



CARD Seminar 2014

ABSTRACTS



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Wanda Alberts, Leibniz Universität, Hannover

Critical Analysis of Religious Diversity in School Contexts

The paper deals with the representation, construction, conceptualisation and management of religious diversity in educational contexts, particularly with education about religion in public state schools. The paper will focus on the influence of the state, law and human rights on this field. Examples will be the case of Norwegian RE at the European Court of Human Rights in 2007 and the referendum about the status of RE that was held in the city of Berlin in 2009. The examples will be contextualised in the different models for education about religious and nonreligious diversity in Norway and Germany within the European landscape of religious education (RE) or similar subjects.

The paper will draw attention to the frequent entanglement of scholarly and other (for example, religious or political) interests in RE and conclude with an outlook on what the points on the checklist developed on the first meeting of the CARD-seminar might imply for further critical research on RE-issues.

Irene Becci, University of Lausanne, Lausanne

The new religious and spiritual plurality in public health institutions: a European project

In the last decades, west European countries have been witnessing the emergence of new religious and spiritual practices and discourses. The word “new” is meant on the one hand in territorial terms, that is, some religious and spiritual practices are new for Europe but have existed in their extra-European context for centuries, and on the other hand, in cultural-historical terms, that is, some religious and spiritual practices and discourses are the outcome of processes of hybridization and syncretism and therefore unprecedented in their current form. Sociologists of religion have indeed not only documented the decline of religion but also processes of religious diversification. Far from being two parallel processes, ignoring each other and concerning two different parts of society, it is crucial to understand today, how they are dynamically interwoven and how they relate to each other.

One possible link is given by the notion of “spirituality” which is today, in a popularized form, irrupting into the clear-cut distinction between the secular and the religious. The emergence, in the context of “superdiverse” cities, of hybrid forms of religion and spirituality has a history. Already in the 1960s, 70s and 80s western cities have been the stage of large ideological components of the great counter-cultural movements. Urban youth have been reinventing new forms of spiritual and religious practices in line with their critique to the perceived gender, economic and military systems of domination. The high number of “New Age” or “Neo - hinduist” communities located in urban contexts have developed and today profoundly affect new

consumerist practices through the largely debated gentrification process. This gives rise to a notion of spirituality that transgresses the boundaries between religion and not-religion, religion and the secular. The notion of spirituality is no longer specific to religion, it has entered mainstream culture. Public hospitals as secular organizations are concerned with religious and spiritual diversity in urban contexts. This communication aims at presenting a planned study of the impact of the success of new spiritualities in the realm of health, more particularly on the example of the hospital practices around premature delivery. To focus on one particular unit in hospitals located in three different European cities helps to understand the ways in which emergent and established religious and spiritual practices transform the secular conceptions of health and life.

Peter Beyer, University of Ottawa, Ottawa

Diverse Religious Diversities in the Systemic Rationales of Law, Media, and Education

Taking as a starting-point the argument presented in the author's presentation for the 2013 meeting of the CARD network, the paper examines theoretical perspectives for understanding how the situation of the re-institutionalization of religion in contemporary societies translates or has difficulty in translating itself into the systemic logics or rationales of legal, educational and media institutions in those societies. The set of hypothesis informing the analysis are a) that the difference in systemic rationales means that religion and religious diversity do not operate or are even understood in the same or even in necessarily commensurate ways in the three institutional settings; b) that scientific understandings of religion and religious diversity diverge in yet a different way from these three; c) that institutionalized and individual religious identities and understandings of religious diversity present yet more divergence; but d) that there is nonetheless operating a comparable and consequentially common construction of religion and religious diversity in all these perspectives. In conclusion, the consequences of this analysis for research on religious diversity are discussed.

Jørn Borup, University of Aarhus, Aarhus

Managing and negotiating religious unities and diversities

Religious diversity has emerged as a new (scholarly) field, but it can be argued that historically, and especially beyond a Western sphere, religious diversity has been the norm of most lived religion. As such, a focus on diversity is a perspective revealing monolithic traditions as particular and constructed, rather than universal and essential. However, also diversity has been used in emic frameworks for discursive and institutional legitimation. Religious traditions have oscillated between different types of diversities and unities in strategic identification and authority narratives. This paper will present examples of such religious diversity representation from Asian contexts in a historical and comparative perspective. While acknowledging post-orientalist theories and critical discourse analyses, it also discusses the importance of seeing such negotiations of diversities as quintessential ingredients of lived religion.

Paul Bramadat, University of Victoria, Victoria

Reason, Religion and Realpolitik: Anatomy and Physiology of a Canadian Controversy

When scholars of religion turn their attention to methodological or theoretical issues regarding the ways religion is constituted in and by law, media and education, it is easy to forget that in these spheres of action, informal and formal political forces often determine the ways events develop “on the ground.” In this presentation, I discuss a 2013 controversy in Canada in which all three spheres overlap. In this incident, a man of undisclosed religious convictions (though all commentators assumed he was Muslim) refused to attend an in-person seminar that was part of an on-line course in sociology. He claimed his religion prevented him from being so close to women with whom he was not related. His professor rejected his argument and suggested that accepting this student’s request would make him (the professor) an “accessory to sexism.” The dean of the professor’s faculty, the provost, the human rights officer of the university, the national association of university professors, and dozens of provincial and federal politicians and other social leaders also weighed in on the issue. An excavation of this controversy allows us to understand more clearly the confluence of abstract intellectual discourses, public preconceptions about religion, and often coarse political considerations.

Marian Buchardt, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen

Religious Diversity and Law in South Africa

Recent scholarship in socio-legal studies and 'law and society' has seen a dramatic rise in interest and preoccupation with issues of religious diversity. Scholars have explored how human rights driven legal reforms have affected processes of de-monopolization, de-confessionalization and disestablishment of religion, examined emergent regimes of legal recognition and acknowledged the rising power of courts and judicial politics. While calling attention to the importance of law in shaping religious diversity, this scholarship sometimes fails to address the ways in which legal reform affects religious diversity as it is interpreted, negotiated and lived in religious communities. In this paper, I address this lacuna and discuss emergent forms of religious diversity in post-apartheid South Africa by looking at how constitutional reforms are perceived and acted upon amongst Christian groups, Muslims, Hindus and followers of 'African Traditional Religion'. In post-apartheid South Africa, religious diversity is constitutionally guaranteed through the protection of 1) equality and non-discrimination, and 2) religious freedom, and politically promoted through various forms of state-sponsored interfaith activities. These protections, however, came along with far-reaching progressive constitutional reforms toward non-discrimination of gender and sexual orientation. While most communities shared the commitment and understanding of non-discrimination as the key lesson of apartheid history, they also felt ambivalent with regard to how to reconcile the diverse aspects of human rights liberalism. The paper has three parts: in the first part I analyze the four religion-related judgments the

constitutional court issued after the end of apartheid and the judicial politics surrounding them. I then turn to the ways in which religious communities have interpreted these judicial politics. Finally, I explore how religious communities themselves attempt to reshape religious diversity through legal project, which became especially evident in the activism surrounding the Charter of Religious Freedom.

Henrik Reintoft Christensen, University of Aarhus, Aarhus
Diversity in research on religion in the news media?

The paper examines religion and news media research. Looking at some of the most influential journals in the study of religion and in the study of media and communication, this study maps the research interests and publication strategies regarding religion in the news media. It examines both the theories and methods used when studying religion in the news, the religion studied, as well as founding announcements in the articles. At the outset this paper hypothesizes a discrepancy between the religions studied and the actual distributions of religions in the world. This discrepancy is, on the other hand, highly correlated with the religions actually represented most prominently in the Western news media which then flows into the international, but Western based, high ranking journals.

Andrew Dawson, Lancaster University, Lancaster
Religious Diversity and Multifaceted Modernity

This paper situates recent criticism of multiculturalism within a wider context of growing dissatisfaction with key aspects of the once dominant 'difference paradigm'. (Founded on the theoretical intermingling of situatedness, knowledge and power, the difference paradigm comprises an amalgam of difference-oriented approaches — e.g. post-colonialism; postmodernism; communitarianism; difference feminism; multiculturalism; multiple modernities — which define themselves over against the universalising, homogenising, Westernising, secularising and collectivising excesses of the modern liberal settlement.) Treating growing criticisms of the difference paradigm as signs of an emerging theoretical step-change, I maintain that a new analytical space is being opened up for a fresh engagement with the dynamics of both socio-cultural diversification in general and religious diversity in particular. Though still theoretically unfashionable, this paper argues that a revitalised conceptualisation of 'modernity' promises a potentially fruitful contribution to thinking about religious diversity both within and across societal contexts impacted by contemporary globalizing processes, transnational networks and border-transcending flows. Embodied by the notion of 'multifaceted modernity', this revitalised conceptualisation combines an analytically robust approach with a hermeneutically nuanced appreciation which captures both the progressive globalization and localizing inflections of typically modern, diversity-inducing processes and dynamics.

Satoko Fujiwara, University of Tokyo, Tokyo
The Dynamics of Religious Diversity and Social Cohesion within School Textbooks: A Reflection on “Contextual” Religious Education Research

How can we assess, in an academically tenable manner, the degree of religious diversity within textbooks used in different countries and eras? In this paper I will tackle this question, starting by reviewing a European research report that focuses on “diversity” and “context.” I regard the report released by Robert Jackson’s Warwick RE research group in 2010, which is titled “Materials Used to Teach about World Religions in Schools in England,” as a good example of the recent European discussions on the issue. I have also reviewed some of the reports of REDCo (Religion in Education: A Contribution to Dialogue or a Factor of Conflict in Transforming Societies of European Countries) and ENERCA (The European Network for Religious Education in Europe through Contextual Approaches) that are based on research conducted by groups of European scholars. From personal observations of these reports, three assumptions seem common among contemporary European scholars with regard to “diversity” and “context.” First, it is desirable, both from a RS (religious studies) perspective and from a RS-based RE (religious education) perspective, to teach about the diversity not only among religious traditions but also within each religious tradition. Second, it is believed that describing such diversity enriches RE and introduces elements of intercultural or citizenship education because it can strengthen social cohesion by making education more inclusive and less discriminative. Third, diversity can be described by “contextualizing” a certain religion, religious group or individual.

Scholars who emphasize the importance of contexts are referred to as promoters of “contextual religious education.”

In this paper I will show that these European assumptions do not necessarily hold in Japan. The criteria used by the Warwick group to evaluate the teaching materials for RE may be equally useful in other European countries but would not work at least in one country outside Europe. As for the theoretical contributions to this CARD meeting, I will make three arguments: first, religious “diversity” or “difference” can be divided into two types, each of which correlates to social cohesion in its own way. Second, there is neither a religious nor spiritual way of committing to a religious tradition. Third, contrary to what context-conscious scholars believe, contextualism is not the logical opposite of essentialism. Rather, contextualism can be a version of essentialism. To note, my concern in this paper will be purely analytical, and I am not intending to make a normative claim that RE should or should not serve a practical goal such as social cohesion or interfaith dialogue.

Maria del Mar Griera, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona,
Barcelona

“Who should teach what?” Politics, religious diversity and education in contemporary Spain

Religious education has historically been a site of struggle between political and religious actors in Spain. The growth in number and visibility of religious diversity has introduced new challenges in this area and has fostered the political debate on the role of religious and moral education in the school. In this regard a new proposal of substituting ‘confessional religious education’ by a ‘non-confessional religious education’ at the school was launched in the early 2000’s. The proposal was widely discussed in the political sphere but finally rejected. The aim of this presentation is to trace the origins of this policy proposal, to analyze the main arguments that were presented for and against the proposal and to examine the reasons behind its failure. I will argue about the heuristic potential of taking this particular debate as a privileged site for exploring power struggles, historical legacies and competing discourses on religious diversity in the contemporary Spanish political field.

Rosalind I.J. Hackett, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Religion and Legal Personality: Controlling Religious Diversity in Africa through Registration Laws

My earliest research consisted of an ethnographic and historical study of religious pluralization in a south-eastern Nigerian town, together with several publications on the emergence of new religious movements. Subsequent studies addressed rising inter-religious tensions in Nigeria more generally. My recent work has focused on the rise of new media in Africa in relation to questions of religious pluralism and conflict, and on the regulation of religion in the African context by state and non-state actors. For the present paper I will draw on my current research on the registration of religious groups in Africa as that offers a more specific area of inquiry in regards to the facilitating or limiting of religious activities and expression.

This is not an easy task since comparative work by legal and social science scholars on the registration of religious groups has not generally extended to the African continent. Related jurisprudence and legal studies on religious freedom rights are thin on the ground in Africa. Some data are available from international reports on religious freedom and occasional media reports on the banning of certain religious organizations (such as Islam in Angola). I thus adopt a multi-disciplinary approach, drawing on the former sources, as well as legal literature on religious registration and association laws more broadly, and exploring these questions in a range of African states both at the theoretical and practical levels. Historical and contemporary studies of religion and state issues in Africa can provide some (albeit limited) comparative perspective on patterns of use and abuse of registration policy by both state and non-state parties,

as well as some of the unintended consequences. I will also consider a range of national and transnational factors (e.g. colonialism, migrations, conflict and war, global discourses on religious freedom, anti-cult activity, mass and social media) that have shaped and continue to shape the legal recognition and functioning of religious organizations (particularly the treatment of indigenous, minority or non-conventional religious groups) in various African contexts. In conclusion, I will question whether the definitional questions deriving from scholarship on religion are productive in this neo-liberalizing, post-colonial context and how they compare to legal entity framing in the political and legal setting.

Anna Halafoff, Deakin University, Melbourne
Australian Interfaith Youth Perspectives on Education about Religions and Beliefs in Schools: Interreligious Understanding, Social Inclusion, and Countering Extremism

Interfaith youth initiatives, and education about religions and beliefs (ERB) programs, began to be viewed as potential social cohesion strategies, and important tools in countering extremism, following the July 2005 London bombings when concerns about the radicalisation of Muslim youth and fears of home-grown terrorism became prevalent in many so-called Western societies. The multifaith movement had already grown significantly in the USA, the UK and Australia since September 11, 2001, given the movement's commitment to promoting positive interreligious relations and its longstanding commitment to challenging cultures of direct and structural violence within religious traditions. This paper presents the findings of a pilot study of young people participating in InterAction, a multifaith youth movement in Australia, between 2009-2014 and their experiences of and views on interreligious engagement and education about diverse religions and beliefs in schools. The data gathered indicates that interreligious youth initiatives and ERB programs can play a role in advancing interreligious understanding, social inclusion and countering extremism in religiously diverse societies. However, young people's visions of an ideal type of ERB program offer new insights on why, how and when these programs might best be delivered.

William Hoverd, Massey University, Wellington

**Reviewing the Religious Diversity Literature 2001-2013 –
Preliminary Findings and Observations**

This talk outlines the initial results emerging from a systematic review of the 'religious diversity literature' published between 2001 and 2013. The CARD Network review covered 186 books and 95 peer reviewed journal articles that were published within this period. Preliminary analysis suggests that this literature can be arranged in a number of thematic areas including: State Management of Religion, National Case Studies, Regional Case Studies, Human Rights, Accommodation and Social Inclusion, Religious Diversity and Islam, Religious Diversity Education, Religious Diversity in the Health Sector, and Religious Diversity & Secularism. Importantly, for the CARD Network, the existing literature has not focused upon methodological approaches to the study of Religious Diversity. The overall goal of the presentation is to map the current state of 'religious diversity literature,' to point to particular reoccurring trends and themes within the literature, and to encourage critical engagement with the preliminary findings.

Tim Jensen, University of Southern Denmark, Odense

The Danish Situation

Following a few words on Danish studies on religious diversity, the paper ever so swiftly presents an outline of what Jensen considers important and characteristic features of the Danish situation in regard to the handling of religion and religious diversities in the constitution, in sub-constitutional law, in the administration of religious communities applying for recognition, in public school and other public institutions, and in the so-called 'public service' TV and Radio.

Lene Kühle, Aarhus University, Aarhus
Continuing the Agenda

(No abstract)

Tuomas Martikainen, Åbo Academi University, Åbo
States dealing with religious diversity: what is it that is dealt with and what are its impacts?

The management, or governance, of religions and religious diversity has become of increasing concern for many states during the 2000s. The growth in states' interest is commonly associated with religious conflicts (terrorism), international migration and, especially, the rise of Islam in the West. This paper will address the issue of managing religion in the context of a move from a "Reformation Style" to a "New Style" of religion (Woodhead). The paper makes three central claims. First, the states do implicitly deal with "Reformation Style" religion in their efforts to deal with contemporary social conflict. Second, thereby they aim to make new religious phenomena similar to historical "Reformation Style" religion, but fail to acknowledge the shift to "New Style" religion. Third, the promotion of interfaith activities has led to a situation, whereby the locus of states' interest has moved from "religion(s)" to "religious diversity". The last change implies a new order of managing religion, whereby the focus is on interreligious relations rather than in bilateral state-religion/church relations. It is argued that this new focus has the potential to change the position of "religion" in society and may imply a new era in state-religion/church relations. Furthermore, the impact of "New Style" religion remains in the shadows from the public eye, but continues to erode the very basis on which the state-religion/church relations are built.

Alexander-Kenneth Nagel, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Bochum
Silencing Diversity? A critical analysis of multifaith rooms of quiet

How should public institutions, such as schools, hospitals or airports respond to religious pluralization? This question was posed prominently during a lawsuit about a Muslim prayer room at a German school. Based on an analysis of the legal arguments put forward against and in favor of a prayer room I will address a number of recently established inter- or multifaith rooms of quiet in communal as well as confessional hospitals, all of which have been installed as responses to Muslim requests. In doing so, I will analyze the notion of legitimate religious diversity and the implicit theology of religion as embodied in the particular composition of these rooms based on visual analysis. In a second step I will trace the planning process from the Muslim intervention to the actual interfaith room, based on interviews with chaplains and artists. Methodologically speaking, my paper contributes to the critical analysis of religious diversity by exploring a material culture perspective on manifestations or artifacts of religious pluralism in public institutions.

Susanne W. Rasmussen, University of Southern Denmark, Odense
Religious diversity: *religio* versus *superstitio* in antiquity and in contemporary Europe

This paper will discuss various aspects – empirical, theoretical, and methodological – of interaction between Christianity and other religions in the Roman Empire. I shall then compare these aspects with some of the cultural encounters, religious conflicts, and intercultural discussions in present-day Europe, such as migration, integration, freedom of speech, use of religious symbols, exotic apparel, and so on. By comparing cases diachronically as well as synchronically, my paper will focus on social, political, and religious mechanisms in ancient and modern multicultural Europe, analyzing the concepts of *religio* and *superstitio* as rhetorical strategy in questions of cultural and religious diversity. For instance, when the Christian church father Tertullian vividly depicts Christianity as the one and only true *religio* in opposition to the traditional and, to Tertullian, depraved pagan world of the Romans, polluted by *superstitio*, by impurity, by cruel and disgusting cults, by obscene rituals and ridiculous myths, by the stench of incense and the unclean blood of victims, by the dangerous and shameless world of the theatre, by eating binges, excessive drinking and sex orgies. Finally, the paper will discuss the benefits of a cross-disciplinary perspective on the subject, as well as the relevance of such an approach to contemporary European debates, where it can potentially clarify the role played by religions in conflict and coexistence in our ever more globalized world.

Mar Marcos Sanchez, Universidad de Cantabria, Santander
Religious Diversity and Discourses of Tolerance in Antiquity

As it had been the current situation throughout the history of the ancient Mediterranean, a plurality of religious groups and traditions coexisted in the Roman Empire, without any theoretical discourse over religious tolerance having ever been formulated. Religious cohabitation changed dramatically with the spread of Christianity. As a monotheistic, exclusivist religion with a universalistic scope, Christianity was incompatible with the traditional religious practices of the Greco-Roman world as well as with the religious demands of the Roman state. During the time of persecution (2nd to early 4th century AD), Christian apologists developed an elaborate discourse in favour of tolerance and against religious coercion. They founded their claim on arguments of varying nature, basically: 1) the idea that religion was a personal and intimate choice, which could not be imposed by force; 2) the superiority, in philosophical terms, of persuasion over coercion; 3) the praxis of Roman policy, which had always respected and preserved the religious *ethos* of the peoples under its rule; and 4) the right to practice the religion of one's choice as a privilege inherent in citizenship. The aim of this paper is to study the apologetic discourse on tolerance based on the inter-connection of the third and fourth of these arguments, i.e. religious freedom as one of the rights that the Roman state guarantee for its citizens on the basis of acknowledging religious plurality.

Stefania Travagnin, University of Groningen, Groningen
**A harmonious plurality of religious expressions.
Theorising official normative paradigms in Chinese
education practices**

The Chinese case of religious diversity does present a challenge to our conceptions of religious diversity. It is a somewhat messier kind of religious diversity (A. Y. Chaw, 2013)

In the recent years scholars of religion in China have addressed the issue of 'religious diversity' with the preliminary caveat that both the construct of 'religion' and the concept of 'diversity' should be problematised and critically redefined in light of the China context. Adam Yuet Chaw explained the concept of 'religious diversity' as alien to most of the Chinese, since Chinese people identify religions not as monolithic and impermeable systems of belief but as situation-based practices. As Chaw argues, if we consider religions in terms of 'religiosities' (or, to use Chaw's definition, 'modalities of doing religion'), then we do find a plurality of ritualised expressions of faith that are intertwined in the Chinese context. In other words, we may not perceive a proper 'religious diversity' in China, but we can certainly unveil a 'diversity in religiosities'. While looking at the doctrinal part of religions, Joachim Gentz lists the so-called 'three doctrine' (Ch: *sanjiao* 三教) as a case of doctrinal diversity that has permeated China successfully for centuries. Such diversity appears balanced on the basis on an inherent and atemporal unity of all the three doctrines. Perry Schmidt-Leukel rewords this idea of 'unity' as 'harmony', which is a (Confucian-based) Chinese key concept (Ch: *datong* 大同). Yang Fenggang

proposes the economics model and Philip Clart the ecology model as the most adequate theoretical lenses through which reading nature and meaning of the diversity of religions in China.

While these theories facilitate contextualisation and understanding of forms of 'diversity' within China, I propose to reconsider the often ambiguous and fragmented Chinese religious landscape through ritual theories and the concept of agency. This process will produce alternative epistemological models for the spectrum of the Chinese plurality of religious expressions.

When it comes to the context of religious education, we move from the private way of doing religions to religions' participation in public life, which implies the shift of focus from personal experience of religion to policies on religion, changes in the dialectics of agency, and more concern for the efficacy of the official central denomination and control of religion. I propose to reframe those religious education practices by engaging them with the concept of 'identity'. A planned re-appropriation of the root-identity of Chinese civilization, I argue, leads the programs of schooling for Chinese citizens in the era of globalization.