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European Institutions and the Contribution of Studies of Religious Diversity to Education for Democratic Citizenship¹

The International Context

Issues about the study of religion in public education are being discussed internationally as never before. The discussions include specialists in religion, but also many outside the professional field of religious education – politicians, civil servants, NGOs and other groups within civil society as well as educators concerned with fields such as citizenship and intercultural education. This is partly due to the global attention given to religion as a result of the events of September 11, 2001 in the USA, their causes, on-going consequences and associated incidents that have affected people in many parts of the world. In Europe, it also relates to the challenge of transcultural diversities (Robins, 2006) and the growing climate of racism in some states (MacEwen, 1995), much of it directed against Muslims, exacerbated by 9/11 and its consequences (Modood, Triandafyllidou & Zapata-Barrero, 2006).

Of course, positive events involving religion also have an impact on public consciousness in relation to issues within civil society, whether through the constructive activities of inter-faith networks, or the example of outstanding personalities such as the Dalai Lama in relation to peace and environmental issues² or Archbishop Desmond Tutu as Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa (Tutu, 2000). It is also interesting that several research projects are being conducted at the moment on the theme of religion as social capital (Putnam, 1995), aiming, for example, to explore the extent to which faith organisations and members contribute to, or appear as obstacles to, ‘the bridging and linking of social capital required to achieve well-connected communities’.³

In the present discussion, there is no intention to imply that the study of religion in schools should be solely justified through attention to social and political events and issues. I agree with the Delors Report in considering that education should include learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be (UNESCO, 1996). It is arguable that religious education should be concerned with all of these, especially the fourth. The present discussion focuses on the third, but does not ignore the others. The discussion responds to recent and widespread international interest in the study of religions in schools, with particular attention to European institutions, prompted by various political events and social issues. This is why close attention is given to citizenship education.

1 An earlier version of this chapter was presented as a plenary paper at the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values Conference on ‘Religious Education in a World of Religious Diversity’, Driebergen, Netherlands, 3rd August 2006.

2 <http://www.dalailama.com/> accessed 15 May 2006.

3 For example, ‘Faith as Social Capital: Connecting or Dividing?’ Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2005. <http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/9781861348388.pdf> accessed 14 June 2006.

Religious Education and Citizenship Education: Diversity in Europe

Having placed the debate in a global context, I will now concentrate on issues concerning religion and public education in Europe. These will be considered in parallel with developments in citizenship education, a field which also responds to social issues.

First, I will illustrate some different approaches to religious education and citizenship education in individual states. The differences between them reflect particular factors in each state, including historical tradition (especially the history of Church/State relations in the case of religious education), the nature and degree of ‘multiculturalism’ in society and other cultural factors, socio-political structure, economic system, and international/global influences, all of which interplay with factors such as educational values, aims and funding arrangements. I will then go on to consider broader European approaches, developed through European networks of researchers and educators, and especially through projects associated with European institutions. There will be some reference to EU/EC funded research, but most space will be devoted to developments within the Council of Europe. Both institutions are concerned with European integration, understood in terms of fostering a society in which citizens feel that they belong to Europe while they also feel rooted in regional and national traditions and cultures. European integration thus includes identifying and establishing a minimum of common values, as legislated in the European Convention of Human Rights, but respects the preservation and development of regional and national cultural elements, including the integration of various kinds of cultural diversity within and across individual states. European collaborative work in education can thus provide models for policy makers and curriculum developers that present a broad European vision, but which may not be fully applicable in all countries.

Religious Education in Europe

Of course, the role of religion in education has been seen rather differently in the various European states. Friedrich Schweitzer has pointed out the need for careful comparative study of religious education (or its equivalents) as a research tool for informing developments in policy and practice (Schweitzer, 2006). He has also, rightly, pointed out the pitfalls of such studies if done superficially, especially in relation to linguistic issues such as the different meanings given to ‘religious education’ and diverse usages of particular terms such as ‘confessional’ (and its equivalent in other European languages) across different systems.

Despite the field of comparative study being in its infancy, there have been a number of publications aiming to give a picture of educational provision in relation to religion across European states (eg Kodelja & Bassler, 2004; Schreiner, 2002; Willaime & Mathieu, 2005). On the basis of these sources one might make some points about the diversity of policy and practice in Europe from different angles. One might, for example, distinguish between the different ways in which states accommodate religion within their educational systems and develop policy accordingly. There are ‘confessional’ systems in

which religious bodies are given responsibility for religious education. For example, in Germany, the churches have a supervisory responsibility for religious education, but within a constitutional framework of equal rights and non-discrimination. The ‘confessional’ system is different in the Netherlands, where schools have the right to teach the religion of the sponsor, and different again from, say, Slovakia, where schools teach what is recognised as the religion of the state – in this case Roman Catholicism. In some instances, as in Poland, religious education is an optional subject, taught by insiders, according to the tenets of particular denominations (mainly Roman Catholicism). Teachers’ qualifications are defined by the church in question, in agreement with the Ministry of National Education and Sport (Eurydice, 2006). Then, there are non-confessional systems where religious bodies have no role in public education. For example, in public education in France, there is no subject devoted specifically to the study of religion, and any teaching covering religion in subjects such as history or philosophy must be purely informational (Estivalezes, 2005, 2006). Sweden presents another example of non-confessional religious education. As with France, there is no direct involvement in education from religious bodies, but in contrast to the French situation, religious education is seen very much in relation to the personal development of children and young people (Larsson, 2000). There are also ‘mixed’ systems, as in England and Wales, where fully publicly funded schools have a form of religious education which aims at impartiality in its treatment of religion, while mainly state-funded voluntary aided schools may teach and promote the religion of the sponsoring body (Jackson, 2000).

A familiar way of making distinctions is from the point of view of the aims of the subject. The distinction is sometimes made between educating into, about and from religion (cf Hull, 2002). Educating into religion deals with a single religious tradition, is taught by ‘insiders’ and often has the objective of enabling pupils to come to believe in the religion or to strengthen their commitment to it. Educating about religion confines itself to using descriptive and historical methods, and aims neither to foster nor to erode religious belief. Educating from religion involves pupils in considering different responses to religious and moral issues, so that they may develop their own views in a reflective way. Here the main objective might be seen as enabling pupils to develop their own point of view on matters relating to religion and values. On this taxonomy, the Italian system would be an example of educating into religion (Gandolfo-Censi, 2000), the Estonian system would exemplify educating about religion (Valk, 2000), while the English community school system would combine educating about and educating from religion (QCA, 2004).

Another way of distinguishing between varieties of religious education is in relation to broad geographical regions – such as the northern countries influenced mainly, in terms of religious history, by Protestantism, the southern mainly Catholic-influenced countries, and the former communist states recovering and reshaping earlier traditions (Orthodox and Catholic for example) following the demise of communism. There is a real danger of over-simplification here, of course. It is in the north, however, that most research and development has been done so far in the field of religious education (Larsson & Gustavsson, 2004). Times are changing rapidly, as we know from the wide variety of new work represented in the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (ISREV),

the European Network for Research on Religious Education through Contextual Approaches (ENRECA) and other networks. Some Russian scholars aim to produce a non-confessional cultural approach to recovering Orthodox tradition (Kosyrev & ter Avest, forthcoming), while French social scientists re-examine the concept of *laïcité* in relation to the accommodation of religion within public education (Debray, 2002; Estivalezes, 2005, 2006). Turkey which, like the Russian Federation, spans the continents of Europe and Asia, has a lively debate over the development of models of religious education appropriate for public education (Kaymakcan, 2006).

Clearly, these simple taxonomies do not provide a completely reliable basis for comparative study. The more detail that is uncovered in each system or approach, the more one realises the dangers of easy comparison. It is also evident that there would be difficulties in finding a common European approach to religious education.

Citizenship Education in Europe

Citizenship education is high on the agenda of European governments although, as with religious education, understandings of its nature and purposes are diverse across the continent. Whether influenced primarily by fears of the young's disengagement with political processes, by concerns about social cohesion in culturally diverse societies, or by political change in former communist countries, citizenship education has emerged, either as a discrete curriculum subject or as a dimension of the wider school curriculum (Paludan & Prinds, 1999). On a major Council of Europe project in Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) (which we will return to below), citizenship education is inclusive of human rights education, civic education, peace education, global education and intercultural education as well as activities in which participation in society can be learned, exercised and encouraged.⁴ There is an increasing number of sources of information about citizenship education in different European states. For example, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) has conducted an international *Civic Education Study*.⁵ More than 140,000 pupils, teachers and school principals from 28 countries took part in the study, and two major reports were issued by the IEA in 2001 and 2002.⁶ Of the 28 countries researched, 23 were European.

The study found some general trends. For example, students in most countries showed some understanding of democratic values and institutions but often with little depth of understanding. Students with the most civic knowledge were most likely to be open to participate in civic activities as adults, while schools modelling democratic practice were the most effective in promoting civic knowledge and engagement. Patterns of trust in government-related institutions varied widely across countries (Torney-Purta, Lehmann,

4 http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/E.D.C/ accessed 15 May 2006.

5 Formed 31 years ago, IEA is a non-profit, private association which carries out international comparative studies on schools. Policy makers and educators use data from IEA studies to assess the impact of alternative curricular offerings; monitor the quality of schooling worldwide; identify effective schools and learn how to improve their own educational systems, and better understand the instructional learning process.

6 For further information see: http://www2.hu-berlin.de/empir_bf/iea_e.html and <http://www.wam.umd.edu/~iea/> both accessed 15 May 2006.

Oswald & Schulz, 2001). The study showed a gap between policy and practice in many cases, especially in relation to participation and active learning. Only about 25 per cent of pupils across all countries reported that they were often encouraged to state their own views during lessons, with an equal proportion stating that such discussion occurs rarely or never (Kerr, 2003, p. 21).

A second important source is a Eurydice project on citizenship, sponsored by the European Commission. The EC Directorate-General for Education and Culture, in 2003, established a working group focusing on an 'Open Learning Environment, Active Citizenship and Social Inclusion' (European Commission 2003). In 2004, this group requested information on citizenship education via the Information Network on Education in Europe (Eurydice).⁷ A wealth of relevant data were provided from 30 European countries, in the form of a final report analysing how citizenship education is taught in schools (Eurydice, 2005), plus numerous accounts of the treatment of citizenship education in individual countries.⁸

The final report, *Citizenship Education at School in Europe*, recommends that the term citizenship education should be detached as far as possible from its legal connotation, 'embracing all members of a given society, regardless of their nationality, sex, or racial, social or educational background'. The report also notes that in different states citizenship education may be offered as a separate subject, integrated into conventional subjects (including religious and moral education) or be seen as a cross-curricular theme. There is also a growing view that the idea of citizenship should be pursued through whole school policies and increasing support for the 'democratic school' in which teachers, parents and pupils are involved in school management and decision-making. There is also widespread support for citizenship education's role in developing political literacy through dealing with issues such as democracy and human rights and for increasing active participation by pupils (Eurydice, 2005, p. 59-62). A trawl through individual reports shows that approaches linking citizenship education and religious education reflect the range of conceptions of both fields found across Europe.⁹

The Council of Europe project on Education for Democratic Citizenship has also conducted a survey of current policy and practice in citizenship education among member states. The findings draw attention to the 'implementation gap' between national policies and syllabuses and what is actually experienced by students (Council of Europe, 2004b).

The findings of the studies mentioned above bear out Terence McLaughlin's distinction between 'maximal' and 'minimal' interpretations of citizenship education

7 Eurydice is a network of institutions collecting, monitoring, processing and circulating comparable information on education systems and policies across Europe. Eurydice was established in 1980 by the European Commission and member states as a strategic mechanism to foster co-operation, through improving understanding of educational systems and policies.

8 Downloadable from <http://www.eurydice.org> accessed 10 June, 2006.

9 For example, religion is mentioned in relation to social exclusion or discrimination (Belgium [Flemish]); diversity (Italy); understanding religious values (Denmark); strengthening values (Slovakia); understanding religions (Slovenia) and respecting each other's religions (Bulgaria). Links between religious and citizenship education are seen through visits to neighbourhood or community groups including religious bodies. Some countries make no reference to religious education in their official documentation on citizenship education (eg Poland, Estonia, the Netherlands and Malta).

(McLaughlin, 1992). In this, a ‘minimal’ approach presents the subject as knowledge-based, with a particular civics-related content to be transmitted in a formal and didactic manner. A ‘maximal’ approach, in contrast, emphasises active learning and inclusion, is interactive, values-based and process led, allowing students to develop and articulate their own opinions and to engage in debate. The IEA, Eurydice and Council of Europe studies show a spectrum of practice between the two extremes. McLaughlin observes that the ‘minimal’ interpretation is open to various objections; the most notable being ‘...that it may involve merely an unreflective socialisation into the political and social *status quo*, and is therefore inadequate on educational, as well as other, grounds’ (McLaughlin, 1992, p. 238).¹⁰

Research on Effective Citizenship Education

There is considerable support in the European Union and the Council of Europe for a more ‘maximal’ interpretation of citizenship education. When we consider pedagogy, there is strong research evidence, from Europe and the USA in particular, endorsing the effectiveness of ‘maximal’ approaches. A key source is two close analyses of published research in citizenship education by Ruth Deakin Crick and her collaborators (Deakin Crick et al., 2004, 2005; Deakin Crick, 2005).¹¹

In the 2004 study, Deakin Crick and her colleagues provide a review of evidence giving information of how citizenship education is implemented in schools.¹² This review included different types of empirical studies published by early 2003. The overall question addressed was ‘What is the impact of citizenship on the provision of schooling?’ This was taken to mean learning and teaching; school context and ethos; leadership and management; curriculum construction and development and external relations and community. Fourteen studies were selected for detailed analysis.

With regard to learning and teaching specifically, seven studies were considered especially relevant. These indicated that dialogue and discourse relating to shared values, human rights and issues of justice and equality were effective methods, and that the quality of discourse is a key factor in learning. In such dialogue the teacher acts as a facilitator, rather than a purveyor of information; the students are encouraged to express their views, often drawing on their own life experiences. The studies reveal that such partici-

10 See also Kerr, 1999, 12f on distinguishing between education about, through and for citizenship.

11 The research was conducted under the auspices of the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre), set up in 1993 to address the need for a systematic approach to the organisation and review of evidence-based work on social interventions. Both reports are published on EPPI-Centre’s website as part of The Research Evidence in Education Library (REEL) (<http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/EPPIWeb/home.aspx?page=/reel/intro.htm>).

12 Following Gearon (2003) she points out that there was little or no UK research on citizenship education before the 1990s, but some research and writing in fields such as values education, character education and PSHE, and in fields operative since the 1970s, called collectively by Gearon ‘implicit citizenship education’ – peace education, global/world studies, human rights education and political education. In particular, there was very little research on practice at the school level and little attempt to integrate citizenship education into broader educational philosophies and practices.

pative, conversational activity sustains achievement and that students become engaged when the experience is challenging, attainable and relevant to their own lives. A necessary condition is that there need to be ground rules for dialogue and discussion, ensuring inclusion and respect for others. The studies suggest the need for opportunities for students to engage with values issues across all curriculum subjects and experiences. Deakin Crick notes that this approach may challenge existing conventions and power structures within the school, and that teachers and leaders are likely to need additional training and support in order to acquire the necessary professional skills, preferably through a whole-school strategy, including an agreed framework of values (Deakin Crick, 2005, p. 72).

The 2005 study reviewed the impact of citizenship education specifically on student learning and achievement. The review focused on a detailed analysis of 13 research studies, two UK based, with a broader context provided by 35 research studies. Most of these were from the USA (22), five from the UK, two from Australia and one each from New Zealand, Portugal, Canada, Thailand, Ireland and Romania. Findings are consistent with those of the earlier review. The evidence indicates that approaches using dialogue and discussion are especially effective in enhancing learning and in increasing students' motivation and engagement. A co-operative learning environment that empowers students is shown to lead to increased self-confidence, greater self-reliance and more positive behaviour. Moreover, students' participation increases when lesson content relates to their own personal experiences. In gaining awareness of the situations of others, students are enabled to analyse and reflect on their own personal stories and experiences. On the question of teaching, as with the 2004 report, the review acknowledges a need for support for teachers in developing their expertise in facilitation and dialogue.

What is remarkable in this research is the consistent finding that there is a close connection between pedagogies that affirm the autonomy of young people and give them voice and responsibility (cf Hallett & Prout, 2003; Prout, 2001) and an increase in student motivation and engagement. This is also a finding of an ESRC research project on teaching and learning (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004).

Religion, Citizenship and Public Education in European Institutions

Having given a sketch of the diversity of both religious education and citizenship education in Europe, I will now concentrate on these fields as dealt with at the European level, focusing on work undertaken under the auspices of the Council of Europe.

With regard to the European Union, the preamble to the EU's first ever Constitution, (agreed at a summit on 18 June 2004, but rejected by referenda in France and the Netherlands), says the EU draws its 'inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, democracy, equality, freedom and the rule of law'.¹³ The Vatican and several Roman Catholic countries led by Poland pressed, without success, for the Constitution's preamble to refer to Europe's Christian heritage. Since the

13 http://europa.eu/constitution/en/ptoc1_en.htm#a1.

statement about religious heritage was not a factor in the French and Dutch rejection of the Constitution, it seems unlikely that the text will change in relation to religion in any future draft. In article 10 of the Constitution, there is a guarantee of freedom of thought, religion and conscience: 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.' One would expect EU policies with regard to religion and education to reflect these principles (Willaime 2005).

In developing a more integrated approach to the place of religion in public education, the importance of informal and semi-formal European networks of scholars and professional associations should be mentioned. With regard to religious education, for example, the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (ISREV),¹⁴ the European Association for Religious Education through Contextual Approaches (ENRECA)¹⁵ and the International Network for Inter-religious and Intercultural Education¹⁶ have been important. These networks have furnished opportunities for the discussion of new research ideas and research in progress at the European level and have provided the basis for bids for European funding for research. These include a successful bid to the EU Framework 6 programme for a collaborative European research project on 'Religion in Education: A Contribution to Dialogue or a Factor of Conflict in Transforming Societies of European Countries' (REDCo), which will be completed in 2009.¹⁷ In relation to professional organisations, The Co-ordinating Group for Religious Education in Europe (CoGREE)

14 The International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (ISREV) was founded in 1978 and has met biennially since that time. Originally it included western Europeans and north Americans. The membership is now much more international. See <http://www.isrev.org/> (accessed 8 August 2006).

15 The driving figure behind the establishment of ENRECA was Professor Hans-Günther Heimbrock. Heimbrock, Scheilke and Schreiner (2001) is ENRECA's first book; Miedema, Schreiner, Skeie and Jackson (2004) explains the ENRECA's goals; see also <http://enreca.isert-network.com/docs/index.htm> (accessed 1 June 2006). ENRECA now has its own European Book Series on 'Religious Diversity and Education in Europe', published from Germany by Waxmann. The first titles published were Zonne (2006) and Afdal (2006).

16 The International Network for Inter-religious and Inter-cultural Education was set up in 1994, soon after the election of a democratic government in South Africa, and had its first meeting at the University of Hamburg. The aim was to promote links between Southern African and Northern European research groups working in fields connecting religion and education in culturally diverse democratic societies. The seminar brought together Northern European and Southern African members of research and development groups working in the fields of religion, education and cultural diversity. Publications include Andree, Bakker and Schreiner (1997); Chidester, Stonier and Tobler (1999); Jackson (2003a); Weisse (1996) and contributions to a special issue of *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion and Theology in South Africa*, 89 (2), 2005.

17 Bringing together research groups from 10 European universities in seven countries, the REDCo project aims to identify policies and pedagogies that can contribute to making religion in education a factor promoting dialogue in the context of European development. This is the first major international project on religious education to gain funding from the European Commission, reflecting the changing attitude towards bringing studies of religion into public education (Jackson 2006a; see also Chapter 1 of this volume and <http://213.131.236.148/web/3480/3481/index.html>).

brings together a range of European professional associations in the field.¹⁸ With regard to citizenship education and its constituent fields, bodies such as the International Association for Intercultural Education (IAIE) have had a similar synthetic function.¹⁹

The Council of Europe

Another major influence on educational developments in Europe is the Council of Europe. Since the Council is currently taking a strong interest in both the study of religious diversity in schools and education for democratic citizenship, it is worth explaining how it operates since, unlike the EU/EC, it integrates project development with political decision making and support. The Council is an inter-governmental organisation founded in 1949 and based in Strasbourg, France. It comprises 46 member states currently and its aims include protecting human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law and seeking solutions to problems such as discrimination against minorities, xenophobia and intolerance (Council of Europe, 2004c). The Council's work leads to European conventions and agreements in the light of which member states may amend their own legislation. The key political bodies of the Council are the Parliamentary Assembly, the Committee of Ministers and various specialist conferences of Ministers.

The Parliamentary Assembly is made up of Members of Parliament (not Members of the European Parliament) from the member states, appointed or elected within their own countries, with cross party representation and with the number of MPs per country determined by its relative population size. The Assembly meets for a week four times a year. Its many functions include the consideration of proposals from specialist groups and projects, and making recommendations to the Committee of Ministers. Unlike the European Parliament, its powers extend only to investigation, recommendation and advice.

The Committee of Ministers, comprising the Foreign Affairs Ministers of member states or their permanent diplomatic representatives (based in Strasbourg), is the Council's decision making body. Its functions include determining action to be taken following recommendations by the Parliamentary Assembly and conferences of specialist ministers (such as the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education, which meets every three years). The Committee of Ministers meets twice a year, but their permanent diplomatic representatives meet weekly. The Committee's decisions are relayed as recommendations to member governments or are incorporated into European conventions and agreements which are legally binding on governments ratifying them.

At the administrative level, the Council is organised under four directorates, including the Directorate of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport (DGIV).²⁰ Ideas for projects or results of projects are channelled by the Directorates and their various committees, as appropriate, for consideration by the Parliamentary Assembly, the Committee of Ministers or one of the conferences of specialist ministers, such as the Standing Con-

18 <http://www.cogree.com/> accessed 6 June 2006.

19 See <http://www.iaie.org/> accessed 6 June 2006.

20 The others are: the Directorate of Legal Affairs (DGI), the Directorate of Human Rights (DGII) and the Directorate of Social Cohesion (DGIII).

ference of Ministers of Education (the Ministers of Education from the parliaments of the member states). There is also a Commissioner for Human Rights, who operates (in organisational terms) independently from the Directorates.

From the point of view of official projects, the Council of Europe offers a structure which fully integrates development and political processes. Project proposals are approved by the Council's political institutions and project findings and recommendations are considered and approved by them or sent back for further development. There is an expectation that, in turn, member states will implement policies set out in declarations or be influenced by them in policy development. The Council is thus a powerful instrument for European integration within its fields of operation.

The Council's projects on Intercultural Education and the Challenge of Religious Diversity and Dialogue in Europe and on Education for Democratic Citizenship will now be considered, as will a discussion on the possible establishment of a European Centre for Religious Education.²¹

Intercultural Education and the Challenge of Religious Diversity and Dialogue in Europe

Within the Council, a view of intercultural education has gradually emerged, concerned with developing competences and attitudes enabling individuals to respect the rights of others, developing skills of critical empathy and fostering dialogue with others from different backgrounds (Council of Europe, 2002). This approach was developed in projects in history, education for democratic citizenship, modern foreign languages and the Roma, but did not include attention to religion. Religion was avoided because of the different relationships between religion and state across Europe, because of the diversity of current arrangements in member states on the place of religion in schools – reflecting histories involving religious conflict – and especially because, as a public body, the Council has to maintain neutrality with regard to the expression of views on the truth or falsity of religious claims.

However, at the political level, the atrocities of September 11, 2001 triggered a shift in policy. Through the Committee of Ministers, the Council of Europe formulated its response to include safeguarding fundamental values and investing in democracy. In relation to the latter, the then Secretary General, Walter Schwimmer, affirmed that intercultural and interfaith dialogue would become a key theme for the Council, proposing:

...action to promote a better understanding between cultural and/or religious communities through school education, on the basis of shared principles of ethics and democratic citizenship (Council of Europe, 2002).

9/11 thus can be regarded as a symbol for the entry of the study of religion as a new priority for European public policy on education. However, the paper proposing the Council's first project involving religion as part of intercultural education saw reflection on the events of 9/11 as offering a very limited amount in educational terms: 'The study of re-

21 A general discussion of education policies within the Council of Europe is provided in Birz ea (2005).

ligions here could show that all the main world religions categorically reject terrorism as a legitimate political tactic, but could do little more.’ Rather the Council’s Working Party took the view that:

It is better to see the connection between extremist religion and political conflict and social disruption as a wake-up-call to tackle the quite different and less acute, but still widespread and serious, problem of poor community relations within Europe: where mutual mistrust, intolerance, racist incidents, and discrimination mainly take an ethnic form, but sometimes a religious one (Council of Europe, 2002).

The new priority was therefore an extension of previous efforts to combat racism and promote democratic citizenship within the Council agreed at the Vienna Summit in 1993.²² However, the Council had ‘... no overall intercultural concept, strategy or recent normative text capable of easy extension specifically to cover religious diversity as well’, recognising that ‘existing activities do not deal with issues of religion in education’, and concluding that ‘a new activity is required; and the importance and complexity of the subject indicate making it a full-scale project’ (Council of Europe, 2002).

In early 2002, the Council set up a working party to examine the issues, prior to the establishment of a project suggesting methods and approaches for integrating the study of religion into intercultural education in the public domain. The Working Party’s action plan reflects the view that all countries face common challenges expressed in different environments, that they have much to learn from each other and that they should be prepared to review their policies in dialogue with the relevant stakeholders.

The key condition for including religion as a pan-European topic in education was that, despite different views on religion at the personal and societal levels, all could agree that religion is a ‘cultural fact’ and that knowledge and understanding of religion at this level is highly relevant to good community and personal relations and is therefore a legitimate concern of public policy. This was not a form of intellectual reductionism, but a pragmatic recognition that the fact of the presence of religions in society was the lowest common denominator with which all European states could work in an educational context. Had this strategy not been adopted, the project would not have gone forward.

The Working Party’s proposals were discussed at a forum on ‘Intercultural education and the challenge of religious diversity and dialogue’ in Strasbourg in September 2002 and subsequently, in modified form, adopted by the Committee of Ministers. Experts in religious and intercultural education from different parts of Europe met in Paris in June 2003 in order to identify the key issues in relation to religious diversity and the religious dimension of intercultural education, to tease out the implications of these issues for pedagogy and to make policy recommendations for the Education Ministers’ conference on intercultural education to be held in Athens in November 2003. One conspicuous feature of this workshop was the initial suspicion by some of the intercultural educators of the aims and motives of specialists in religious education. It soon became clear that, as a result of their academic specialisation and national focus, many in each field were ignorant of the work of the others; there was especially an ignorance of work done on open and impartial approaches to the study of religions in schools. Once intercultural educators

22 http://www.coe.int/T/e/human_rights/ecri/5-Archives/2-Other_texts/2-Vienna_Summit/Declaration/Declaration_Vienna_Summit.asp accessed 15 May 2006.

became aware of the range of pedagogical and theoretical work that had been done in seeking to present religious material impartially, a genuine dialogue was established, and the complementary skills of the different constituencies were appreciated mutually.

In terms of policy, the working group that included members from Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Greece, the UK, Latvia and Denmark recommended that, whatever the system of religious education in any particular state, children should have education in religious and secular diversity as part of their intercultural education, regardless of where specifically this was included in the curriculum. This element of the curriculum should include, for example, encouraging tolerance for different religious and secular points of view, education in human rights, citizenship and conflict management, and strategies to counter racism and discrimination in a religiously diverse world.²³ The 2003 Athens Conference of the European Ministers of Education endorsed the project and also recognised its significance in promoting dialogue beyond Europe.

Issues related to the project were discussed at a high profile conference on ‘The religious dimension of intercultural education’, held in Oslo in June 2004. Participants included educational decision-makers from most member states and from observer states, education professionals and representatives of civil society involved in intercultural education. Speakers included the Prime Minister of Norway and the Council of Europe’s Director General for Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport. The conference proceedings were published by the Council (Council of Europe, 2004a).

Following the conference, the Council appointed a group of specialists in religious and intercultural education to work together to produce a guide for teachers, teacher trainers, administrators and policy makers to deal with the issue of religious diversity in Europe’s schools (Council of Europe, 2006). The first section deals with theoretical perspectives that teachers and others need to be aware of in considering the dimension of religious diversity in intercultural education. The second begins to relate the conceptual elements of intercultural education to various approaches to teaching and learning. The third section considers wider questions of religious diversity in schools, including school governance and management, dealing with how to apply intercultural education principles (participation, inclusion and respect for human rights) in different educational settings. The final section includes some examples of current practice in some member states of the Council of Europe.

At the end of the project, the Steering Committee for Education will submit a draft recommendation to the Committee of Ministers on the management of religious diversity

23 This group also recommended that states should:

encourage schools to develop policies with respect to diversity (including religious diversity) promoting equity based on the national and local situation and within the legal framework of the country

collect and disseminate examples of good practice of school policies.

encourage schools to develop curricula that reflect cultural diversity, including religious and linguistic diversity.

provide initial and continuing teacher education that reflects the reality and needs of teachers preparing children for participation in an open society and of teachers working in multicultural schools.

encourage schools to develop a critical attitude towards textbooks and electronic means of information and to develop criteria for the selection and use of resources.

in schools, based on the project's approach. The final Ministerial recommendation will provide a set of principles that can be used by all member states. As with other work within the Council of Europe, the process of interdisciplinary and international collaboration was as important as the product. There are now established procedures for including studies of religious diversity as a dimension of intercultural education at the European level.

The Council of Europe and Education for Democratic Citizenship

The Council of Europe has considered education for democratic citizenship (EDC) to be a priority in relation to its mission to strengthen pluralistic democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Europe. The EDC project was officially launched by the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe's member countries in Strasbourg in October 1997. At the time of writing, (2006), the project is now in its third phase. The first phase, covering 1997-2000, set out to identify values and skills needed to become responsible citizens and to examine how they could be acquired and transmitted to others. By September 2000 publications had been produced clarifying concepts, practices and methods, identifying and promoting citizenship sites (including schools), presenting various studies and teaching materials, and establishing a network including decision makers, experts, practitioners and NGOs. The first phase resulted in the production of a range of publications including Audigier (2000), discussing basic concepts and competences for citizenship education, Carey and Forrester (2000), considering 'sites of citizenship' and Dürr, Spajic-Vrkaš and Martins (2000), exploring different contexts for learning for democratic citizenship, and considering methods and practices, including core concepts, values and skills. Here, Education for Democratic Citizenship is seen as inclusive of many aspects of Human Rights Education, Civic Education, Peace Education, Global Education and Intercultural Education as well as activities in which participation in society can be learned, exercised and encouraged. The results of phase one were endorsed by the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education in Cracow in October 2000.

The second phase covered the period 2000-2004, concentrating on the development of EDC policies, establishing networks, producing and disseminating materials and preparing for the European Year of Citizenship in 2005. In 2002, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted the proposal that member states should make EDC a priority of educational policy and reform (Council of Europe, 2004b, p. 13). The EDC group produced a systematic review of policy on EDC in six regions of Europe,²⁴ a 'toolkit' for policy makers and practitioners (including Huddleston & Garabagiu, 2005) and a key text on learning about and practising democratic participation in the school (Dürr, 2005).

The European Year of Citizenship through Education (2005) marked the culmination of the first two phases of the EDC project and set out to encourage the implementation of agreements by politicians who undertook to adapt the 2002 Committee of Ministers' Recommendation on EDC to their own states' education systems. The year included a

24 The policy review was piloted in South Eastern European countries and then applied in the Northern, Western, Southern, Central and Eastern regions. The results of these studies are published in Council of Europe (2004b), as is a synthesis of them.

range of activities, some in collaboration with international organisations such as the EU and UNESCO.

The third phase of the project (2006–2009) aims to promote sustainable policies, support good practice and encourage co-operation between and within the member States. The programme includes the further development of guidelines, tools and policy recommendations and is especially concentrating on developing ideas for democratic governance in educational institutions (Bäckman & Trafford, 2006).

The EDC project has not dealt directly with religion as an aspect of citizenship education. This is partly because the project is primarily concerned with generic issues, and may also be because of the view that religion was the centre-piece of the project on Intercultural Education and the Challenge of Religious Diversity and Dialogue in Europe – intercultural education being considered to be a sub-set of EDC. However, the absence of religion from direct consideration in the EDC project is a pity, since there are various reasons for addressing issues of religion within citizenship education – issues concerning values, human rights, peace and the global environment, as well as existential questions – that are not specific to the intercultural dimension (Blaylock, 2003; Gearon, 2006; Ippgrave, 2003; Jackson, 2003a; Jackson & Fujiwara 2007).

Proposal for a European Centre for Religious Education

Mention should also be made of discussions prompted by the then Commissioner for human rights, Mr. Alvaro Gil-Robles, who set up a series of annual meetings to discuss the role of religious bodies in promoting human rights and addressing social issues in member states. The meetings brought together representatives of the main religions traditionally present in Europe, representatives of the authorities of the Council of Europe's member states, academics and politicians (including some members of the Committee of Ministers). These annual seminars began in 2000, turning their attention to religious education at the meetings in Malta (2004) and Kazan in the Russian Federation (2006).

The Maltese consultation discussed the possibility of establishing a foundational programme for religious education in all member states of the Council, and considered the establishment of a European Centre for Religious Education focusing on human rights (McGrady, 2006). The recommendations of the Maltese seminar were considered by the Parliamentary Assembly in 2005 (<http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta05/EREC1720.htm>), which made specific recommendations to the Committee of Ministers, including that it should:

- examine the possible approaches to teaching about religions at primary and secondary levels, for example through basic modules which would subsequently be adapted to different educational systems (13.1.)
- promote initial and in-service teacher training in religious studies ... (13.2.)
- envisage setting up a European teacher training institute for the comparative study of religions (13.3.)
- encourage the governments of member states to ensure that religious studies are taught at the primary and secondary levels of state education (14.)

Such an education should include ensuring that pupils are informed impartially about religious diversity in Europe and aware of the human right of freedom of religion or belief (including the right to have no religion) (14.1, 2). The objective of this form of teaching should be to promote understanding, not to instil faith, even in countries having a state religion (14.4). Teachers providing this kind of education, from whatever discipline, would need specific training (14.5). Teacher training (for an impartial education in European religious diversity) should be provided within each state, and generic syllabuses (produced under the auspices of the Council of Europe) should be adapted to each country's particular needs and to the different ages of children (14.6).²⁵

The 2006 seminar, on 'dialogue, tolerance and education: the concerted action of the Council of Europe and the religious communities', at Kazan in the Russian Federation (22–23 February), took the discussion further.²⁶

The 2005 recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly were discussed by the Committee of Ministers on May 24th 2006. The Ministers welcomed the recommendations in principle, but set them in the context of various policy statements on developing intercultural dialogue (within and beyond Europe), including the religious dimension, relating them to the Council's wider activities in fields such as pedagogy and teacher education in intercultural education and history, which incorporate the dimension of religious diversity. Attention was drawn to the Council's project on the intercultural education and religious diversity (see above), especially to its output on *Religious Diversity and Intercultural Education: A Reference Book for Schools* (Council of Europe 2007), which encourages impartiality, open mindedness and a critical approach.

Although not stated explicitly, it is clear that the Committee of Ministers considered that the recommendations from the Parliamentary Assembly, relating only to teaching about religions, were too narrow in relation to the establishment of a European Centre. The Chair of the Education Steering Committee, whose observations were appended to the Committee of Ministers' response, reiterated the Steering Committee's interest in setting up a network, centre or 'pôle' of excellence for the training of education staff in the Council of Europe's fields of competence, such as education for democratic citizenship

25 Parliamentary Assembly, 4 October 2005 Recommendation 1720 (2005) <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta05/EREC1720.htm> accessed 9 June 2006.

26 The conclusion to the seminar report states that:

In the majority of Council of Europe member states the new generations do not even receive an education in their own religious heritage, much less that of others. For this reason, it had previously been suggested to establish an Institute capable of contributing to the development of teaching programmes, methods and materials in the member states. At the same time this Institute would serve as a research centre on these matters. It should also be a training centre for instructors, a meeting place and a forum for dialogue and exchange. Course content should be defined in close collaboration with representatives of the different religions traditionally present in Europe (Anon 2006).

Participants discussed the nature of such a centre (it should be independent, but organised within the structures of the Council of Europe), the kind of curriculum that might be taught there, the place that religious communities might have in a consultative role (the group envisaged an advisory body from the religious communities who could work with the Council of Europe), and the Centre's organisation, management and staffing. For example, the group envisaged an advisory body from the religious communities who could work with the Council of Europe.

and human rights, history teaching and intercultural education. The Chair noted that training for teachers on education about religion could be featured more prominently in the centre's programme.²⁷

Summary

I have outlined issues of policy and practice regarding the place of religion in public education internationally and in Europe, noting the view expressed within the Council of Europe that 9/11 was a 'wake-up-call' with regard to the study of religions in relation to social and cultural issues, precipitating a move towards the inclusion of studies of religions in public education across Europe. This shift in policy especially prompts the question of the relationship between studies of religion in education and citizenship education and related areas such as intercultural education.

At the level of European policy and pedagogy, I have, in particular, traced developments in the fields of education about religious diversity and citizenship education within the Council of Europe. On the positive side, the benefits of interdisciplinary work were noted, involving specialists in religious and intercultural education who have worked together fruitfully on a project bringing the dimension of religious diversity to intercultural education. The joint work did much to dispel stereotypes of research and development in religious education, facilitated the dissemination of pedagogical ideas derived from the RE field to wider constituencies and raised awareness among religious education specialists of the academic isolation of their field.

Also of particular benefit is the Council of Europe's role in European integration. This does not aim for homogeneity across European education systems. Rather it requires the application of human rights principles to educational issues in order to develop models for policy and practice that are adaptable for use in particular national settings. The Council's arrangements for integrating recommendations from projects into the European political process are a key element in this, especially in terms of influencing policy development in member states. Examples illustrating the roles of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Committee of Ministers and the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education in consolidating and applying ideas from projects have been given.

Negatively, it was noted that, while much good work is being done in the Council of Europe on Education for Democratic Citizenship, so far there has been no specific collaborative work focusing on EDC involving both religious education and EDC specialists. This is partly because the EDC project has concentrated on generic issues, and partly because the EDC project regards intercultural education to be a sub-set of EDC – and, of course, the Council already has a project on intercultural education and religious diversity. It would be beneficial to have a forum within the Council of Europe where specialists in the two fields (and other related areas) could share research findings and pedagogical studies, debate issues and develop ideas for policy and practice. Religious education has much to offer such discussions, since there has been a significant amount of

27 <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc06/EDOC10944.htm> accessed 13 June 2006.

theoretical and empirical research on the relationship between the two fields initiated by specialists in religion (eg Gearon, 2003; Jackson, 2003a; Jackson & Fujiwara, 2007; McGrady, 2006; Ouellet, 2006).

I outlined the proposals for a European Centre for Religious Education, developed by a group convened by the Council's Commissioner for Human Rights and approved by the Parliamentary Assembly. General approval to the principles underlying this proposal was given by the Committee of Ministers, but it was also clear that the Ministers saw the proposal as too narrow and isolated from other related concerns of the Council. Mention was made of the possibility for the development of a European interdisciplinary Centre bringing together expertise in a range of fields, including citizenship education, intercultural education, human rights education and the study of religions. As indicated above, the establishment of such a Centre would provide rich opportunities for more international and interdisciplinary work, including the study of religions. The Council of Europe commissioned a feasibility study which recommended the establishment of such an interdisciplinary Centre. Subsequently, a major international conference on 'Dialogue of Cultures and Inter-Faith Co-operation' (the Volga Forum) included in its final declaration the statement that 'the participants expressed their support for the project aiming at setting up, in the framework of the Council of Europe, a pôle of excellence on human rights and democratic citizenship education, taking into account the religious dimension'.²⁸

Discussion

If such a Centre were established, I would put four related issues immediately on the agenda for consideration. The first concerns the representation of religion as a 'cultural fact', the second is concerned with teaching about religions in a social climate of growing racism, the third relates to the use of pedagogies giving agency to children and young people and the fourth deals specifically with the issue of whether children and young people should share their own beliefs and commitments in exploring issues related to identity. Each of these issues is relevant to the debate about religion in the public sphere, and especially to the discussion of the study of religions in public education in Europe and the relationship between an open, critical religious education and a broad citizenship education which incorporates intercultural and human rights education and related fields.

28 The conference was held in Nizhniy Novgorod in the Russian Federation, September 7-9, 2006, under the auspices of the Ministry of Regional Development of the Russian Federation, the Inter-Faith Council of Russia and the Council of Europe. The quotation is from the 'Volga Forum Declaration', Final Document of the International Conference 'Dialogue of Cultures and Inter-Faith Cooperation', paragraph 4.

http://www.strasbourg-reor.org/modules.php?name=News&new_topic=42&file=article&sid=352 http://www.coe.int/T/DC/Press/news/20060908_declaration_volga_en.asp (both accessed 12 October 2006).

Religion as a Cultural Fact

The generic Council of Europe perspective for the intercultural project, as reflected in the ground rules developed by politicians and civil servants, takes a cultural view of religion. That is, religion is represented as a ‘cultural fact’. The maintenance of strict impartiality in the face of contested religious and secular beliefs is a position that one would expect to find adopted by a formal political institution manifesting the values of constitutional democracy in the institutional public sphere (Habermas, 2006).

For the Council of Europe, religion is seen as a topic to be dealt with at the level of culture – within intercultural education, itself perceived as a subset of Education for Democratic Citizenship. The documentary evidence from the Council of Europe confirms that the ‘religion as a cultural fact’ position is neither an epistemological stance nor a secular assumption, but a *procedural* strategy for dealing publicly with an intractable problem that had previously kept religion out of the general European discussion and out of policy development and curricula in much European public education (Council of Europe, 2002).²⁹

There are developments in the Council of Europe’s relationship with religions, in that there is an increasing openness to consultation with religious organisations. The Volga Forum Declaration notes that the participants:

welcomed the newly established policy of the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe of inviting religious leaders and consulting with religious organisations on relevant topics. They felt that the time had indeed come for the Council of Europe to develop appropriate mechanisms for an open, transparent and regular dialogue with religious organisations (Volga Forum Declaration, Final Document, paragraph 6, September 2006).³⁰

This is a positive move in the sense that dialogue between those of different religious and secular outlooks, using both religious and secular language, is fully appropriate at the level of public debate (Habermas, 2006).

The important point is that the Council of Europe should maintain its impartiality and independence and should not be over-influenced either by secularists or by those promoting religious stances and worldviews. On the one hand, there is a need for scrutiny of policies and materials produced in the Council’s name in order to monitor any tendency towards reductionism – that is to check that there is no assumption that religion can *only* be interpreted in cultural terms.³¹ On the other hand, there is equally a need to ensure that religious bodies do not propagate their own beliefs via the Council of Europe or in any other way compromise its impartiality and commitment to fair deliberation on the part of *all* citizens.

29 The issue of faith-based religious education is a separate issue. One view expressed within the Council of Europe, based on human rights arguments, recognises the complementary nature of faith-based education (mainly in the private sphere) and a generic public education ‘about’ religion (McGrady 2006).

30 http://www.strasbourg-reor.org/modules.php?name=News&new_topic=42&file=article&sid=352 http://www.coe.int/T/DC/Press/news/20060908_declaration_volga_en.asp accessed 12th October 2006.

31 Moreover, the appreciation of religion as a ‘cultural fact’ should not inhibit the observation in classroom practice that many religious people believe their convictions to be true.

Religion and Racism

There has already been some work done on religious education in relation to racism, including what Tariq Modood (1997) has called ‘cultural racism’ (e.g. Council of Europe 2007; Jackson 1997, 2004; Milot, 2001; see also Runnymede Trust, 1997 and Richardson, 2004 on ‘Islamophobia’). However, post 9/11, European countries have seen a revival of far right political parties, some of them getting quite close to the political mainstream – in Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium and France, for example (MacEwen, 1995; Mason 2002). Muslims and Islam are the main target for such groups (Modood, Triandafyllidou & Zapata-Barrero, 2006). Moreover, the perpetration of atrocities by radical Muslims in European locations, and the threat of further attacks, has led to a hardening of policy towards ‘multiculturalism’ by some European governments, which has played into the hands of the extreme right. Reports in popular newspapers, interpreting the remarks of politicians, can reinforce stereotypes of Islam and foster an atmosphere of deep intolerance,³² What sets out to be a reasonable debate, according to the politicians concerned, can precipitate a change in climate permitting segments of the media to cultivate a fear of ‘difference’, and allowing the perpetuation of stereotypes and generalizations that are characteristic of ‘cultural racism’ and ‘Islamophobia’

Such forms of racism can only be addressed fundamentally through the leadership and policies of governments. However, schools and other educational institutions offer one area of public space where racist assumptions can be studied and challenged in a rational manner. There is still much work to be done here. There are, of course, key issues relating to whole school policies and values which need further consideration, but religious education (at least in some education systems), citizenship education, human rights education (Gearon, 2006), peace education (Jackson & Fujiwara, 2007) and associated fields, are curriculum areas which have the potential to address forms of racism that focus on religion and culture. For example, the Spanish scholar Francisco Diez de Velasco has suggested that religious education has the potential to become ‘a laboratory for peace education’ (Diez de Velasco, 2007). Fulfilling that potential would require interdisciplinary study and close attention to pedagogy, especially in developing approaches which include self-reflection as well as learning to listen to the voices of others and to be critical of stereotypical and insensitive representations of religions. Thus we turn now to issues related to pedagogy that require further consideration.

Agency of Pupils and Pedagogical Styles

Issues of pedagogy need to be considered in relation to views of the child or young person. There is a general issue of whether participative methods which give independence and agency to students are universally acceptable, and a specific issue as to whether methods drawing on personal views of children and young people on *religious matters in particular* are appropriate in all countries.

32 Eg Ban it! Daily Express, 21 October, 2006.

What is striking about the Council of Europe's work on Education for Democratic Citizenship is its emphasis on a 'maximal' approach that gives agency to students, and which has implications for the organisation and procedures of the whole school and for governance, as well as for classroom methods and styles of teaching and learning. We have seen that strong support for a student-centred pedagogy also comes from independent reviews of European research on approaches to citizenship education. Deakin Crick's analysis of research relating to teaching and learning, in the context of citizenship education, links the exploration of personal issues with broader social issues and provides evidence that the participation and motivation of students increases when lesson content relates to their own personal experiences and that students are enabled to analyse and reflect on their own personal stories and experiences through gaining awareness of the situations of others.³³

The general approach of the Council of Europe EDC project and the findings from the research projects reported by Deakin Crick reverberate with much research and development in religious education which takes a hermeneutical turn. Theoretical work influenced by hermeneutics,³⁴ ethnographic research on young people's identity in the context of religious diversity,³⁵ and pedagogical research on the practice of religious education³⁶ are all highly relevant to an analysis of the relationship between a critical religious education and the kind of 'maximal' citizenship education advocated in the research reported by Deakin Crick and in the Council of Europe EDC project.³⁷ The body of theoretical work affirms the exploration of individual identity issues as a key feature of religious education, and links issues important to young people with broader questions of value. Evidence from ethnographic studies of children and young people confirms the importance of attention to individual identity issues in representing accurately individual young people's stances on religion and ethnicity. Data from such focused qualitative studies are a powerful counter to stereotypical portrayals of religions and provide an important source for religious, intercultural and citizenship education. The research studies on pedagogy in religious education referred to above also show the efficacy of approaches that include the exploration of identity issues, even with younger children. Iprgrave's work in England, on dialogue in the primary school, draws heavily on children's own perspectives and experiences (2003, 2005). As with Leganger-Krogstad's research in Norway (2000, 2001, 2003) and Weisse's work in Germany (2003), Iprgrave makes connections between children's explorations of identity at the individual level and broader social issues. Referring to Iris Young's writing (Young, 1990), I also argue that, in inte-

33 Research on the values of European youth also shows that most young people rate the value of personal autonomy highly (Kay and Ziebertz 2006).

34 Eg Jackson 1997, 2004; Meijer 1995, 2006; Ouellet 2006; Skeie 1995, 2006; Wright 2006.

35 Eg Jackson and Nesbitt 1993; Nesbitt 2004, 2006; Østberg 2003, 2006.

36 Eg Iprgrave 2003, 2005; Jackson 1997, 2004; 2006b; Leganger-Krogstad 2000, 2001, 2003; O'Grady 2003, 2005; Weisse 2003.

37 See the view that exploration of fundamental questions also contributes to citizenship education (eg Iprgrave 2003) and the view that religious education has much to offer considerations of global citizenship (Jackson 2003b). Note also that some research conducted in the broad religious education field is highly relevant to the exploration of the relationship between religious and citizenship education at the conceptual level. Geir Afdal's monumental study of 'tolerance' comes to mind (Afdal 2006).

grating religious and citizenship education, pedagogies that give voice to children, thus promoting 'differentiated citizenship', should be favoured (Jackson, 2003, 2004). Moreover, O'Grady's action research studies with adolescents, conducted in schools in the north of England, demonstrate that a pedagogy relating students' ethical concerns and personal pre-occupations to material from the study of religions and to wider social issues can be highly motivating to students (O'Grady, 2003, 2005).

Despite this impressive body of theory and research related to hermeneutical and pupil-centred approaches to religious and citizenship education, it is currently not possible to apply or develop it in all parts of Europe. The diversity of national systems reflects various pedagogical traditions related to each country's historical experience, and student-centred approaches are at odds with traditional practice in some European states. Some colleagues from France and Spain tell me that, currently, the kind of student-centred approaches advocated by the Council of Europe EDC project, reflected in the research reported by Deakin Crick, would be difficult to apply in public school classrooms in their countries, although this would depend to some extent on particular circumstances, such as the age of children and the subject under study (in France, it would be easier to do in philosophy than in some other subjects, for example). Comparative education specialists would need to analyse whether this tendency is a matter of 'cultural assumption' or whether there are other reasons for it. For example, in explaining why the IEA study on citizenship education showed that only around 25 per cent of pupils surveyed were encouraged or allowed to share their personal views, it would be instructive to investigate how far the various national traditions on pedagogy reflect different perspectives (including theological perspectives of various kinds) on the nature of authority and the nature of childhood. It would be valuable to know how much support there is for the idea of the child as an autonomous agent, a view which has gained support through theoretical and empirical studies in the sociology of childhood (eg Christensen, 2004; Hallett & Prout, 2003; Prout 2001).

There are some important points to pursue and develop here about the nature of learning: a hermeneutical view *requires* movement between the learner's views and those to be found in material that is studied, such as material from the religions, or movement between personal issues and wider social issues or broad issues of tradition. It does not separate activities of understanding and reflection (representation, interpretation and reflexivity [Jackson, 1997, 2004, 2006b]) but presents these as complementary and integrated processes.

Children's Personal Views on Religion

When we turn to the specific issue of the study of religions in education, we find additional objections to approaches which give children agency and voice, even within a 'democratic' classroom where the teacher acts as an impartial facilitator. These are that the exploration of issues related to identity issues of children and young people encroach on the field of private space and potentially undermine parental wishes. For example, the French discussion sees the study of religion in schools as 'teaching about religion', as imparting a body of knowledge that is regarded procedurally as independent of the stu-

dents in the classroom (Estivalezes, 2006). The principle of *laïcité*, which is linked to the separation of public and private domains, demands the impartiality and neutrality of teachers (Debray, 2002). Students have more freedom to express their own religious convictions than teachers, although it is arguable that the 2004 law against the wearing of religious symbols has restricted it. Moreover, the way in which *laïcité* is represented often makes it difficult in practice for young people to discuss their own personal views in class. As one French colleague put it, 'There is a fear of assigning religious identities to pupils: we don't want to force them to reveal whether they are Jewish, Muslim or Christian and, sometimes, most of them are just indifferent; I think this might be one of the reasons why we don't want too much of a pupil-centred approach'. Nevertheless, discussion of the interpretation of the concept of *laïcité* is currently part of the French debate, including the issue of whether religious expression should be confined to private space (such as the family or religious community) or should be integral to public life within civil society; thus there is potentially some room for movement (Debray, 2002; Estivalezes, 2006). For reasons close to those stated above, it would also be difficult currently to take a fully hermeneutical approach in countries such as Spain, Turkey and Estonia, just as it would in some non-European states, such as the Republic of Korea or the USA.

We have already noted that the ideal of European integration, as expressed within the EU and the Council of Europe, does not demand or expect total uniformity in educational matters. What is important is that a dialogue is maintained, especially through collaborative work on European research projects (such as the EC REDCo Project) and through the Council of Europe. In discussing pedagogical issues in the European context, it would be worth considering dialogue in the context of wider international debates related to the study of religions and citizenship education. We might, for example, gain some insight from another country struggling to find pedagogies for the study of religion in public education, namely the USA.³⁸ Over the last 30 years or so, there has been some movement in the United States towards inclusion of religion in the curriculum of publicly funded schools. Arising from the religious liberty principles of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, the view has been developed 'that age-appropriate study about religion should be a part of all public and private elementary, secondary and university education' (American Assembly, 2000, p. 14). Teaching models so far developed are of the 'teaching about' variety, aiming to increase pupils' understanding of different religions in history and society as well as to increase tolerance and sensitivity toward people of different faiths and philosophies. Advocates of this approach would be wary of methods which relate material studied to students' own beliefs and assumptions and with the development of their religious or spiritual identities. This would be regarded as a deviation from the requirement that public schools should be entirely neutral in areas of religion. Bruce Grelle, a leading authority in the debate about religion in public education, in considering the American situation in relation to my own interpretive approach (Jackson, 1997, 2004, 2006b), suggests an alternative way of making the connection between knowledge and understanding and pupils' personal lives. He does this precisely through

38 There are also interesting developments in the Canadian province of Quebec that are very relevant to the European debate (see Milot 2001; Ouellet 2000, 2001, 2006).

linking religious education to citizenship education, with an emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in a pluralistic democracy, rather than on the sharing of personal views. 'Teaching about diverse religious and secular worldviews and ways of life', argues Grelle, 'becomes a venue for helping students understand their rights to religious liberty or freedom of conscience as well as their responsibility to protect those same rights for their fellow citizens' (Grelle, 2006).

Grelle's ideas provide an example of an adaptation to a strictly 'teaching about' approach, tailored to the American context, resulting from an international dialogue about pedagogy. It is hoped that the Council of Europe will continue its important work by promoting dialogical thinking of this type across the European states and between the Council of Europe and other countries, in the Arab world, for example, in an interdisciplinary context. This could be achieved under the Council's current organisational arrangements, but ideally should be facilitated through the establishment of a Centre bringing together educators and researchers dealing with religion in public education and scholars from other fields, such as education for democratic citizenship.

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