

Religion in the Context of a Europeanisation of Education

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Europeanisation

- Entry-point for greater understanding of important changes occurring in politics and society (Featherstone 2003)
- Creating a European Education Space & European Education Policy (Dale 2009)
- »*Europe does not exist. There is only Europeanisation*« (Beck & Grande 2004)
- Two dimensions of Europeanisation
 - a *vertical process* between national societies and European institutions
 - a *horizontal process* in creating a social space of Europe in relation of European civil societies





Context

Council of Europe

47 member states (including Russia and Turkey)

Watchdog of 3 main values:

- **Democracy**
- **Human rights**
- **Right of law**

**Committee of Ministers; Parliamentary Assembly;
Commissioner of Human Rights; European Court of
Human Rights**



Context

European Union

- »Lisbon strategy 2000«, new strategic goal for EU: to become by 2010 “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion“
- »EU 2020«: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth; includes a EU flagship initiative “Youth on the move“ to enhance the performance of education systems

Council of Europe



Recommendations about
education and religion
(1993-2008)

(Parliamentary Assembly)

White paper on
Intercultural dialogue
(2008)

(Committee of Ministers)

2. Material & Methods

Recommendations Council of Europe



1993: Religious tolerance in a democratic society

1999: Religion and democracy

2005: Education and religion

2007: State, religion, secularity and human rights

2008: On the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education

2011: The religious dimension of intercultural dialogue

White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (2008)



Methods

- **Qualitative Content Analysis** (Mayring 2005, 2007, 2008)
- **Discourse Analysis** – exploring the text in relation to its context (Wilson 2001; Donati 2001, Diaz-Bone 2006)
- **Grounded Theory** – data collection and analysis using principles of »theoretical sampling«, permanent comparison of texts; developing an empirical grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin 1999; Strübing 2004, 2008; Corbin & Strauss 2008)



3. Main findings

➤ Religion as a trouble maker

“Religion often reinforces, or is used to reinforce, international, social and national minority conflicts. (,...) The question of tolerance has to be further developed.” (1993: Religious tolerance..)

“There is a religious aspect to many of the problems that contemporary society faces, such as intolerant fundamentalist movements and terrorist acts, racism and xenophobia, and ethnic conflicts; and considerations should also be given to inequality between sexes in religion” (1999: Religion and democracy)

3. Main findings

A more comprehensive perception of religion

- Religion as a strictly personal matter
- Religious communities
- Religions as (at least) »cultural facts«
- The religious dimension of intercultural dialogue

“There are considerable overlaps between the CoE’ agenda and the concerns of religious communities: human rights, democratic citizenship, the promotion of values, peace, dialogue, education and solidarity “ (2008: White paper, p. 21)

3 Main Findings

Religion

Different perspectives of religion (Council of Europe CoE):

Private  Collective and organised  Cultural fact

No explicit concept of religion (European Union EU)

Interrelatedness of religion and education: *explicitly* (CoE) and *implicitly* (EU)

Education

High value and positive image (CoE)

A special role and value for economy and growth (EU)

Religious Education

Preference for a knowledge-based concept of “teaching about religions“

3. Main findings

The purpose to mention religion

- *To guarantee freedom of conscience and religious expression*
- *To promote education about religions*
- *To promote better relations with and between religions*
- *To promote the cultural and social expression of religions*

(1999: Religion & Democracy)

3. Main findings: Increasing dialogue

- Established system of more than 400 INGOs
- Exchange with religions communities since 2008
- Commissioner for Human Rights in dialogue with religious communities
- Establishment of the European Wergeland Centre in Oslo for intercultural, human rights & citizenship education (www.theewc.org)

4 Discussion and Perspectives

Discussion

- Critical view on privatization and marginalization of religion; a plea for a more differentiated perception of religion
- Comprehensive, multi-dimensional concept of education
- Religious education should include more than only the knowledge aspect

Perspectives

- Development of Europeanisation as a research perspective
- Analyses from different national perspectives needed
- Active dialogue with European institutions on religion and education including Protestant views



Thank you for your attention

