16.3.1 The Ontological Level

Stage 1: Public Silencing, 1943–1961. The Jewish community in Palestine, and later the Israeli public, initially ignored the Holocaust, either by suppressing or repressing its memory. Two modes of denial can be found: (1) actual silence, the suppression because of an inability of the survivors as well as the public to discuss anything concerning this issue, and (2) a selective attitude, the repression, that referred only to the heroic aspects of the Holocaust when the Jews resisted Nazi tyranny, such as the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April 1943. In the general public discourse during this period, European Jewry was portrayed as "sheep going to the slaughter", and this was seen as a sign of shame. Therefore, survivors quickly learnt not to speak about their Holocaust experiences.

Stage 2: Public acknowledgement, 1961–1980. Public acknowledgement and recognition that the Holocaust actually happened and that it had a tragic and humiliating facet began during the Eichmann trial in 1961. When the first testimonies were heard, people began to acknowledge the information and a new trend emerged: people wanted to hear the testimonies of the survivors. The Eichmann trial of 1961 was the first in a series of events that raised the need to include the study of the Holocaust in high school history books in Israel by the late 1970s.

16.3.2 The Epistemological Level

Stage 3: Construction, 1980–2000. In 1980, the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) amended the State Education Law to include as one of its goals "awareness of the memory of the Holocaust and the heroes." In addition, the Ministry of Education decided that the high school matriculation examination in history would include the topic of the Holocaust (Segev, 2000). In the two decades after 1980, Holocaust education became a separate, compulsory subject. In this period, the importance of recording survivor stories for educational purposes emerged as well as school visits to the Holocaust memorial sites in Poland began.

Stage 4: Deconstruction, 2000-present. In the late 1990s, in what is known as post-Zionist criticism, some scholars began to condemn what they saw as the cynical political use of the Holocaust by the Zionist movement, which viewed the Holocaust as justifying the expulsion of the Arabs from Palestine (Segev, 2000; Zertal, 2002). They also argued that the pre-state Jewish community had not done enough to rescue the Jews from the concentration camps. Following this public criticism and enhancement of the post-Zionist discourse, a new history textbook, published in 1999, which belittled the place of the Holocaust, Zionism and the State of Israel, aroused a strong public debate and was the subject of a discussion in the Knesset. The textbook was rejected "because it didn't draw the appropriate historical lessons from the Holocaust" (Porat, 2004, p. 619). The public criticism also led to the development of

"alternative" memorial ceremonies that related to other persecuted minorities in the Holocaust (such as the Roma) and other genocides. This also led to criticism of a civic nature about the discrimination against minorities in Israel with a concentration on the lessons one should draw from the Holocaust. These scholars criticized the institutional commemoration ceremonies that emphasized the symbols of the Holocaust and its historical context (the Nazi and Fascist regimes), instead of concentrating on the meaning of atrocity and hatred, and what such movements might lead to.

16.3.3 Transitions and Shifts: From Ontology to Epistemology

The general transition, however, was from the national to the personal, from the particularistic to the universalistic and from the solely "Jewish" aspect to the more civic, Israeli point of view. The ontological level concentrated mainly on the past, while the epistemological dealt with the present and the future. The constructive stage concentrated mainly on the particularistic Jewish present while the deconstructive stage concentrated on universal civic messages and connotations for the future.

In its treatment of the Holocaust, each group in Israeli society can reflect on the dilemmas and values of its own subculture (Gross, 2011). Beyond the conceptual-heuristic value of the ontological-epistemological periodization, this periodization has educational value (Gross, 2015). It enables us to trace the linear process of knowledge development that created Holocaust consciousness and a culture of remembrance. Moreover, this typology may reflect the stages of awareness of a national trauma, which deserves further elaboration. Due to a generational change, today we encounter the fourth generation in countries all over the world. This new generation will have to grapple with Holocaust education and Holocaust remembrance at a time when the first generation of survivors is no longer alive. This will entail the need to construct a new fifth stage to the suggested periodization—reconstruction, which will take into account the needs and aspirations of students and teachers concerning the cultivation of a Culture of Remembrance of the Holocaust in relation to the current existential situation in many countries throughout the world (Gross, 2018).

On the macro level, the emergence of these four stages can also be traced in relation to Holocaust education in other settings. In Europe, and indeed in other parts of the world, there was also public denial, followed by acknowledgement, then the epistemological levels of construction of basic knowledge, followed by critical deconstruction (Gross & Stevick, 2015). While the study of the Holocaust within the disciplines of History and Civic Education in Israel has developed a more epistemological approach, the field of religious education has failed to do so. Religious educators do not know how to cope with the difficult ethical and spiritual dilemmas as raised in the discussion of the theological responses above.

16.3.4 The Implementation of the Typology in Religious Education

The periodization discussed above can be implemented in religious education. If memory is the center of the Jewish religion and religious education) Gross, 2014), then we should construct a Holocaust curriculum that brings the student from the ontological to the epistemological level, from the experiential level that analyzes religious experiences through the senses to a more abstract constructive and deconstructive approach.

16.4 The Reflective Culture of Holocaust Remembrance (RCoHR) as a Major Challenge for Religious Education

Enhancing the Reflective Culture of Holocaust Remembrance (RCoHR), which needs to be embedded in moral and spiritual values, is a major challenge for religious education (Gross, 2012). The notion of a Reflective Culture of Holocaust Remembrance is inspired by the UN definition of a culture of peace (Gross, 2008). The United Nations defined a culture of peace as "a set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes in order to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations" (United Nations General Assembly, 1998). A RCoHR is a hermeneutic process that involves continual adaptation, criticism and reflection. Kluckhohn (1951) argues that "culture consists of patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts, the essential core of culture consists of traditional (that is historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values" (p. 86). Hosfstede (1991) enlarged the scope of this definition to adapt it to different settings and contexts. Hence, culture is perceived in his terminology as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (p. 5). This conception implies that culture is a multi-layered entity that is contextually bound.

To develop a RCoHR, a society must actively strive for positive values, and promote knowledge, attitudes and skills conducive to mutual understanding and to an active commitment to a cooperative and caring democratic society. The RCoHR requires vitality and the capacity to revive essential, generative elements of culture that have been lost in moments of destruction, bringing the members of the group to convene and renew their interest in, and adherence to, the central themes of their communal identity. Thus, a major goal of a vital culture of remembrance is not just to focus on the past but rather to provide a vision for the present and the future. This kind of culture has the potential to reinforce, extend and further the aims of anti-racist education.

Regarding the Holocaust, culture of remembrance means that victims, perpetrators and the entire world need to continue to remember what happened because of the magnitude of the atrocities. This remembrance has different facets and consists of contesting memories in the Focauldian tradition (Foucault, 1972). Thus, the extent to which remembrance becomes visible stems from discourses of power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980) in which social agents and educators in particular must participate. Human beings are obliged to remember both the brutal aggression of Nazi actions and the attempt of Jews to sanctify life even in abnormal and horrendous situations. Thus, though the subject is a reflective culture of remembrance, we refer to cultures of remembrance. This (these) culture(s) can be manifested, interpreted and presented differently in different contexts, yet the responsibility and commitment to enhance remembrance are embraced so that the mistakes of the past will neither be forgotten nor repeated. The fact that there have been further genocides in different parts of the world, such as Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur since the Holocaust reinforces the importance of this point (Bauer, 2001). Though the issue of the Holocaust poses major religious questions, as was analyzed above, overcoming them while discussing its complications and paradox can enhance not just the memory but the culture to try to create a more humane society based on the essential moral and spiritual values that will reduce man's inhumanity to man.

The reflective process includes six distinct phases: Question—asking questions; 2. Explore—going more deeply into the responses; 3. Discovery—revealing deep dilemmas; 4. Debate; 5. Deliberation; and 6. Management (how to manage difficult knowledge). This six-phase process of deliberation and reflection involves multi-faceted thinking and dealing with complexity in the context of the mediation of difficult knowledge for students and teachers.

Currently, there is a general question of what steps should be taken to ensure the enhancement of Holocaust Remembrance for the fourth and fifth generations in Israel and across the globe. The hypothesis of this research project is that this new approach of Reflective Culture of Remembrance (RCoR), which is based on critical, multicultural, universal and human rights perspectives, can help to meet this new challenge.

16.5 Methodology

This study was conducted among 24 eleventh graders at a religious girls' high school in Israel. All the students live in central Israel, and all were born in Israel, as were their parents. Some of the girls have a Sephardic/Mizrachi family background (36%), some have a mixed background (Ashkenazi and Sephardic/Mizrachi 31%) and the rest have a European Ashkenazi background (33%).

The students were presented with a poem written by Michael, an eleventh grader, following a visit to concentration camps in Poland, and were asked to express their opinion of the poem and how they feel about it. Here is the poem:

When I Walk through the Ghettos

When I walk through the ghettos
I'm appalled by all the sights
How can I forget
And I won't let it rest
How can I forget the children?
Whose parents were taken when they were young?
I beseech you, King of Kings
Avenge the blood of all the Jews
And bring us soon to Redemption
Hear, O Israel! Adonai is our God! Adonai is One
And the Lord shall be king over all the earth;
In that day shall there be one Lord, and his name One.

It should be noted that the initiative to teach the class was mine. I asked a teacher who is a friend of mine if she would agree to let me teach a special Holocaust class to her students. I told her in advance that it was a challenging topic and approach, and she was actually pleased with the idea and the possibility that I would introduce her and the students to something new. She is a veteran teacher in the education system and is considered an excellent and committed teacher. She teaches civics and history and is also a homeroom teacher. She told me that this is a very advanced level class and that some of the girls enjoy intellectual challenges, and I realized that this was an opportunity to try the new RCoHR method that I am trying to structure in my study supported by the National Academy of Sciences.

The data was analyzed according to the constant comparative method (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1997). In the initial stage of analysis, recurring topics were identified, of which the principal ones were the tension between religion and Holocaust. Through axial coding, the following categories and concepts were identified: God, transcendence, faith, evil, choice and human being. The final stage involved creating a category-based theoretical structure linked with the theory and developing an empirically corroborated theoretical framework to understand how high school students understand the concept of religious belief vis-a-vis the concept of the Holocaust.

16.6 Findings

The analysis of the poem in class with the students was performed in two stages: the descriptive stage and the reflective stage. In the descriptive stage, the students were asked to describe what they see on the phone and how they interpret it as a work of art. In the second stage, a reflective analysis was performed using the reflective culture of remembrance method, which comprises 6 stages: Question-exploration-discovery-deliberation-debate-management.

16.6.1 The Descriptive Stage

Most of the students thought that it was a powerful poem incorporating fundamental questions that challenged their religious beliefs.

> "It's a powerful poem. A poem of faith. A poem that evokes thoughts."
>
> Most of the girls noted that following the journey to Poland, they undergo a religious transformation which is reflected in their extrinsic religious appearance:
>
> "Based on my experience, then there are girls attending a post high school religious program, and all of a sudden they wear their skirts longer. "Suddenly the whole religious thing becomes very significant."
>
> "The journey to Poland has a major impact from a religious standpoint. People suddenly change and become more observant. You realize that something significant happened to our people. This is not an ordinary event and it is thought-provoking"
>
> "Some people say after visiting Auschwitz, prayer also changes. Suddenly it becomes meaningful."

The Holocaust is perceived as one of the key events that led to the establishment of the State of Israel:

> "There is no doubt that when you're in Poland and you see so many graves it makes you think. There are many graves with the Star of David and you realize that the Jews needed their own state to protect them.

In general, many students identify with the words of the poem because they also see the story of the Holocaust as a story of faith.

> "This poem is a powerful poem because it expresses strong faith," one of the girls says. Someone else says:
>
> "It is clearly evident that the experience of visiting the camps in Poland gives the boy and his faith great meaning."

Another student says that the end of the poem, with the words "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one", shows that the boy who wrote the poem understands how God leads the world and accepts it.

Another student claims that "the great faith that the boy conveys in the poem gives him a kind of understanding of this difficult event called the Holocaust." One of the students claims that the poem expresses and echoes the key religious message on the subject of the Holocaust that the religious education system conveyed to its students: "We have been taught the story of the Holocaust as a story of religious faith."

But despite the almost general consensus in the classroom, some of the girls are critical of the religious issue.

16.6.2 The Second Stage: The Reflective Stage

I asked the students if they had any questions that worried or disturbed them. One of the girls says: "If they (the teachers) taught me this story as a story of faith about how I was saved, how it happened that I was saved—then okay—it's possible. On the other hand, you would have to explain to me why my whole family wasn't saved." The student looks at the teacher in order to see what her reaction was. This approach appears to be different, and challenges the prevailing narrative at the school and in the classroom, and she does not receive an answer or any encouragement from the teacher. Another girl continues to make things difficult and claims:

> "If six million Jews were murdered then it's not really a story of faith. There are a lot of issues. It's not like... Wow, God, the Lord was with us all the time in the Holocaust. No. Actually, He wasn't. Six million Jews were actually murdered, so I don't immediately think that that there was a huge rescue there... That this was the story of a rescue ... Because that's not really what happened there."

At this moment the teacher becomes stressed and intervenes in the discussion. The teacher approaches me and whispers to me: "You can't leave it like this. They must be told something educational, so that they will emerge from this session with something educational that includes a clear religious message of faith and resilience".

Since the teacher is my friend, I ask her to allow me to conduct the discussion and I decide to systematically apply the concept and technique of reflective culture of remembrance:

> "Now," I addressed the students after we have analyzed the poem in general. I ask the students to ask the questions that arise after reading the poem and that they feel are relevant to the discussion. At first, there is silence in the classroom. And then one student says, "I'm not sure it's permitted to ask all the questions. A believer does not ask, he tries to grapple with the question himself, out of his faith." Most of the students nod their heads in agreement and the classroom falls silent again. Another student answers them: "there is no way everything is open to questions."

Another student breaks the silence and asks: "What are you trying to say, that God was in the Holocaust?" At this moment, the students recognize the fact that there is actually a question here. "Yes," another student nods her head and says: "There really is a question here. A big question." Another says: "Yes, it also says so also in the poem," and she quotes: "How can I forget And I won't let it rest".

In other words, the situation does not let the boy who wrote rest—he is in a state of discomfort and restlessness. At first, he hesitates and in the end he arrives at a decisive position and solves the problem by saying: "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." As soon as he places God as king over his religious faith, he solves the problem. Despite this answer, I repeat the question, address the students and ask whether they want to discuss this question, i.e., the question of whether God was or was not in the Holocaust.

I ask the students for their opinion. At this point, the exploration stage begins one student says, "God was not in the Holocaust otherwise it would not have happened."

I ask the students, “Does the fact that the Holocaust was a difficult and bad reality indicate that God was not present?”.

The girls deliberate: One student claims that “God is present at events, good and bad.” Another student claims that “This guy in the poem sees God in the Holocaust—that’s strange.” Another claims that the boy who wrote the poem is naive and adds, “It’s a naive poem.”

At this point, the teacher becomes stressed and asks to intervene in the session. The teacher says to the students: “Even though it seems to you that God wasn’t there—he was, but in hiding.” This is a new revelation and a new religious belief that the girls aren’t really familiar with.

At this point, the deliberation stage begins. One student asks the teacher to explain the meaning of in hiding: One student answers her with the famous song by singer Yaakov Shwekey, And Even in Hiding.

The students begin to hum the song—some of them begin to move their bodies and dance to the melody. The teacher feels slightly embarrassed and asks the girls to behave nicely in honor of the guest…. I actually think that this is an excellent opportunity to take a relaxing break from the spiritual and intellectual tension that was created in the classroom.

Another student objects, disagrees with the teacher’s claim and tells her: “Hiding means hiding God’s presence but not hiding His providence or hiding His leadership” Some of the students in the class agree and some disagree.

The debate stage begins. Another student says: “I do not feel that the Holocaust contradicts the existence of God—he was there.” And another student says: “I do not think He was there because how is it possible that so many children were murdered there. He was not there.”

The teacher seems to be getting stressed and I want to train her and the class in the reflective approach. The teacher approaches me and whispers that she is not sure that all the girls are psychologically and intellectually mature enough for such a process, but I decide to proceed with the session and continue to implement the method.

The students in the class are divided. Some of them argue, as one of the girls says that “the hiding approach is actually an intermediate position that could explain to a religious believer what actually happened there,” while other students are unable to understand the reality of hiding and are adamant that God was not in the Holocaust. The majority of the class is passive in this specific discussion and does not adopt a position but merely nods to the first or second position, and only when I address them directly do most of them optf for the first position (He was there but in hiding), while the minority opts for the second position (He was not there). One of the girls challenges the discussion and takes it forward, saying that “there was no reality of no God, but He is not present in certain situations where human beings have to make a decision and manage reality out of their own free will.” “Human beings, that is, the Nazis in the Holocaust, made a decision to be evil, and God is not part of that decision and that reality.” This is certainly another approach to the discussion, but it is evident that the issue is too much and too heavy for the girls and they are distressed by it. Their distress is reflected in their facial expressions and nonverbal responses, some of them sigh and some of them lean on their desks, in what appears to me

to be a gesture of helplessness. I sense that this complex topic is causing the girls noticeable discomfort and that it is hard for them to grapple with it.

Here, we move on to the management stage, where I offer the teacher and the class alternative approaches to dealing with the issue from another new angle:

"It's possible," I tell the teacher that these are different spiritual stages in which people are in religious-spiritual crisis situations and not necessarily a situation that requires us to make a decision. It is not always possible to make a decision. It is possible that the question of discovering God within absolute darkness requires spiritual soul work that enables the believer to see God in hiding, while the other people who do not see and fail to discover God are in a different spiritual state that apparently does not enable them to see. These are different states of spirituality and faith."

One of the students asks, "In other words, there are those who are at a higher level of spirituality and those who are at a lower level." "No," I say, thinking to myself that I don't want to be judgmental but prefer to remain at the descriptive level of the analysis of the spiritual situation. Therefore, I tell the students that sometimes, and especially in times of crisis and spiritual crisis in particular, it is better to leave the analysis at the descriptive level and not analyze reality, even if it is dark, in judgmental terms of better or worse or more righteous or wicked.

One of the students joins my argument and says, "It never occurred to me that in crisis situations, the believer is given the possibility to discover or not to discover God in situations of darkness and ambiguity." To me, this is a very high-level answer.

The fact that in times of crisis the believer chooses to discover or not to discover God through spiritual soul work is a new discovery that the girls are trying to cope with conceptually, but the class session is over and we have to finish. If we had time, then at this of discovery we would begin a new cycle of reflective thinking of question, exploration, discovery, deliberation, debate and management.

The teacher told me with concern that she was not sure it was right to teach such a difficult lesson and raise those challenging questions. The students, however, came up to me and thanked me, with some shaking my hand in appreciation and asking when I would come again.

16.7 Discussion

The purpose of this article is to explore how religious girls attending a religious girls' high school interpret a poem written by a boy their age that focuses, inter alia, on the question of where God was in the Holocaust. However, it does so indirectly, attempting to circumvent the problem of religious faith and to provide a general cosmic answer that reorganizes a cosmic global experience that recognizes the existence of a higher being or force.

During the class session, four distinct phases of participation and cognition could be identified among the participants, which mirrored the four stages of development of Holocaust memory and remembrance (Gross, 2010): The first phase was silence,

followed by the phase of recognition that this is indeed a complex ontological and epistemological question. Then the next phase of construction, that is, seeking to interpret the poem began, followed by a discussion of the critical aspects of deconstruction. Then the students reached the final phase of reconstruction through the reflective process that took place in the classroom after struggling with the analysis of the poem. This included the six distinct stages: questioning, exploration, discovery, deliberation, debate and management.

Even though the students did not resolve the conflict that arose in the classroom, they learnt to manage it by the means of several open alternatives (Gross, 2022). These granted students with different beliefs the agency not to become passive even in the face of a crisis situation, equipping the students with resilience and spiritual tools for coping with the difficult knowledge due to conflicting opinions that they were exposed to in class. While the teacher displayed signs of stress and anxiety upon hearing the critical opinions, it seems that the six-step reflective clarification process provided the students with a profound spiritual experience. According to Elkins (1990), spirituality is perceived as a personal and experiential connection to the sacred or transcendental, and this process could be seen with the students who were deeply involved with the class discussion. In line with Antonowski (1979), aspects of a sense of coherence, significance, understandability and manageability can be identified in these students' statements.

While the discourse with the students is a "thick" and profound discourse, the discourse conveyed by the teacher represents the religious establishment's position and is a "thin" discourse. The reflective method undermines the students' basic perceptions and reopens everything for discussion. At the same time, it "flattens" the role of the teacher and places great responsibility on the shoulders of the students in managing the spiritual journey offered to them by means of the reflective technique. The discussion focuses on the human aspect and the way contemporary students grapple with fundamental existential questions of faith. The reflective process transforms the analysis from a literary analysis to a guided spiritual process (Gross, 2012; Gross & Rutland, 2021).

Through the multi-stage reflective analysis of the poem, the Holocaust ceases to be a political-historical event and becomes an event of contemporary religious and spiritual significance. The analysis of the poem turns the discourse into a spiritual discussion. Through the poem, the students express their spiritual-religious aspirations and try to better understand the reality and the connection between man and God. In effect, the concerns of the teacher who believed that the process would lead the students to abandon their religion were proved to be incorrect, and the students who dared to cope with this challenging knowledge through the reflective process achieved higher levels of faith that were creative and reflect agency and spiritual depth. The analysis that students offered in the reflective process focuses on their connection with the spiritual and the sublime. The experience that the girls went through in class reflects a search for the broader meaning of the existence of God (Gross, 2009). The reflective process allows for the recognition of the existence of a transcendental dimension that is eternal and infinite (Nielsen, 2018). The reflective

process creates dependence and reciprocity between God and the believer (Plater, 2017). This process makes it possible to simultaneously see the immanent dimension of God and the sublime transcendental dimension and the dialectic that is created between these two dimensions.

In effect, according to the formulation of Homi Bhabha (Rutherford, 1990), the reflective process creates a "third space" of religious faith and spirituality that simultaneously contains the immanent, the transcendental, the dimension of "here and now" and the historical "there." The transitions between the time perspectives of the "here" and "there" and the dimensions of the immanent and the transcendental give students a sense of relief about how to cope with the "difficult knowledge" to which they are exposed in the reflective process. This sense of relief also gives them spiritual satisfaction and resilience. The reflective process allows for a spiritual search for life's "big questions" (Russo-Netzer & Mayseless, 2017), and turns the questions into milestones in the students' personal journey of faith toward a more profound religious consciousness.

Among those girls who went through a process of a critical nature (as opposed to the official perception of the teacher who represents the conservative school establishment), the reflective process gives a sense of thriving that affects the pro-social conduct of the girls, especially those who came up to me at the end of the process, thanked me and expressed their gratitude. The reflective process indicates strenuous inner work (Russo-Netzer, 2019) that enables spiritual growth and investment, and this process makes it possible to reveal the deepest dimensions in the personalities of the girls who experience it, enabling them to undergo a spiritual transformation. From a process perceived a priori by the teacher as threatening and not worth starting educationally and spiritually, the great joy of the girls who underwent this transformation as they touched on the deepest parts of their faith and overcame the crisis, even if they did not end up with a clear answer, demonstrated the value of this approach. The fact that at the end of the management stage it is possible to reach several alternatives and perhaps also the alternative that "we don't really have an answer and that's okay" gives students a sense of mental well-being in the spiritual process of searching for an answer in a world where the answers are complex and might never be fully understood. Bringing the reflective paradigm into the world of memory grants memory a new depth. It helps to transform what Pierre Nora (1984) calls "history" into a genuine, personal "memory" that simultaneously gives meaning to the past history and the contemporary existential existence of remembrance. In some respects, from a meaningless static memory it becomes a relevant memory that receives a contemporary legitimacy (Gross, 2015; Gross & Rutland, 2021), and this in turn cultivates it and adds educational meaning to the religious spiritual discourse. In this way, believers are not passive receptors who accept a finished and dictated faith from "somewhere." Instead, they shape their own belief and participate actively in the discussion of historical memory that connects them and becomes a contemporary and integral part of their existence and identity, providing them with meaning and a sense of belonging.

16.8 Summation

In this chapter, we have seen an example of the application of a new reflective educational concept in religious education comprising six structured stages that enable educators to cope with the complexity of the memory of the Holocaust with its difficult content knowledge. Coping with the memory of the Holocaust in the theological context challenges the believers' religious thinking and leads them to complex questions of faith that require the implementation of a different pedagogy of a complex reflective inductive nature. The reflective culture of remembrance approach is not only a technique for educational action of a critical reflective nature. It is also a pedagogical-theoretical concept that perceives the preoccupation with aspects of memory as an educational opportunity to challenge existing conventions while, at the same time, structuring them into a systematic educational process between student and teacher in order to restructure the student's spiritual world of beliefs and opinions. There are also dangers in this approach that are liable to lead the student to heretical reflections. Moreover, it is possible that some of the students may not be mature enough for this complex, intellectual process (Gross, 2010). However, there is no doubt that students who are able to delve into this complexity with difficult content and knowledge will go through a fascinating educational and religious journey that will enable them to make a new or different entry into the world of religious faith and spirituality (Russo-Netzer, 2019). Religious education in a postmodern world must challenge students' thinking in order for it to become relevant and topical and to enable the students to express their authentic doubts and deliberations (Pargament, 2013). In this way, the reflective approach will transform religion from a product of an anachronistic nature to a dynamic entity tailored to the needs of the postmodern world.

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Chapter 17
Religious Education for the Mexican Immigrant Community in Albuquerque: The Vital Role of Compassion

Richard Kitchen

Abstract In the United States, students of color and low-income students have historically been denied access to high-quality educational opportunities in public schools. As a result, I was moved to initiate and direct Escuela Luz del Mundo (ELM), a progressive Christian middle school that served a high poverty, Mexican immigrant community in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. ELM had a unique mission; to glorify God by providing a culturally relevant and affirming, college-preparatory education for the children of first-generation Mexican immigrants. In this chapter, the research literature is reviewed that illustrates the historic legacy in the United States of low-income students and students of color being denied access to high-quality educational opportunities. Qualitative research methodologies, both self-study and narrative inquiry, are used to demonstrate some of the distinguishing features that made ELM a unique school for the first-generation Mexican immigrants that it served. An extended discussion is provided about lessons learned at ELM, such as the vital role that compassion should play in making schools places where every student is valued.

Keywords Compassion · Mexican immigrant community · Progressive Christian education · Culturally relevant education

> Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.
>
> Mother Teresa (1910–1997).

This famous quote by Mother Teresa was posted on a wall outside of a teacher's classroom at Escuela Luz del Mundo (ELM) or "Light of the World School." At ELM, the school's mission statement was to provide "a rigorous, college-preparatory education for low-income children." On those days when I wondered whether we were offering our students such a great education, I found Mother Teresa's quote to be an encouragement. As anyone who has been involved in ministry knows, there

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are times when you wonder whether the ministry is making a difference in the lives of those whom you serve.

ELM was a Christian middle school[1] located in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA, that was designed to align with basic Christian doctrine as articulated in the Bible. The school had a unique mission, to glorify God by providing a culturally relevant and affirming, college-preparatory education for the children of first-generation Mexican immigrants. As it turned out, this mission was not only provocative, but utterly radical! ELM was not a "church school," it did not just serve students from one church and one specific denominational background. ELM served many students who were "un-churched" and whose families never attended church. ELM served the poor, not the wealthy, and the school was Christian *and* progressive. In this chapter, I employ the qualitative methodologies of both self-study and narrative inquiry to demonstrate some of the distinguishing features that made ELM a unique school for the first-generation Mexican immigrants that it served. An extended discussion is also provided about lessons learned at ELM, such as the vital role that compassion should play in making schools places where every student is valued. First, though, I provide further information about the school and some historical background.

17.1 Some Background on Escuela Luz del Mundo

ELM opened its doors on August 13, 2007, to 18 eager 6th graders in a renovated halfway house located on a corner infamous in Albuquerque for drug dealing and prostitution in the city's most economically, politically, and socially marginalized community. Many of the school's students had parents, siblings, and extended family members who were undocumented (i.e., did not possess the proper papers to be deemed as legal immigrants in the United States). For this reason, many of ELM's students and their families lived in constant fear of deportation. All of the students and their families lived in poverty. During the school's first year, they paid only $20/month to attend ELM. By the school's seventh and final year (the school closed in the fall of 2014 after seven years), families were asked to pay $60/month, but many could not afford this amount. While families struggled to afford ELM's tuition, no student was ever expelled from the school for not paying tuition. To be able to make payroll every month, approximately 85% of ELM's budget was devoted to paying teachers; the school was dependent on donations from churches, other Christian ministries such as East Central Ministries, and individuals. ELM also relied upon volunteers from churches and the University of New Mexico (UNM) to support its strong academic mission described below.

The school's teachers and I struggled at times to know how to respond to the unfathomable challenges faced by the first-generation immigrant students that we

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[1] When referring to "Christians," I am not referring to any particular denomination or particular ideology. In the United States, middle school consists of grades 6–8 (students are generally 12–14 years of age).

served at ELM. For instance, in the winter of ELM's second year, a student learned about her uncle's death in the Mexican border city of Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. He was most likely murdered, and it was quite possible that his death was part of the ongoing violence taking place at that time in Juárez among warring drug cartels. Despite these challenges, I was afforded many blessings in my role at ELM through the school's families and students. God speaks to us "through the needs, rights, dignity, cultures, gifts, and faith of crucified people" (Recinos, 2006, p. 63) such as the immigrant Latino/a populations in the United States.

When ELM was initiated, I served as the school's volunteer director. At the time, I was a tenured faculty member at UNM. As ELM's founder, and as a progressive *and* a Christian, I wanted the school to be a Christ-centered school that was open and affirming of differences. I did not want ELM to be a school where anyone was judged, stereotyped, or labeled because of their race, language, class, background, sexuality, or for anything, for that matter. As one example, I asked the teachers to abstain from teaching that homosexuality is a sin. No doubt, some of the school's teachers had strong beliefs that homosexuality is a sin. From the school's outset, it was important to me to communicate with parents, teachers, and students about the value I placed on ELM being a safe and inclusive place for students whatever their sexual orientation. I also wanted ELM's students to understand that as Christians we are called not to judge, but to love and embrace all.

I also wanted ELM to be a Christian school that was intimately involved in improving and supporting its community. For example, on one occasion the school's students partook with community activists in a silent march that interrupted a UNM Trustees meeting at which considerations were underway to privatize UNM's hospitals. At the time, UNM provided affordable medical care in the community and the students and their families were concerned that privatization would increase their medical costs while lowering the quality of care they would receive. Much to their delight, local media highlighted ELM's students' involvement in the march. Ultimately, UNM's hospitals were not privatized, and ELM students believed they played a role in this positive outcome being achieved.

At ELM's founding, a foundational premise was that the low-income, diverse students that the school would serve should have access to high-quality educational opportunities, just like their counterparts from middle-class and upper-middle-class communities. Inspired by a "highly effective schools" study that I led (Kitchen et al., 2007), I wanted the school to be a place where students would be challenged daily to learn, where they would learn how to learn, and a place where students would develop an appetite for more learning. To support these goals, school days and class periods were intentionally scheduled to be long to provide students the time needed to engage in a rigorous academic program. As a small school, ELM had small classes, which also allowed teachers with opportunities to provide individualized instruction. ELM was also a ministry in the International District,[2] a high-poverty community in

[2] Disparagingly referred to by some as the "War Zone," the community has been attracting new business, and crime is decreasing (http://www.bizjournals.com/albuquerque/stories/2009/03/30/focus1/html?page=all).

Albuquerque, where students could learn about Jesus Christ, develop a relationship with Jesus, and thrive in a safe environment.

The highly effective schools study documented the practices of nine, exemplary secondary-level schools across the United States that achieved at exceptionally high levels *and* served high percentages of low-income students (Kitchen et al., 2007). The three primary findings of the study that informed the creation of ELM included (1) High academic expectations at a school need to be backed with sustained support for academic excellence (e.g., through extensive one-on-one tutoring for students), (2) Challenging academic content should be offered in combination with high-level instruction, and (3) Developing strong relationships with the students we served, primarily first-generation, Mexican immigrants needed to be a priority. Inspired by the highly effective schools (Kitchen et al., 2007), the academic program developed at ELM was demanding and included few frills. The school offered a traditional liberal arts curriculum that focused on providing a rigorous academic program in the four subjects of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Physical Education was also offered twice/week and included a strong health education component. Both Spanish and Bible were offered once/week and supplemental instruction (i.e., tutoring) for students in mathematics or Language Arts was provided thrice/week. Attending these tutoring sessions was not an option; it was mandatory for all students. Extracurricular activities were offered once/week. Though we did not use Christian curricula at the school (i.e., texts that commonly include biblical messages throughout), teachers prayed with students in their classes and were encouraged to address issues from a Christian perspective. Christian values and principles were regularly discussed at ELM and, though imperfect, the school's faculty attempted to live and model these values and principles on a consistent basis. We worked to provide quality education to students who historically have not had access to one, while also providing guidance for spiritual growth and development in Jesus Christ.

From the beginning, carrying out ELM's mission was a daunting one, to provide educational opportunities that even schools located in relatively wealthy neighborhoods struggle to offer, with far fewer resources than those schools. The public schools in the neighborhood were among the lowest achieving in Albuquerque and the state, but they still had multi-million-dollar annual budgets, multi-purpose gymnasiums, cafeterias, support staff, and access to and support for educational technology. Nevertheless, ELM's students did learn at high levels for the duration of the school's short history. The primary evidence that we have for the academic success of the school is that so many of the students who attended the school had success in high school and college. This is no small feat in the International District. When the school began in 2007, less than 50% of the students from this neighborhood who initially matriculated in high school actually graduated. Undoubtedly, ELM's students benefitted from long school days, small classes, and the abundant individualized attention they received from their teachers.

In the remainder of this chapter, I look back and reminisce about ELM and some of the school's unique qualities. First, I reflect on the freedom we had at the school to teach, rather than to have to focus on preparing students for success on "the test." I will then return to another notable feature of ELM; the school was not a Christian

"bubble school" that withdrew from the world, rather we tried to engage in it. I continue by ruminating about the school's focus that went beyond simply attending to our students' educational needs. I will also discuss how we tried to meet students where they were, by spiritually attending to their immediate needs and concerns. I conclude by deliberating on a lesson learned at ELM about the vital role that compassion should play in making schools places where every student is valued. Lastly, "Mariella," one of ELM's original students, gets the final word.

17.2 The Legacy of Classism and Racism in U.S. Public Education

In the United States, there is a historic legacy in public education of low-income students and students of color[3] being denied access to high-quality educational opportunities (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Massey, 2009; Milner, 2013). The legacy of racism against Native Americans, African Americans, and Latinos/as, in particular, and classism in the country provide the backdrop for the impoverished educational system that we find today in urban and highly rural districts that primarily serve low-income and diverse students (Ferguson, 1998; Milner, 2013). The result is that low-income students and students of color have had fewer opportunities to be taught by qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Kitchen, 2003; Payne & Biddle, 1999). They also tend to attend schools that are not well-resourced. On standardized tests nationally, low-income students consistently score lower than their counterparts from more affluent communities (referred to as the "income gap"), and students of color score lower than white and Asian students (referred to as the "racial and/or ethnic achievement gap") (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2013; 2018).

The racial/ethnic and income achievement gaps have become taken-for-granted aspects of the educational landscape in the United States (Flores, 2008). Instead of accepting these achievement gaps as innate and immutable to change, they should be viewed as "opportunity gaps." Poverty is often cited as the root cause of opportunity gaps since poverty disproportionally affects racial and ethnic minorities in the United States (Ravitch, 2013). In 2013, the poverty rate was 14.5%, with 45.3 million people living in poverty in the United States (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2014). However, the poverty rate for ethnic and racial minorities in the United States in 2013 was much higher than the national poverty rate of 14.5; 27.2% of blacks and 23.5% of Latinos/as were poor, compared to 9.6% of non-Latino/a whites and 10.5% of Asians (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2014).

[3] "People of color" is a commonly used phrase in the United States that is synonymous with people who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups in the country such as Latinos/as, African Americans, and Native Americans.

In addition to poverty, student access to a challenging education is influenced by race, ethnicity, and English language proficiency (DiME, 2007; Kitchen & Berk, 2016; Martin, 2013; Milner, 2013). Rather than expecting much of students, something that is more common in suburban schools that primarily serve white, middle-class students, research has demonstrated that learning expectations tend to be reduced for students of color (DiME, 2007; Milner, 2013). For example, disproportionately high numbers of remedial classes in mathematics are often found in U.S. schools that enroll high number of African American students in which instruction is focused on rote-learning and strategies (Davis & Martin, 2008; Lattimore, 2005). Moreover, in schools that serve large numbers of immigrant Latino/a students who speak with an accent, use English words incorrectly or speak in Spanish as a means to express themselves, educators, peers, and community members may assume students lack the capacity to perform well (Moll & Ruiz, 2002; Moschkovich, 2007). Almost all of ELM's students spoke English as a second language.

To summarize, students from low-income backgrounds and students of color in the United States have historically lacked access to high-quality educational opportunities like their white, Asian, and middle- and upper-class counterparts have had, and these differences in opportunities are at the root of disparities in student achievement (Ravitch, 2013). Jonathan Kozol in his book, *Savage inequalities: Children in America's schools* (1991), provides a compelling and distressing portrait of public education in the inner city and in poor, rural areas of the United States. Kozol (1991) describes segregated, inferior-quality schools that are understaffed, lack basic resources, and are in bad physical condition in communities such as East St. Louis, Chicago, New York City, San Antonio, Camden, and Appalachia. His observations illuminate how historically students of color and low-income students have often attended bad and even dangerous schools in the United States, while affluent groups and the government have consistently found endless excuses for not addressing this situation (Kozol, 1991). Given the historic legacy of denying poor, disenfranchised students in the United States access to a quality education, I wanted Escuela Luz del Mundo (ELM) to be a school that provided students in the International District of Albuquerque with educational opportunities that may not have existed in the neighborhood's public schools. I now proceed by outlining the research methodology used for this study.

17.3 Research Methodology

For the remainder of the chapter, I provide an extended discussion about lessons learned at ELM, including the vital role that compassion should play in making schools places where every student is valued. The discussion is informed through a qualitative research approach referred to as self-study. LaBoskey (2004) delineates the five components of self-study as being focused on a particular problem or issue, improvement, interaction, qualitative methodologies, and validity delineated via trustworthiness. At ELM, there was a continual focus on developing, sustaining,

and improving the academic program at the school. The spiritual development of students was also paramount. In this research design, I use self-study to reflect upon my experiences as ELM's director and lead advocate for the school. In self-studies, researcher reflexivity plays a key role as the researcher (me) reflects on distinguishing features of ELM, what can be learned from the school's experiences, and the role of compassion to make schools places where students are valued (Kleinsasser, 2000).

As part of my self-study, I incorporated research methods associated with narrative inquiry (Hamilton et al., 2008). On several occasions, I draw on narratives that I constructed through journaling to examine underlying meanings expressed through these narratives (Riessman, 2007). I regularly engaged in journaling about what transpired at the school over its seven-year existence. Through much of my tenure at ELM, journaling specifically helped me to understand events that unfolded over the course of the school's history. In addition, I solicited narratives from the school's teachers, students, and supporters after the school closed. Though only a few of these narratives are included here, they were consistent with the themes generated by analyzing these narratives. The discussion below is informed by themes that emerged by analyzing my journal entries and the school's teacher, student, and supporter narratives using interpretive methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The journal entries and narratives were read or viewed as a whole, followed by a period of reflecting upon and clarifying interpretations made. An iterative process of reviewing, reflecting upon, and then clarifying my interpretations followed (Miles et al., 2013). This process went through multiple revisions as the journal entries as well as teacher, student, and school supporter narratives were repeatedly read and reviewed to check the consistency of findings. This process continued until consistency was achieved.

17.4 Lessons Learned at Escuela Luz del Mundo

17.4.1 Freed from Teaching to "the Test," Teachers Could Focus on Student Learning

President George W. Bush signed The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) into law in January 2002. A result of NCLB was increased testing and accountability in U.S. public schools. States did not have to comply with the new law, but if they did not, they risked losing federal Title I funds (Klein, 2015). Proponents of the NCLB legislation argued that by holding low-performing schools (i.e., schools that predominantly serve low-income students and students of color) accountable through high-stakes testing, student learning, and achievement would improve at these schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The accountability measures of NCLB changed the educational landscape; states, school districts, and schools have taken extraordinary actions with the sole purpose of improving test scores (see, for example, Kitchen & Berk, 2016). In the NCLB era, schools increasingly focused their energies on test preparation, and in the process, compromised on offering their students an academically challenging

curriculum (Burch, 2009; Valenzuela, 2005). The nation's obsession with testing and accountability has not improved teaching and learning. Instead, NCLB has caused educators to focus on skills-based instruction to the detriment of all students, particularly low-income students and students of color (Kitchen et al., 2016; Nichols et al., 2006).

Since ELM did not receive any federal or state funding, the school was not required to give the annual state test and this allowed teachers more of a chance to offer their students the type of demanding education they needed and deserved. Rather than having to concern themselves with preparing their students for "the test" and its administration over the course of a week or more, ELM's teachers had the academic freedom to challenge their students to learn challenging academic content. This was no small matter. Many U.S. teachers and administrators believe that significant time was wasted preparing students for the test, rather than devoting instruction to the sort of learning and teaching that matters (e.g., solving rich problems in the mathematics classroom) (Kitchen et al., 2007). Many have also protested that the time administering "the test" could have been better spent if devoted to instruction.

At ELM, we engaged students in extended class periods so that they could investigate scientific conjectures and participate in deep analyses of challenging historical content without having to worry about being forced to move on to the next lesson to cover subject matter known to be on the state test. From my experiences visiting schools as a professional development provider, because of pressures associated with preparing their students for success on "the test," teachers often do not have the time needed to help their students do a "deep dive" into ideas to develop conceptual understandings. They are under constant pressure to cover content on "the test," and often must move on to the next lesson before students are ready to do so. Ironically, teachers were being held accountable for the learning of students who were often a grade-level or more behind, who were not provided sufficient support to learn at consistently high levels (e.g., individualized tutoring assistance), and who were being pushed to continue to learn more and more material with less time (Kitchen et al., 2016; Olp-Garcia et al., 2017). Extended class periods at ELM also allowed students the space to research topics, deeply consider ideas, and respond to their peers' ideas and get feedback from their teacher and peers. A central idea here is that students need time and support to learn challenging academic content (Kitchen et al., 2007). Learning cannot be forced into abbreviated class periods; students need time to make sense of new ideas and then to practice and apply their new understandings.

Though the annual state test was not administered at ELM, we did administer final examinations and other tests at the school. This was important to prepare students for what they would experience after leaving the school. However, we did not give traditional letter grades on exams and assignments. Rather, teachers provided students with feedback on their work that was intended to help them learn from their mistakes. If learning is taken seriously and is the actual goal at schools, giving letter grades may be detrimental (Kitchen et al., 2007). Letter grades compare student performances (e.g., B students are better than C students). By moving away from letter grades, we hoped to help students focus more on learning and less on their achievement relative to others. I found that students who attended the school embraced this philosophy

after a short stint at ELM, engaging in their work for the sake of learning and growing as learners, rather than for the sake of achieving a good grade to satisfy their teachers and parents. Students never asked for letter grades, and were perfectly happy to do their work without the threat of receiving a bad grade if they did not do it. However, students understood that they would have to revise or possibly even re-do an assignment if they did not take an assignment seriously.

17.4.2 There Are no Shortcuts to Learning

While edu-entrepreneurs and their allies attempt to create the sense that a crisis exists in American education, they take advantage of this manufactured crisis to peddle all sorts of new and expensive educational programs to Title I schools[4] (Kitchen & Berk, 2016). The basic fact, however, is that we cannot simply place students in front of computers and expect them to learn at high levels, even with the most advanced educational software programs. We cannot just give information and knowledge to children and expect them to subsequently be critical thinkers. Students need to have time to make sense of ideas, learn how to frame ideas, and finally communicate these ideas (De Corte, 2004; Schoenfeld, 1985). For this to occur, teachers need to have a strong background in the discipline(s) they teach, they need to have some understanding of learning theories that inform instruction, and they need to have some basic understanding of culture and where students are "coming from" (Ball et al., 2005; De Corte, 2004; Kitchen et al., 2007). This does not necessarily mean that teachers need to have in-depth knowledge of the cultures of the students they teach, but it does mean they should be open to trying to understand the particular and unique cultural ways of those who are in front of them every day (Ladson-Billings, 2013). Teachers should also have high expectations for all their students, not just their more advanced students (Kitchen et al., 2007).

For teachers to dynamically engage their diverse students in critical thinking (Kitchen et al., 2007), they need knowledge about their students' interests and cultural backgrounds. For example, Janet Lear designed a series of lessons for six of her upper-elementary Latina students to examine views they had about Barbie dolls. She found that her students identified strongly with the dolls, and that some of their views about themselves were related to the dolls (e.g., they all wanted to have blue eyes like Barbie). Janet had the girls measure the proportions of the bodies of Barbie dolls to discover how grossly distorted they are in comparison to women's bodies. The girls wound up writing letters to the Mattel Company, maker of Barbie dolls, to share their concerns about the disproportional bodies of the dolls. In the process, they critically evaluated some of their views about their body image, and even how these views affected their perceptions of self (Kitchen & Lear, 2000).

[4] The basic principle of Title I is that schools with large concentrations of low-income students receive supplemental federal funds to assist in meeting student's educational goals. https://www2.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html.

Teachers also need support to be able to teach at academically high levels, rather than just being held responsible for how their students achieve on "the test." As we learned as part of the highly effective schools study (Kitchen et al., 2007), academic excellence is not something that occurs by accident at a school. Rather, teachers need to be supported through regular access to high-quality professional development (PD) that is targeted, relevant, and practical to develop their craft to support the learning of their students (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Much more attention needs to be paid to supporting practicing teachers to be successful in their profession, the way other professionals are supported to get better at theirs. Quality PD for teachers must attend very directly to teachers' most immediate needs specific to what they are teaching and how to teach, but should also help teachers learn how to teach in equitable ways (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Joyce & Showers, 2002).

Unfortunately, so much PD is superfluous, shallow, and does not really help teachers develop their craft (Garet et al., 2001). Quality PD attends directly to the content that teachers teach (Ball et al., 2008; Hill & Ball, 2004) and provides them with tangible strategies that they can use to plan lessons that help them holistically map out learning objectives using a backward planning design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Participating schools in the highly effective schools study used backward planning to design instruction to meet learning goals (Kitchen et al., 2007). A simple example was that all the participating middle schools in the study selected learning goals traditionally found in an Algebra I course as their primary learning goals for their 8th grade mathematics courses. They then engaged in backward planning so that students in 7th grade learned prerequisite mathematical concepts and skills needed to learn the algebraic learning goals in 8th grade. Continuing this logic, they planned backward to design 6th grade learning goals that were prerequisite concepts and skills students needed to be successful in 7th grade mathematics. This sort of planning requires time, undertaken by thoughtful teachers who have systematically mapped out learning goals for their students, and then have the support needed to help their students achieve these goals (Kitchen et al., 2007).

17.4.3 The Value of Paying Attention to Students' Non-Academic Needs

One of the greatest joys that I regularly enjoyed at ELM was attending to students' non-academic needs. We started every day at ELM by asking for students' prayer requests and then praying over these requests. I got to circulate from classroom to classroom, soliciting students' prayer requests and then praying over these requests with teachers and other students. On some days, the "Prayer Ladies"[5] and others would join me in prayer over students. This was a compelling way to show not only that we cared about the students we served at ELM, but also to model for them the

[5] Joan Christy and Carol Shirley were volunteers at the school who prayed over students' prayer requests on a weekly basis.

love that Christ has for us all. Through prayer, we were able to attend to the things that mattered most to students, like the challenges their families faced to pay bills, get a new job, and obtain needed medical services. However, this was not the only time that prayer occurred at the school. Teachers often prayed with individual students as needs arose. Teachers were sometimes in the hallway praying with students as their classes engaged in academic activities. Of course, praying took place during Bible class, too. When I led it, we often finished our Bible study with "meditative prayer" in which students lay on the floor in a large break-out room, closed their eyes, and prayed as they felt the Holy Spirit lead. Prayer was also a common occurrence at the beginning of special events, such as when a parent team brought lunch for the school on Thursdays, at fundraisers, and when we had our sex education classes. I even led prayer for the basketball team before the games started. We prayed for fun and for the other team, and gave thanks to God that we had a team and a game to play.

"Ms. Alejandra," one of ELM's teachers who grew up in the neighborhood the school served, reflects on her time at the school and the prayer community that had developed at the school:

> Being a part of Escuela Luz del Mundo was such a wonderful experience and blessing. I remember the first day I volunteered to tutor I felt nervous about working with middle schoolers. I had no experience with working with students in middle school, but, till this day, I am very glad I went. I remember walking into 'Ms. Allen's' classroom and working with 6th graders. They were so curious and ready to learn. When I left that day, I left happy because you could truly feel the sense of community amongst the students. As I continued to go every week, Mr. Kitchen offered me an internship as one of the Spanish teachers, and saying yes was one of the best decisions I've made. As an intern I felt a part of the community and I was able to experience God's grace through the students and the teachers. Everyone was so welcoming and caring. One of my favorite parts about working with ELM was initiating our staff meetings with prayer and feeling comfortable communicating my concerns to the more experienced teachers. (Sent via Messenger, March 5, 2016)

Through prayer, we developed a close faculty, built trusting and respectful relationships with students and parents, as well as with the community in Albuquerque's International District. We solicited students' prayer requests and responded to these requests through supplication. We also engaged the community at the school and were engaged in the community. By the grace of God and through an infilling of the Holy Spirit, Christ Jesus was present at this tiny school that was rooted in a marginalized and hurting community.

17.4.4 At ELM, the Real Issues that Affected Students Were not "Swept Under the Rug"

U.S. immigration policies weighed heavily on the students and families we served at ELM since these policies directly impacted their lives. Many of the students had family members who were not documented and did not hold a U.S. passport. Even if their family members were documented, many of their friends were not. So, immigration policy was something that was pertinent and very real to the ELM community.

For the most part, students knew a lot about U.S. immigration policies and had strong opinions about them. There was a strong consensus among students that U.S. immigration policies were unfair and penalized them and their families who were law-abiding taxpayers. Rather than ignore this reality, we looked for opportunities to address students' concerns about immigration policies, particularly during prayer.

It was refreshing and moving to be able to listen to students' voice about what concerned them the most, and then to try to address these concerns through prayer, and at times, by engaging in some sort of action (e.g., raising funds for a family that could not pay their rent). It makes a difference when school personnel care for the students who attend their school (for example, see Noddings, 2005). For Christians, loving the students and families we serve is what we are called to do as followers of Jesus Christ. For those of us who have devoted our lives to working in public schools, it can be frustrating having to repress our desire to openly express our faith beliefs when working with students. I am not implying here that we should be inculcating students into our religious beliefs. I am simply sharing my feelings and how many other teachers feel in public school settings, and this applies to teachers independent of their faith tradition. Nonetheless, despite having to be careful in outwardly expressing their faith beliefs, I frequently observe teachers openly express their love for their students as part of their faith walk. Perhaps this was the most radical thing we did at ELM—we loved our students and worked every day to serve them, their families, and our community.

17.5 The Need for Compassion in Education

Following Jesus' lead,[6] ELM was a humble little school that, to say the least, had nothing fancy to offer except for the all-encompassing love of God as offered through Christ Jesus. In the narrative below, "Sally," ELM Board member and school supporter, reflects on the school's first year, how the school impacted the students it served, and reminisces about the school's first continuation ceremony ("graduation").

> As the very first school year began at ELM, I remember meeting several of the students at the newly refurbished house that was remade into a school in one of the most challenged neighborhoods in Albuquerque. It was so nice to meet the children, and many of their parents, at the party held in the schoolyard that summer afternoon just prior to the opening of school. I couldn't help but think many of these children would have easily been un-noticed in a larger public school environment. As the school year progressed, I was able to see these children become confident leaders as they were shown the love of Christ by their teachers. The involvement of their parents through many fundraisers, as well as their participation in bringing lunch to school once a week for the children, made this school a family outreach as well. The highlight of the year, for me, was at graduation. I saw these children receive awards for their efforts, but most importantly, I was able to witness how they blossomed into confident, well-spoken students, who shared a commitment to each other and to their school.

[6] In *The Jesus I Never Knew* (1995), Philip Yancey reminds us that unlike Queen Elizabeth II and her family's lavish lifestyle, God's visit to earth in Jesus was initiated in an animal shelter where there were probably more animal witnesses to Jesus' birth than human witnesses.

> I was so moved to see what God had accomplished at this school in its very first year. (Email message received on December 16, 2015)

Sally helped the school in countless ways over the course of its history. She was well-known and loved by ELM's students. Her message helps inform me about how to address a simple, but poignant question: What role should the faith community play when it comes to healing and advancing public education for all in the United States? Perhaps a simple response is that the faith community needs to offer its compassion to those who spend countless hours doing their best in challenging circumstances. Surely, compassion is needed for the teachers and administrators who work long days for the students they serve. Compassion is also needed for students who are generally struggling to sort out a myriad of complexities in their lives, oftentimes with little guidance at home, and lots of external pressures from their peers and society that are not always positive. Rather than over-assessing our students as a means to hold teachers and students accountable,[7] perhaps we need to be thinking more about how to simply care for students who are practically screaming out for attention in our crazy, loud world. Schools should be places where students are loved, places where they are known by caring adults, and places where everyone feels included.

Jill McVey (2016), one of my former doctoral students, examined a national database as part of her dissertation to investigate the importance of non-cognitive factors in schools. She found that the development of relationships with school personnel (e.g., teachers) was particularly salient for increasing students' academic outcomes. McVey (2016) also found that these relationships tend to be weaker for students who are more frequently absent, have failing courses, and come to school without their homework completed. In contrast, students who spend more time on homework and achieve higher grades have stronger relationships with their teachers. Once again, this points to the value of teachers holding students accountable for their work, of students receiving the academic support needed to be successful, and to the significance of teachers making a deliberate attempt to know and care for their students.

In addition to working for justice for the poor and those who have not been served well by public schools in the United States such as students of color, I believe that much more attention needs to be paid nationally to the family, both traditional and non-traditional, and the important roles the family plays in raising children. It is certainly the case that families are in crisis in the United States, particularly low-income, working-class families. According to The Working Poor Families Project, in 21 states in 2011, one-third or more of all working families were low-income.

[7] Sahlberg (2007) argues that Finland has been transformed from a remote agrarian/industrial state to a model knowledge economy by using education to promote economic and social development. Finland is often cited as an example of a model educational system in the world. Importantly, high-stakes testing is not part of Finnish education policies. Instead, the Finns place great emphasis on learning and teaching, in which teachers are supported to shape optimal learning environments for their students. Ladson-Billings (2013) reminds us that Finnish teachers are also highly unionized, well respected in their society, and are compensated accordingly for their work.

Moreover, 44% of working families with at least one minority parent were low-income, twice the proportion of white working families in which 22% of families were low-income.[8]

ELM's parents had fundraisers, cleaned the school building, and made lunch for teachers and students every week so that their children could be taught at high levels, learn about Jesus, and develop a relationship with God through Christ. Though they had few financial resources, they gave everything they had to support ELM. They were some of the most incredible people that I have ever had the honor of knowing and of serving. In the following, one of ELM's teachers writes that an experience he had with ELM's wonderful parents was among his best experiences at the school:

> What really stands out to me about my one year at ELM was the parents. They were all incredibly supportive, encouraging, and hospitable. Even though there was a language barrier—I probably know a grand total of 10 words in Spanish—their smiles and few English words were all I needed some days. There was one parent who invited me, and the other teachers, into her home for a meal. It was one of my fondest memories that year. (Sent via Messenger, October 24, 2015)

One of the things I loved about ELM's parents was that they were very supportive of the school and open to suggestions offered by their children's teachers and by me. The simple point that I would like to make here is that our parents, almost all of whom grew up in extreme poverty and experienced hardships that few of us who come from privilege growing up in the United States can imagine, may not have had many of their basic emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs met during their childhoods. Many of them therefore found it difficult to meet the needs of their children. Of course, they also struggled to negotiate U.S. civil society and American cultural norms. At times, some of us at the school, including the Prayer Ladies, engaged in prayer with parents who sought our help and solace. We also had information about services available to the community and tried to respectfully and discretely share this information with our families when appropriate. In retrospect, the free exchange of compassion among the school and its parents was a distinguishing feature of ELM.

Ladson-Billings (2013) writes that the excellent teachers she has observed are compassionate *and* demand academic excellence from their students. Is it possible for both academic excellence *and* compassion to be priorities in more schools, particularly at schools that serve the poor and students of color? As a nation, we must invest in bringing the best teachers to the most forgotten places, and transforming schooling in these locations so that high expectations and support for high levels of learning are the norms for every student (Kitchen et al., 2007). For example, it should be a national priority to recruit and retain some of our nation's best teachers and administrators to work at schools located near or on Native American reservations and at schools located in the most economically challenged communities in America's inner cities. This will require not only significant financial resources, but also a significant commitment on the part of politicians, community activists, and school districts. At

[8] http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/about/.

the same time, schools need to be focal points in the community, where compassionate adults teach, culturally affirming and loving relationships are developed, and child-centric learning environments foster continual student learning and growth.

17.6 ELM is no More—Now What?

Ironically, ELM ceased operations not because of a lack of funding, but because of low enrollment. Early on, it was clear that the relationships the school developed in the community were central to developing trust with those we served. After I moved to Denver in 2012, it became more difficult for an understaffed school to reach out to the community and develop relationships with potential new families and students. In the fall of 2014, when only 14 students showed up for the first day of school, about ten students fewer than the number expected, it became clear that ELM had run its course. As is common in ministry, the school had fulfilled its purpose and its time had come to an end. Though our season as a Christian ministry was over, the students and families we served have been sharing the Gospel in the neighborhood and beyond. At the conclusion of the first day of school in August 2014, I announced with many tears to the teachers and students that the school would cease operations at the end of the week. In November 2014, we held a celebration of the school in the East Central Ministry's warehouse. To my surprise and delight, a number of ELM students, along with some of their parents and former school supporters showed up. Though it was a sad day, we celebrated all that God had accomplished through ELM in Albuquerque's International District.

I miss ELM. I feel like my child that I raised has moved on, and I continue to process the sorrow that a parent feels once the nest is empty. Columbian novelist, short-story writer, screenwriter, journalist, and Nobel Prize winner in Literature, Gabriel García Márquez wrote, "Don't cry because it came to an end, smile because it happened."[9] Who knows, maybe at some point, the next iteration of the school will be birthed. After all, operations were not terminated, they were only suspended!

I think it is totally fitting that "Mariella" gets the final word. As one of ELM's original students, Mariella endured significant challenges to graduate from one of Albuquerque's most highly regarded high schools in 2014. When she sent this message, she was doing quite well as a student at the University of New Mexico. In the following, Mariella tells her ELM story:

> After graduating elementary, me and my best friend 'Marie' were trying to look for a good middle school. Since we live on opposite sides of town we didn't have the same district. So, we started to look for a school we both liked. We visited several schools, and we even went to orientations and like summer clubs that these schools do for kids who are interested in the school. For one reason or another, we just didn't click with any of the schools we tried. The end of the summer was approaching and Marie's mom mentioned this new school called Escuela Luz del Mundo. She explained that it was going to be a super small Christian school. Without going to visit the school, and without even really having to think about it,

[9] https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/13450.Gabriel_Garc_a_M_rquez.

> Marie and I said yes right away. We were determined to find a good school for us and as soon as Marie's mom mentioned ELM for some reason we just knew that was it. I definitely think that God had something to do with our decision. You know, we tried so hard trying to look for a school, and like I said we visited several ones, but I feel like God wanted us to go there. He had it planned out and told us "this is the school you're looking for." I'm extremely grateful for everything ELM did for its students, parents, and community. ELM is a big part of who I am today and without it I would have probably never gotten to know so much about God and my religion. I also met so many amazing people who I still keep in touch with, and because of ELM, I was also able to find the perfect high school for me. I wouldn't change my experience with ELM for anything. (Sent via Messenger, April 30, 2016)

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