



ERENEWS

European Religious Education

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Our newsletter is classified among the "other activities" of the DSU's educational offer as an activity that entitles you to 6 cfu (area F).

Are you a student in another university?

EREnews can also host trainees from other universities, following the signing of an agreement between the university of origin and Roma Tre. The internship, which lasts 150 hours, allows students to obtain 6 cfu, can be carried out entirely online and requires the student to take part in editorial meetings and to collaborate in the creation of an issue of the bulletin (press review on a given topic; writing of a fact sheet on a specific European school system and a contribution to the monographic section, article or interview).

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ERENews

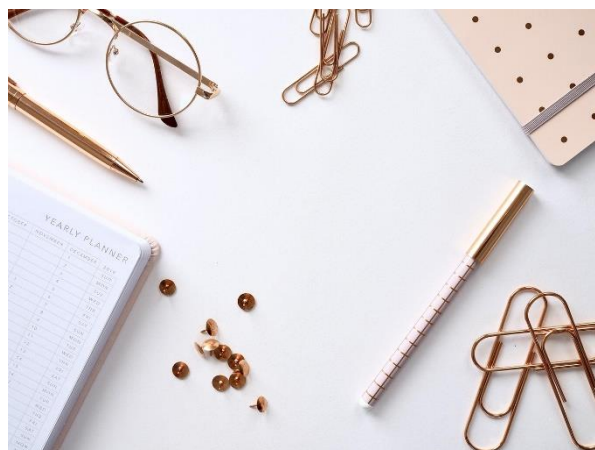
European Religious Education Newsletter

EDITORIAL

By Federica Candido

Readers will have realised that, in recent years, ERENews has been trying to take on a new face. Ours is a structural intervention that seeks to combine the fruitful and courageous cultural operation of the founder Flavio Pajer with the new demands of today, with our questions, with our topics of study and research. ERENews remains a newsletter, a space for information, but it also aspires to be an opportunity for growth and discussion.

This issue comes out two months late. We apologise for this. Group work demands more time, as we know. But the gestation of this issue has been particularly laborious and demanding for two reasons: firstly, it was decided to deal in the monographic section with a burning and topical issue such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, starting with a few questions: are there religious motivations behind the clash between Israel and Palestine, or are religious issues used instrumentally by Western



narratives? How and why are religious issues taken up ideologically and used as a propaganda tool? Does religion really play a role in this conflict?

We decided to present the report of a series of seminars entitled "The Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a historical perspective. The roots of the present" organised in November 2023 at the Department of Humanistic Studies of the University of Roma Tre by Gianfranco Bria, Maria Chiara Giorda, Gennaro Gervasio, Giuliano Garavini, and Paolo Mattered. These seminars were an important opportunity for us in terms of

learning, and it is for this reason that we have decided to reproduce the contents of those meetings in a condensed but nevertheless significant version. We thought this would be a good starting point to reflect on this topic and, at the same time to provide our readers with a valuable orientation tool in this confusing horizon that even today, as Ramadan has begun, continues to manifest itself in the most violent and incomprehensible forms.

The second reason that extended the publication time of issue 1 of 2024 is that we are inaugurating a new section of our newsletter: it is a section dedicated to presenting theses, studies and research related to the religious fact.

Furthermore, this issue is enriched, as always, by an annotated press review, the presentation of some editorial novelties

and the reporting of events and conferences.

Finally, another news item. On 6 March 2024, we had the pleasure of meeting and interviewing Professor Wanda Alberts (Univ. Hannover). The dialogue with the professor started the first of a series of podcasts dedicated to the teaching of religions in Europe. The title of this first appointment is *Teaching religion and religions in Germany. Critical analysis and new perspectives*: we invite you to listen to it by visiting our website (www.erenews.uniroma3.it) and our social media profiles.

We wish you a good read and look forward as always to your reactions and comments.

FIRST SECTION

Reasoned press review

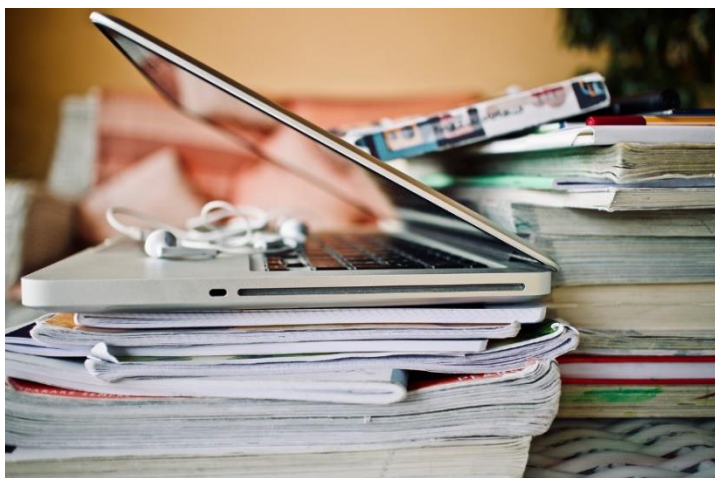
Keywords: religion, ethics, public school, teaching, students, Italy, Austria UK, France, Europe, USA, secularism, prayer, niqab, Ramadan.

In this first section we offer news, insights and reflections on the world of schools, with a special focus on the topic of teaching religions and/or ethics in schools in various European countries and around the world.

AUSTRIA

Teaching Ethics in Austria: a balance of results two years after the reform took effect

By Sara Giorgetti



In the second number of Erenews of the year 2022¹ we discussed the topic of the school reform approved in Austria by resolution of the National Council of 20 November 2020, BGBl. I Nr. 133/2020². This measure amended the national law on Austrian school organization, introducing the teaching of Ethics as a compulsory subject in state schools for all students who choose not to attend

Religious Education classes. The topics of the new lessons focus mainly on philosophy, which is also joined by other subjects (psychology, sociology, religious studies, history, law, biology, economics, political science).

The first scholastic year for testing the new law in secondary schools was 2021/22. In that year, ethics lessons were offered in an as yet untested formula, for two hours per

¹ <https://erenews.uniroma3.it/austria-etica-nuova-materia-obbligatoria-per-gli-studenti-che-non-frequentano-le-lezioni-di-religione/>

² Link for full reading of the law: <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/eli/bgbl/I/2020/133> . In the August 2021 EREnews issue we reported the approval of the new law, before it was implemented for the 2021/2022 school year (cf. <https://erenews.uniroma3.it/numeri-di-erenews/>).

week, in 922 schools. The project started with the ninth classes and should reach full implementation in the school year 2024/25 or 2025/26.

In the year 2022/23, the number of students who attended Ethics classes as an alternative to Religious Education was 35,065. There was thus a high increase compared to the school year 2021/22, when there were 17,935 participants. This means that 26.2% of all students in years 9 and 10 participated in Ethics courses. The doubling can be explained above all by the following point: in the year 2021/22, ethics classes were only available to those enrolled in the ninth grade, whereas in 2022/23, both new entrants to the ninth grade and those who, having already attended the ninth grade, were promoted to the 10th grade had access.

The percentages, however, show a slight increase: the share of those who chose ethics instead of religion in fact rose from 24.9 for the 2021/22 school year of those who were enrolled, to 26.2% for the 2022/23 school year. In the last school year, the percentage of Ethics students was even higher in Vienna, with a maximum of 38.3% of students enrolled. On the other hand, the region in which the choice of Ethics met with the lowest acceptance was Burgenland, where only 15.5% of young people chose to enroll on alternative courses to Religious Education.



Read more:

<https://www.derstandard.at/story/3000000184059/schule-26-prozent-aller-sch252ler-besuchen-ethikunterricht>

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/eli/bgbl/l/2020/133>

ITALY

After twenty years, here is the public competition for religious teachers

By Michele Trabucco

This time, after twenty years, the government has implemented concrete and decisive steps to remedy the unjust chronic condition of precariousness of Catholic religion teachers. Exactly after two decades of useless expectations, illusions, failed promises, discussions and controversies, the concrete legislative steps have already been taken to issue the notice for the ordinary and extraordinary competition for religious teachers by February 2024. In fact, the last one dates back to the Berlusconi government in the spring of 2004. Since then, many promises but no real desire to remedy an unfair job classification. The figure of the Catholic religion teacher (idr) in Italy is regulated by the agreements between the Italian State and the Italian Conference of Bishops, which in turn operate within the constitutional framework of articles 7 and 8.



All public jobs are accessible through a public competition which must allow the selection of personnel to be hired for that specific role while guaranteeing at least some important principles: transparency, merit and fairness. The first because it must allow everyone to know the requirements, tests, purposes and evaluation criteria; the second because only by passing the required tests can the preparation and merit of each person be deduced according to a ranking; the third because it allows anyone to compete without discrimination or subterfuge.

Let us start by saying that in schools there are two types of teachers, which is the result of a unique historical path of our Republic, and which can certainly be a reason for discussion and change: that of those who teach Catholic religion and the other of those who teach all other subjects. Compared to the others, the IDR must have two requirements to enter the school as a teacher: competence in the subject, obtained with a degree from universities recognized by the Vatican, and also, compared to the other teachers, suitability as a teacher who it is issued by the bishop of the diocese where he lives or works. It consists of a sort of 'certification' of good conduct and participation in the life of the church according to the norms of canon law.

Since the last reform of the State-Church Concordat in 1984, the meaning of the IDR has changed a lot, both due to the change in the social, religious and cultural context of our country and the increasingly greater presence of lay people compared to religious people. Previously the prerogative of ecclesiastical personnel, this profession has been practiced by lay people for decades now.

Since 2004, those who had not passed or did not have the requirements to participate in the competition or who started teaching after that date, did so only and always on a temporary basis, that is, with a joint appointment by the bishop and the school director, renewable or not every year. .

This situation has generated various discontent and protests over time for the reiteration of a fixed-term employment relationship which by law cannot be implemented beyond three years. For this reason, over time, appeals to the Courts have been increasingly numerous, reaching the European Court of Justice. All legal sentences have recognized this repeated stipulation of fixed-term contracts as incompatible with today's labor law regulations, so much so as to condemn the State to pay money for this infringement as compensation for damages.

There are paradoxical situations of teachers who in twenty years of work will retire as temporary workers. They have never been able to participate in a competition and have had the opportunity to gain tenure, that is, to have a permanent contract, essential in many life and professional career situations, such as being able to take out a mortgage, pay large expenses in installments, be able to access different roles in the school (headmaster, president of the state exam commission, guidance tutor, Invalsi commission, etc.), enjoy adequate and paid study and personal leave.

The theme and debate on the secularity of the State and the role of religious teaching in schools must not undermine the right of every worker to have the same opportunities and conditions. The competition for those who teach in schools must be guaranteed to everyone in the same way, which is why the government's promise responds to the needs of equity and dignity.

The competition promised for 2024 should be done in an extraordinary way, for those with more than three years of service, and in an ordinary way for all others who have the requirements to participate (Degree and eligibility).

someone has once again raised the problem of the number of those who make use of the teaching of the Catholic religion as an opportunity to eliminate this discipline from the school curriculum but this aspect must not influence the employment contract of teachers, who if they do this work must have the same conditions as others. Another issue is rethinking the way teachers are recruited, trained and selected and the contents of the subject are taught.

FRANCE

France: threats to laicity in the school context?

By Federica Candido

Dominique Bernard, professor of humanities, was murdered on 13 October 2023 while he was teaching at the Gambetta-Carnot public high school in Arras, northern France. The killer, a 20-year-old boy, Mohammed Mogouchkov, of Chechen origin, a former student at the same lycée, carried out - together with his younger brother - a real terrorist action with the cry of 'Allah Akhbar'. The murder in Arras took place at a time of great

international tension, coinciding with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which in the aftermath of the events of 7 October 2023 manifested itself in its most alarming resurgence. A further coincidence was the proximity of this tragic event with the three-year anniversary of the death of Samuel Paty, the teacher beheaded on his way out of school, guilty of having spoken in class about freedom of expression (we have spoken about this issue in previous issues, *ed*).



Gabriel Attal, French Minister of Education, called on headmasters to reinforce security in schools by implementing all necessary measures and reporting any suspicious or abnormal situations to the ministerial crisis unit.

In this climate of crisis, the French Ministry of Education reported a serious increase in attempts to violate the principle of secularism in schools in the last quarter of 2023. However, in the face of the Ministry's statements, Élisabeth Allain-Moreno, Secretary General of SE-Unsa, says: "the problem is not the abaya, the problem is the attacks on secularism, the questioning of everyone's freedoms. Secularity means allowing freedom of conscience without constraints. (...) How do you know whether what a student says is an attack on secularism or not? "

Read more:

- <https://www.sudouest.fr/politique/education/atteintes-a-la-laicite-a-l-ecole-2-mois-de-forte-hausse-dus-a-des-phenomenes-exceptionnels-puis-net-recul-17833344.php>
- https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2023/12/15/les-atteintes-a-la-laicite-a-l-ecole-en-baisse-apres-deux-mois-de-fortes-hausses_6205971_3224.html
- <https://www.letudiant.fr/educpros/actualite/attentat-darras-on-veut-sanctuariser-lecole-dun-point-de-vue-moral.html>
- <https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceculture/podcasts/etre-et-savoir/des-parents-contre-l-ecole-2529529>
- <https://www.leparisien.fr/societe/religions/ecole-les-atteintes-a-la-laicite-en-forte-hausse-en-cette-rentree-15-12-2023-ICNJ7SMTKFFM7JXC4NZYIEE2AA.php>

https://www.corriere.it/esteri/23_ottobre_13/attacco-francia-liceo-arras-ucciso-insegnate-a706915e-69ae-11ee-bbc5-4ad23a10b29e.shtml?refresh_ce

UK

Forbidden to pray at school: the British case that causes controversy
By Federica Candido

Katharine Birbalsingh, 'Britain's strictest headmistress', heads Michaela Community School, a state secondary school in one of London's most deprived suburbs. The headmistress has based her tenure on a programme of 'discipline and rigour' to which her students are obliged to adapt. This method is so far proving to be extraordinarily successful that Michaela's pupils are beating many of the most prestigious public schools academically and 82% of them manage to get into the universities of the Russell Group, the club of Britain's elite universities. This time, however, Headmistress Birbalsingh made headlines because a pupil reported her to the High Court for religious discrimination. The incident incriminated dates back to last school year when a Muslim student started praying during recess, using her jacket as a mat. The prayer was joined by dozens of other students and the headmistress decided to ban all forms of prayer, on the grounds that the other students (more than half of the school's enrolment is Muslim, ed) might perceive such practices as violating their rights. The headmistress' decision immediately met with fierce opposition, so much so that she herself reported death threats, intimidation, bomb scares and bricks thrown through windows.

In the end, the student involved in this case denounced the school for violating religious freedom and discriminating against Muslims.

The British government's guidelines on the subject are not well defined: schools are not obliged to allow prayers but are warned against discriminatory behaviour. The headmistress, for her part, argues that she has the right to run a secular school and states that multiculturalism, the principle that inspires Great Britain, works when 'each group makes sacrifices for the good of all' and that separate communities cannot be allowed to develop.

This theme is reminiscent of the thorny and topical debates around 'secularism and secularization' that are the order of the day in European schools, and more so in French schools. Debate on these topics has now also become urgent and necessary in the British public-school scenario.



Read more:

- https://www.corriere.it/esteri/24_gennaio_21/londra-preside-ferro-che-vieta-preghiera-islamica-minacce-morte-denuncia-7faf75a8-b896-11ee-b330-158a8386c2cb.shtml?&appunica=true&app_v1=true
- https://www.corriere.it/esteri/23_ottobre_22/preside-piu-severa-regno-unito-katharine-birbalsingh-6a670570-70da-11ee-9999-ffd40b56ff27.shtml

- <https://www.orizzontescuola.it/le-regole-della-preside-piu-inflessibile-del-regno-unito-il-docente-deve-stare-in-cattedra-nei-corridoi-non-si-parla-le-critiche-peggio-finire-la-scuola-senza-saper-leggere/>
- <https://www.ilsussidiario.net/news/preside-a-londra-vieta-preghiera-islam-minacciata-di-morte-e-denunciata-multiculturalismo-non-funziona/2650620/>
- <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-12993461/NADINE-DORRIES-Katharine-Birbalsingh-ban-prayer-schools.html>
- <https://catholicherald.co.uk/religion-knowledge-and-liberty-seen-through-the-michaela-school-prayer-row/>
- <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/education/katharine-birbalsingh-headteacher-prayer-ban-gillian-keegan-b1137095.html>

ITALY

At school with the niqab: religious freedom, women's rights and integration.

The case of Pordenone

By Federica Candido

In a school in Pordenone, a 10-year-old girl came to class wearing the niqab, the full Islamic dress that covers the entire body, leaving only the eyes uncovered. The teacher, following personal contact with the family, asked the parents not to let the girl wear that dress during school hours. The family immediately cooperated, making the child return to school wearing the hijab, but the municipal social services were also alerted. It was inevitable that such news - although very little information has been leaked - would have wide circulation on the web and raise a series of controversies involving politics, schools, the world of culture and the Muslim community itself. The latter, among others, has distanced itself from the family's gesture, stating that this type of headgear should only be worn when one is older. In Italy there is a ban on making oneself unrecognisable in public but, in fact, there is no ban on wearing clothes or religious symbols to school. The line between freedom of expression (including of one's religious affiliation) and women's rights, in this case, is very thin. It is clear that what emerges from this news story is that certain phenomena are on the rise, as a result of the constant change in society, and that politics must commit itself to tackling them with concrete solutions, without prejudice to the need to promote important work on integration and inclusion.

Read more:

https://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2024/03/04/news/pordenone_niqab_scuola_lega-422248082/

<https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2024/03/05/pordenone-bimba-di-10-anni-viene-mandata-a-scuola-con-il-niqab-la-maestra-chiede-ai-genitori-di-farle-scoprire-il-volto/7468762/>

<https://www.open.online/2024/03/04/pordenone-bambina-scuola-niqab/>

https://www.lastampa.it/cronaca/2024/03/04/news/pordenone_niqab_bimba_scuola-14118969/

<https://www.fanpage.it/attualita/il-caso-della-bimba-di-10-anni-con-il-niqab-in-classe-cosa-e-successo-in-una-scuola-di-pordenone/>

https://www.ansa.it/friuliveneziagiulia/notizie/2024/03/05/bimba-col-niqab-sindaco-pordenone-non-si-indossi-a-scuola_42948f8d-4f8a-4df7-be46-d0da529e33ee.html

ITALY

The school 'Iqbal Masiq' in Pioltello closes to celebrate the end of Ramadan: the decision causes controversy

By Federica Candido

The School "Iqbal Masiq" in Pioltello (MI) closes for the Easter holidays and also for the end of Ramadan (10 April). The decision was taken unanimously by the school board last May, when the school year calendar was approved. Headmaster Alessandro Fanfoni, interviewed by Il Fatto Quotidiano, had this to say: *'A Pioltello abbiamo classi dove negli anni scorsi in occasione della fine*



del Ramadan, di fatto, venivano a scuola in tre o quattro. I bambini di fede islamica sono la maggioranza e nonostante le linee guida sull'inclusione consigliano di formare classi con non più del 30% di stranieri, noi arriviamo al 43% perché questa è la nostra utenza. Non possiamo chiudere gli occhi davanti a questi numeri e alla realtà. Questa festa è per molti di loro una tradizione, tra l'altro spesso condivisa anche dai compagni di classe italiani che partecipano per condividere. [...] Spero che a nessuno venga in mente di politicizzare questa decisione presa dal consiglio d'istituto anticipando di un giorno l'inizio delle lezioni per garantire a tutti gli stessi diritti.'

The school headmaster's reasons are motivated by practical needs (given the preponderant number of pupils of the Islamic faith who would in any case be absent during the day of the end of Ramadan) and, at the same time, are part of a broader project of integration and inclusion of the area's Islamic community.

Obviously, the reactions from politics were not slow in coming. On the part of the League, deputy prime minister Matteo Salvini spoke out as follows: *‘Mentre qualcuno vuole rimuovere i simboli cattolici - come i crocifissi nelle aule - per paura di ‘offendere’, in provincia di Milano una preside decide di chiudere la scuola per la fine del ramadan. Una scelta inaccettabile, contro i valori, l’identità e le tradizioni del nostro Paese’.*

The situation is undoubtedly unprecedented and Education Minister Valditara has asked the competent offices of the Ministry to verify the educational reasons that led to the decision to derogate from the regional school calendar and their compatibility with the regulations. The school’s decision is ‘an act of civilisation’ according to Ivonne Cosciotti, the mayor of Pioltello. The latter expressed solidarity with the decision, which she describes as of ‘value and significance’. The mayor says: ‘people try everything to create discontent, but the children go to school together and are ahead of their parents. And in our school there is also the crucifix. Traditions are respected’.

Read more:

https://milano.repubblica.it/cronaca/2024/03/16/news/pioltello_scuola_chiusa_ramadan_pasqua-422323899/

<https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2024/03/16/giorno-di-festa-per-la-fine-del-ramadan-in-un-istituto-a-pioltello-milano-il-dirigente-spero-che-nessuno-politicizzi-questa-decisione/7481714/>

<https://www.open.online/2024/03/18/pioltello-scuola-iqbal-masiq-ramadan/>

<https://www.ilgiornale.it/news/interni/scelta-inaccettabile-salvini-tuona-contro-chiusura-scuola-2297896.html>

<https://www.ilgiorno.it/milano/cronaca/pioltello-scuola-chiusa-fine-ramadan-g1id236o>

https://milano.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/24_marzo_17/la-scuola-di-pioltello-chiusa-per-la-fine-del-ramadan-il-preside-classi-gia-semivuote-per-la-festa-la-lega-attacca-b531bf91-6114-4503-9d7e-4367f79e9xk.shtml

https://www.tgcom24.mediaset.it/cronaca/pioltello-scuola-decide-di-chiudere-per-la-fine-del-ramadan-il-preside-non-possiamo-ignorare-la-realta_79244771-202402k.shtml

SECOND SECTION

Reports of new publications

By Isabella de Paolis

Ambrosini M. – Molli S.D. – Naso P. (2022), *Quando gli immigrati vogliono pregare. Comunità, pluralismo, welfare*. Bologna, Il Mulino, pp. 357.



The text, edited by M. Ambrosini, S.D. Molli and P. Naso, is the result of an extensive research conducted between the years 2020 and 2021 which investigates the problems annexed to the process of migrants' integration in Lombardy.

One of the most populous and multi-ethnic regions of Italy, Lombardy, counts - according to the latest mapping conducted by the researchers involved in the aforementioned survey - 347 places of worship of minority religions or 70 Orthodox parishes, 127 Islamic centers, 41 evangelical churches, 85 Catholic communities, 17 Sikh temples and 6 Buddhist centers.

The starting point of the analysis suggested by the editors of the volume is the relevance of the cause - effect link between migration and New Religious Pluralism that led, beside the quantitative growth of worship places, an urgent need for reflection in terms of interreligious dialogue and political-social recognition. The common thread of all the contributions is an approach that the authors themselves define as "welfare from below" that wants to bring to light the potential and the critical issues of minority religious communities that, according to estimates, count more than four million people in Italy.

The pages of the volume reveal that there are important points in common between the various religious realities - although very different from each other - such as the presence of relations and negotiations of various kinds with the local agencies, the community need for redemption and resilience, the aggregating and socializing effect of prayer centers and religious associations that, through activism, defeat loneliness and trigger a support chain of self-help (from literacy to religious education; from bureaucratic-administrative support to, if necessary, economic support). The description of the different religious communities - entrusted to different authors who, in the same way, capture the attention of even the less experienced reader - leaves way for a shared reflection on the pitfall that hides behind cohesive and well-organized community

realities, thus very fragile. A virtual wall might rise between the minority "us" closed in its comfort-zones and "others" outside, posing yet other social concerns.

Therefore, it is evident, that the *file rouge* of the volume, namely the New Religious Pluralism, is analyzed in a perspective of both “bonding” social capital, constituted by the links between similar individuals by ethnicity, age, social class and “bridging” social capital, made up of networks, relationships and connections with the various social realities. This led, in the current society, to the awareness to foster a series of interventions towards a more effective and productive intercultural coexistence. In this regard, Paolo Naso proposes, in the final chapter, a ten-point *vademecum* for institutional policies of various kinds that calls the current political-administrative world to civic responsibility and programmatic action.

New Publication

GLOBAL RE: An International Bibliographic Bulletin on Religious Education & Religious Studies around the World

It is with great pleasure that we announce issue number 1/2024 of Global RE, a periodical providing information on new publications, research works and publications dedicated to Religious Studies. The periodical is conceived and managed by Flavio Pajer.

To subscribe to this interesting bibliographic tool, please write to fpajer@lasalle.org.

PAST EVENTS and NEW RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

NYU-ROMA TRE PERMANENT GLOBAL SEMINAR

Religious Diversity in Italian Urban History

By Isabella de Paolis



The cooperation between the Department of Italian Studies at New York University and the Department of Humanities at Roma Tre University inaugurated in August 2022 a highly relevant project for academics dealing with religious diversity in urban space.

Read more: <https://as.nyu.edu/departments/italian/Initiatives/nyu-romatre-permanent-global-seminar-religious-diversity-in-ital.html>

The NYU-Roma Tre Permanent Global Seminar on Religious Diversity in Italian Urban History (RDIUH) is dedicated to the whole community of geographers, historians of religions, sociologists, anthropologists and other scholars in the academic field who deal with the issue of religious diversity in the most diverse urban contexts of the Italian reality and beyond.

The aim of the seminar is to bring to light the presence of religious communities settled in urban spaces characterised by a dominant religion in order to investigate the ways in which religious minorities and majority religions meet and clash, to assess the perception of community welcome and to highlight any critical integration issues, with a careful and focused look at the architectural, urban and social changes that are connected with them.

The seminar presents the original, never-before-presented contributions of four PhD students and researchers who, following a call for papers, have the opportunity to present their research in front of a relevant academic audience, to receive ad-hoc feedback from a respondent selected by the steering committee, and to engage in a final discussion. The seminar meetings are held quarterly and last approximately 90 minutes each.

The seminars in the current year observe the following schedule:

-22 March 2023

Sean Wyer, University of California at Berkeley

Gourmet and the Ghetto

Respondent: Diana Garvin, University of Oregon

-21 June 2023

Giulia Massenz, University of Turin
The Urban Geographies of the Third Wave Pentecostal Churches in Turin
Respondent: Annalisa Butticci, Georgetown University

-27 September 2023

Isabella De Paolis, Sapienza University of Rome
Centocelle Between Urban Spatiality and Religious Diversity: Anatomy of a Changing
Neighborhood in Rome
Respondent: Carmen Becker, Leibniz Universität Hannover

-13 December 2023

Paola Stelliferi, University of Roma Tre
In Accordance with Morality. Don Paolo Liggeri and the First Catholic Family Counseling
Center Before the 405/1975 Law.
Respondent: Massimo Faggioli, Villanova University.

Read on-line the call for papers 2024: <https://as.nyu.edu/content/dam/nyu-as/italian/documents/Call%20for%20Papers%202024%20NYU%20-%20Roma%20Tre%20Seminar.pdf> .



NYU-RomaTre Permanent Global Seminar
Religious Diversity in Italian Urban History

Call for Papers

(deadline: November 15, 2023)

Conference EFTRE: Bridges over troubled water. Re in changing times (24th august- 27th aug 2023)

By Martina Cittadini



The 15th EFTRE Conference in Rome

24-27 August 2023

Please note:

Keynote presentations and material from the workshops are now uploaded. Have a look!

RESUME BY RAPPORTEUR DAVE FRANCIS

Bridges over Troubled Waters – RE in changing times

“Current times in Europe easily feel as if several storms are raging at once. With increasing nationalisms, polarization, and pluralisation as well the pandemic, climate change and not at least war in Ukraine, no calm seas seem in sight. A challenge for all and especially for the young children and adolescents growing up in these demanding times. One can easily feel overwhelmed and dis-oriented as if pushed under the water by the waves of these developments. At the EFTRE conference, together we are looking for safe bridges to find a path into a brighter future. You will have opportunities to analyse how RE can and must adapt to this new scenery in contemporary European societies”.

Read more: <https://eftre.net/conference-in-rome-2023-15th/>

From Passions to Professions, University of Roma Tre

By Martina Cittadini

On December 15, 2023, an event titled "From Passions to Professions: Internships at Roma Tre University" took place at the Department of Humanities of Roma Tre University. The meeting was introduced by Prof. Alberto D’Anna, Vice President of the department and delegate for the University Orientation Working Group, along with Prof. Patrizia Tosini, coordinator of the internship committee.

Twelve internship projects carried out in both public and private institutions were presented. During the event, Professors Carla Noce and Federica Candido, as well as members of the EreNews editorial team, including Martina Cittadini, presented the digital bulletin's editorial staff. In practice, EreNews offers students the opportunity to gain educational experience in the field of Religious Education and Religious Studies through an interdisciplinary approach and an international perspective.

Read more: https://studiumanistici.uniroma3.it/articoli/da-passioni-a-professionieri-tirocini-formativi-a-studi-umanistici-esperienze-in-corso_1-371115/

***Rituals/Materials* (Ex-Mattatoio, Rome 7-16 June 2023)**

By Martina Cittadini

The exhibition titled 'Rituals/Materials,' organized between June 7 and 16, 2023, at the Ex Mattatoio in the Testaccio district of Rome, focused on the 'House of One' project in Berlin. Through an installation designed by the Berlin architecture firm Kuhlen Malvezzi and photographer Armin Linke, along with Claudia Professione, Greta Valentinotti, and students from the Department of Architecture at the University, the exhibition tells the story of the genesis of the Berlin project aimed at rethinking the methods of dialogue, integration, and coexistence among the diverse communities inhabiting the city. 'House of One' is an interreligious building that houses a synagogue, a church, and a mosque in the same area, located at Petriplatz in the center of Berlin.

Read more: <https://www.uniroma3.it/en/articoli/mostra-rituals-materials-319225/>

SEZIONE MONOGRAFICA

THE ROOTS OF PRESENT: THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

(report of the seminars organized by the Department of Humanistic Studies - Roma Tre University, November 2023)

Report by F. Candido, F. Carta, M. Cittadini, S. Giorgetti, F. Mariani, G. Nardini



Considering that the entire cycle of seminars was planned and held by the professors of the University of Roma Tre in Italian, it did not seem suitable to propose a full translation in English. Therefore, to read the report on the series of seminars "The Roots of present" please consult the Italian version of this issue of EREnews.

THESIS AREA, STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

The idea of opening a section for discussion and debate devoted to master's theses, doctoral dissertations and research on topics related to religion and religions came up several times during our editorial meetings: on the one hand, we felt the need, on the other, we think that such a section could be a driving force for growth for ERENews.



We are therefore inaugurating this experiment starting with this issue. The aim is to involve students, scholars and teachers in a more complex and broader debate.

This section has the ambition of bringing together studies dedicated to religion in a broad sense without, therefore, remaining anchored to the theme of the teaching religion (which remains, in any case, one of the pivots and prods from which ERENews is constructed): the hope is to involve not only as many universities as possible but also more areas of research, from literature, to sociology, anthropology, and the history of art

We believe that this section will not only give the right visibility to ongoing research, but will also be an opportunity to open up future fields of study and to create moments of confrontation between scholars: we feel that all this represents an added value for our journal and for this reason we invite you to submit your work to our editorial staff.

“Non vi sia costrizione nella religione”

Graduate student: Giulia Conti (giuliaconti3574@gmail.com)

Supervisor: prof. Luca Patrizi

Co-supervisor: prof. - Alessandro Mengozzi

Title: *“Non vi sia costrizione nella religione”. Il rapporto tra Islam ed Ebraismo in al-Andalus, dalla conquista islamica al massacro di Granada*

Tesi di laurea magistrale in Scienze delle religioni – Università di Torino (28-02-2023).

Lately we heard a lot about Jewish people and, even if it is happening for the most unpleasant reasons not strictly related to religion, this has brought to public attention an issue that, in one way or another, has always been quite complex: the relationship between Islam and Judaism.

The one of the Jews is generally remembered as a tumultuous history of exodus, persecution and war, but hidden behind all these difficulties there is a Jewish history of great wealth and prosperity, exceptional politicians and merchants. On the other hand, there is the vast and intricate history of Islam, the religion of people that over the centuries has been enriched and conquered to give life to the Abbasid Empire, one of the richest and most powerful in history.

The events of these two religions are intertwined in my master thesis, entitled "The relationship between Islam and Judaism in al-Andalus, from the Islamic conquest to the massacre of Granada", which sought to report and analyse the main theories regarding the debate on the actual existence of a golden age of Judaism in al-Andalus, the Islamic Spain ruled by the Arabs between 711 and 1492. In this context, characterized by a mild climate and considerable commercial resources, the Moors created a very rich kingdom that lived several centuries of political stability and peaceful religious and cultural coexistence, enough to be remembered by some as the "Spain of the three religions".

In the paper was briefly retraced the history of the Jewish people in Europe, from the arrival of the first communities to their socio-political condition under the rule of Christians and Visigoths, until the total change of their status after the arrival of Muslims in Spain and the mutual influence between the two communities. Then I focused specifically on the case of the Jews of Granada, home to one of the richest and most powerful communities of al-Andalus and the figure of Samuel ibn Naghrela, symbol of the achievement of the highest degree of social elevation of Jews in a non-Jewish context. Finally, I analysed one of the bloodiest exterminations in Jewish history, the massacre of Granada in 1066, its causes and its consequences, also through the examination of the lives and words of two key figures: the Jewish vizier Joseph ibn Naghrela and the Muslim poet Abū Ishāq.

The purpose of this work, as already mentioned, is to retrace a brief section of history common to two peoples, Jewish and Arab, who over the centuries have repeatedly met, influenced and clashed in what Shlomo Goitein has defined Arab-Jewish symbiosis³ and which finds its maximum expression in al-Andalus, the intercultural and interreligious Spain of which even today the traces are quite tangible simply walking through the cities of today's Andalusia. A relationship that over the centuries has developed, has changed shape and that today seems difficult, almost impossible, but that in the past has allowed the existence of a society of inestimable wealth, cradle of grandiose architectural works and spectacular inventions.

Fake Enchantments and Real Necromancers. Magic in the Society of the Decameron (14th Century)

³ For further information: Goitein S. D., *Jews and Arabs: A Concise History of Their Social and Cultural Relations*, Roma, Jouvence, 1980.

Graduate Student: Filippo Mariani (94.filippo@gmail.com)

Supervisor: prof. Vito Loré

Co-supervisor: prof. Maurizio Fiorilla

Co-supervisor: prof. Edward Coleman

Title: Fake Enchantments and Real Necromancers. Magic in the Society of the *Decameron* (14th Century);

Master's degree thesis in European History - University of Roma Tre (a.a. 2022/2023)

Boccaccio's novellas reflect the society of the 14th century and, among the various topics covered by the author, there is magic. There is no synthesis study devoted specifically to magic in the *Decameron*.

The idea behind my work stems precisely from this scarcity of studies on the subject and from the proposal to investigate how magic is represented within the *Decameron*, what characteristics it has and whether these are the result of the author's imagination or are rooted in real magical practices. I will say from the outset that, although I recognise the author's vivid imagination in sketching the events of his novellas and the adventures of the protagonists, it is already clear on first analysis that the magic rituals in the *Decameron* follow developments typical of magic believed to be possible and real. The dynamics described by Boccaccio are very similar to those of magical and supernatural rituals and elements found in other writings of the time, such as Jacopo Passavanti's *Specchio di vera penitenza* (Mirror of True Penance), Marbodo di Rennes' *De lapidibus* (De lapidibus) or various manuals of *Ars notoria*.

However, this does not mean that such practices were considered possible or plausible by the author. In fact, he mostly places them within the framework of hoaxes against foolish and gullible people, the only ones who could give credence to such nonsense; or he shows that it is 'simple' women who give credence to them, perhaps fitting into that strand of scholarly thought that wanted magic to be the stuff of *mulierculae*, of wenches, of no importance. For much of the Middle Ages, this was the 'reputation' of the art of magic, considered nothing more than superstition made up of popular beliefs and devoid of any concreteness. However, this began to change in the 14th century, mainly due to the expansion of Arab culture in Europe and the intervention of Pope John XXII who, through the papal bull *Super illius specula*, introduced the *factum hereticale* for magic, which would go from being nothing more than superstition to heresy and, as such, subject to the Inquisition. This will be a long-lasting process, within which the 14th century is positioned as a watershed between two different perceptions of magic that coexist within it. From this point of view, the *Decameron* offers a perfect picture of the century in question, since in the work Boccaccio juxtaposes those hoaxes against fools and the naive, mentioned above, with real magic procedures.

In particular, the only two episodes of 'real' magic in the *Decameron* are rituals of necromantic magic, precisely that dark and sinister magic that Pope John XXII had called 'heresy'.

And yet, it is precisely from those episodes of mockery, from the description of those false magical procedures, that we can see the very important role of religion - as well as science and medicine - within the art of magic: in practically all the practices described, the religious element is fundamental and inescapable, which takes the form of chants, prayers, invocations of God and his Saints, representations, signs and sacred symbols. Often, indeed, Boccaccio shows how people from a low social background believe that a priest may be able to work magic, or prove to confuse exorcisms with spells. To explain this peculiarity, it is useful to add a further element: until at least the 14th century, those accused of practising magical or necromantic arts (almost always intellectuals and members of the clergy) did not recognise themselves in the description of 'magicians' or 'sorcerers'. Precisely because Christian rituality was essential in such practices, they were convinced that they could obtain what they obtained by divine concession, operating in the 'right' way. The opposite view, on the other hand, sees them as poor fools - later heretics - who ended up being deceived by the Devil.

In conclusion of my research, I can state that the Decameron is a perfect compass to orient oneself within the conception that was held of magic in the 14th century, encapsulating all the nuances presented by the magical arts of the time: the superstition of women and fools; the belief of the uneducated that members of the clergy and intellectuals were able to operate magical practices; rituals and formulae taken from real practices, often considered useless and empty especially by theologians and preachers, placed in the hands of people who deluded or deluded themselves into believing they could operate them; practices considered real but not described in detail, indicating perhaps the transitional period that was the 14th century.

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

By Lena-Sophie Schlehofer

Religious Education in Germany. A notion of religion that meets the needs of a pluralistic society?



Legal conditions and historical context of Religious Education in Germany

The Enlightenment and the so-called "Kulturkampf" (The confrontations between church and state due to the reorganisation of spheres of influence of the two.) are important historical circumstances for today's Religious Education in Germany. The principles of the Enlightenment and the "Kulturkampf" led to the separation of state and church. The Weimar Constitution settled the

reorganisation and fulfilled the separation of church and state in 1919. This was a significant reduction of the political influence of the church. In order to Religious Education, it has been determined that the Catholic and Lutheran churches were allowed to be responsible for it according to their confessional faith, but only under the supervision of the state. This regulation was adopted in the German Constitution. The "Böckenförde-Diktum" is also significant for the conception of Religious Education in Germany, which brought the belief that religiosity is inherent in human beings to a common assumption, also crucial for political issues.⁴ Böckenförde was a judge at the Federal constitutional court and his statement, that "The liberal secularised state lives by prerequisites which it cannot guarantee itself." was crucial for the function which was since that linked to Religious Education in Germany. The historical context of this statement is post-war Germany, which is more or less trying to find a way of dealing with previous National Socialism and its horrific crimes. Religious communities were seen as the responsible body to teach pupils moral thinking and behaviour. Due to this, the new constitution also determines that Religious Education is a matter of the church, which is supervised by the state.⁵ Article 7, Paragraph 3 of the German Constitution says that "Religious instruction shall form part of the regular curriculum in public schools, with the exception of non-denominational schools. Without prejudice to the state's right of supervision, religious instruction shall be given in accordance with the tenets of the religious community concerned. Teachers may not be obliged against their will to give religious instruction."⁶ This means that Religious Education is the only subject that must

⁴ Wittmer, F./ Waldhoff, C. (2019). Religious Education in Germany in Light of Religious Diversity: Constitutional Requirements for Religious Education. German Law Journal 20, pp. 1048- 1050.

⁵ Alberts, Wanda. (2019). Religious education as small 'i' indoctrination: how European countries struggle with a secular approach to religion in schools - In: CEPS Journal 9, 4, p. 58.

⁶ Artikel 7 Absatz 3 GG.

be guaranteed by the state and therefore the state has to provide the necessary framework. This includes the teaching personnel and their education and all other material necessities. Furthermore the state has to fulfil the principle of neutrality while the teaching contents are only decided by the religious communities, which leads to a denominational frame. Article 7, Paragraph 3 obliges the state to guarantee religious societies a subject according to their doctrine. Religious societies are neither obliged to offer Religious Education at all nor to include any other perspectives, theories or approaches. As the right to governmental supervision does not refer to issues of confessional doctrine and faith, it usually results in a denominational education with a truth-claim. The decision of the curriculum and methodology lies within the religious communities and even if the state has to fulfil the organisational requirements including the education of the teachers, this still takes place at theological departments of public universities. Also the teachers need ecclesiastical authorizations to be deployed.⁷ By investigating the organisation of Religious Education it is also important to highlight the so-called “Bremer Klausel” in Article 141 of the German Constitution. This clause determines that those federal states in Germany that had different regulations about Religious Education before 1949 can decide to maintain these regulations and not go with the German Constitution. This has led to big differences concerning Religious Education in the “old Bundesländer” (BRD; Federal Republic of Germany until the Reunification in 1990) and the “new Bundesländer” (DDR; German Democratic Republic until 1990). In most of the federal states in Germany exist laws, agreements and other regulations in order to organise Religious Education.⁸ Even if the majority interprets the Article 7, Paragraph 3 as the basis for a separative model, there exist also positions that interpret it as a legal condition for an integrative framework.⁹ The realisation of Religious Education depends on the condition that there is a particular number of pupils that want to take part. Another condition is that there is a cooperation partner for the state that is qualified as a religious society. This religious society is practising the right to teach Religious Education according to their doctrine and has to provide a contact person for cooperation with the state.¹⁰ In fact, Religious Education is mostly offered by the religious societies that are either the Catholic or Protestant church. But the developments of the last few decades are calling for some changes. There is a religious diversification, fewer people are members of religious societies and of course this means less and less members of the two Christian churches.¹¹ Some argue to maintain the separative approach and just add denominational Religious Education for the religious societies that want to and that have enough pupils to attend. But also there are suggested integrative or as well secular approaches to teach Religious Education (or from a secular approach: Education about Religion). Within the dominant separative approach in Germany, it happened that some schools added Religious Education for Muslims. The realisation of this reveals several problems due to the legal conditions in Germany which are oriented

⁷ Wittmer/ Waldhoff. 2019, pp. 1053-1056.

⁸ Wittmer/ Waldhoff. 2019, p. 1050.

⁹ Alberts, Wanda. (2007). Integrative Religious Education in Europe: A Study-of-Religions Approach, Berlin, Boston, p. 329.

¹⁰ Wittmer/ Waldhoff. 2019, pp. 1054-1055.

¹¹ Wittmer/ Waldhoff. 2019, p. 1051.

on the two Christian churches. As Muslims are organised quite differently, there is no institution that fulfils the conditions of a religious community and therefore as a cooperation partner for the state. Thus the state decided to found an "advisory body". This is to be made up of representatives of Muslim organisations and Muslim public figures and function as a religious community. Against the background of the state's principle of neutrality, this action was strongly criticised. Quite apart from the general criticism that the whole structural framework is privileging only Christian Religious Education and is not favouring pluralism with regard to Religious Education. However, the Right of Religious Freedom that is constitutionally guaranteed, makes it possible to "unsubscribe" from the compulsory subject of confessional Religious Education.¹² Also a lot of alternative subjects were established.

Organisation of Religious Education in the different federal States ("Bundesländer")

As already mentioned Religious Education in Germany is mostly organised in a separative framework. This means that one can either attend a specific confessional class or an alternative subject to Religious Education. In reality it is usually Catholic religion class, Protestant religion class, sometimes Muslim religion class or an alternative subject to confessional Religious Education. Thus it is the case that Religious Education happens only in a confessional way. Everything is framed by a specific religious perspective that goes along with a specific doctrine, mostly a truth-claim and clearly religious concepts, terms, categories and a general understanding. But this framing is most often not clearly marked.¹³ Due to this concept of the subject, the education of the teacher is also framed exclusively theological. It happens at theological institutes at public universities without obligations to include non-confessional, study-of-religion or other religious approaches and perspectives.¹⁴ This confessional framed content is taught with the specific confessional understanding of religion as a Christian term while ignoring the historical dimension of it. Also it is mostly a perspective that sees religion as something good with the main function of being a moral orientation system.¹⁵ The curriculum for Protestant Religious Education for upper secondary class in Lower Saxony mentions personal development and strengthening as first aspects of the education contribution. The subject is among other things described as religious education concerning all levels of societal, social and personal living. The existence of the 'religious dimension of life' is presented as an integrative part of a general education. It states the aims of the subject as to provide knowledge and competences for dealing with one's own religiosity and religions and worldviews of others.¹⁶ The pupils shall acquire the competences to "from the perspective of the Christian faith, dealing argumentative with other religious beliefs

¹² Wittmer/ Waldhoff, 2019, p. 1054.

¹³ Alberts. 2019, p. 56.

¹⁴ Alberts. 2007, p. 331.

¹⁵ Alberts. 2019, p. 62.

¹⁶ Niedersächsisches Kultusministerium. (2017). Kerncurriculum Evangelische Religion Sek II, Hannover, p. 5 f.

and worldviews”¹⁷ These curricular formulations and descriptions make it even clearer what constitutes the denominational perspective in this case. Furthermore, as I have already mentioned, Religious Education is organised differently in the various federal states in Germany. Also the issue of the “Bremer Klausel” was explained. Due to this regulation, Bremen decided to keep the regulation of Religious Education from before 1949. These regulations are specifying an integrative subject. It is called “non-confessional education in biblical history on a general Christian basis”.¹⁸ The education of the teachers of this subject and also the conceptualisation of the curriculum are matters of the state. The responsible academic discipline for teacher training is the Study of Religion. The anchoring for this education, in a non-theological institute is exceptional in Germany. The conceptualisation of this subject shall teach pupils to study different religions and traditions in a critical way while the analytical methodology which includes as well theological as approaches from the Study of Religion. While this conceptualisation fulfils the best conditions for a secular approach, in reality the Protestant church is the most supporting institution of this subject and thus has a big influence for example in planning the curriculum. This is again favouring privileging a christian perspective.¹⁹ Brandenburg introduced the subject LER (“life organisation, ethics, religious studies”) in 1996 as an integrative subject that is the responsibility of the state. Confessional Religious Education was offered as optional and additional to LER. Due to much criticism and law-suits, a court decision was made in 2002 that LER remains as an ordinary subject but with the option to de-register and take confessional RE instead.²⁰

Alternative subjects and challenges for a “Study of Religions” - approach

From the view of the understanding of Religious Education’s function that is accompanied by the “Böckenförde-Diktum”, there would occur very big concerns about society caused by the rising numbers of pupils deregistering from the confessional subjects. The conceptualisation of the alternative subjects reflects this thinking. In Germany people are learning moral values either from religion or secular ethics.²¹ The alternative subjects are compulsory in most of the federal subjects. They focus on studying general moral values as well as learning about different religions. Responsibility lies with the state, whereby the principle of neutrality must be preserved.²² In the federal states Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Berlin, Hesse, Rhineland Palatinate, Saxony, Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt the alternative subject is called ‘ethics’. ‘General ethics’ is the name in Saarland. In Bremen, Hamburg, Schleswig Holstein and Mecklenburg Western Pomerania it is ‘philosophy’. In Lower Saxony the subject is called ‘Values and Norms’. In the curriculum of ‘Values and Norms’ for upper secondary school it is quite obvious what the subject is focussing on. The subject aims to give pupils options for orientation and promote their personal

¹⁷ Niedersächsisches Kultusministerium. 2017, p. 16.

¹⁸ Alberts. 2007, p. 335.

¹⁹ Alberts. 2007, p. 337.

²⁰ Wittmer/ Waldhoff. 2019, p. 1056.

²¹ Alberts. 2019, p. 60.

²² Wittmer/ Waldhoff. 2019, p. 1057.

development. In order to fulfil this function pupils should learn about different worldviews and concepts of truth with the understanding of the existence of a fundamental plurality. In this context, the pupils should learn to deal with and reflect on their own and other's worldviews. The goal of this education is to provide young people with options of orientation in life. But it is stressed that Christian values are the basis for this education because those are significant for living in German society. In the introduction of the curriculum of 'Values and Norms' for the upper secondary class it is stated that this subject aims to fulfil the goal of "developing pupils' personalities on the basis of Christianity, European Humanism and the ideas of the liberal, democratic and social freedom movements".²³ This shows that it is not only about being educated about Christianity but furthermore Christianity is the perspective from which the subject is taught. But it is presented as the secular approach to education that concerns religion. This is problematic because it ignores the historical and religious dimension of the term and makes the Christian categories universal. This is also shown by the way the different religions should be investigated in this subject. It mirrors a positive picture about Christianity and stereotypical presentation of other religions and traditions.²⁴ The education of teachers for the alternative subjects is also another problem. As the subjects are organised quite differently in the various federal states, so is the education. And even within one federal state there is not one clear way for this education. Theology, Philosophy, as well as the Study of Religion are responsible academic disciplines.²⁵ In Lower Saxony one can become a teacher of 'Values and Norms' either by studying Study of Religion or Philosophy. It is obvious that this leads to completely different perspectives that are guiding the education. I want to elaborate a critique on Religious Education in Germany from the perspective of the Study of Religion by referring to Prof. Dr. Wanda Alberts who is a professor at the Institute for the Study of Religion in Hanover, Germany. With regard to the alternative subjects to RE she states that the use of a Christian notion of religion which is claiming to be neutral and secular leads to 'othering', stereotypes, ignoring of the historical constitution of the term and ignoring of the complexity of religious phenomena.²⁶ The fact that this is framed as a secular approach is highly problematic. Speaking about the alternative subjects it is also important to have in mind that there are different understandings of the concept of neutrality. Thus the question whether the state's responsibilities within the alternative subjects, teaching moral values to pupils and maintaining the principle of neutrality are compatible would be answered differently from various standpoints. There is also criticism about the fact that pupils who do not want to take confessional religious education are obliged to take another subject which has not to be attended by the other pupils with regard to the Right of Religious Freedom.²⁷ With regard to the general framework of Religious Education in Germany, I want to refer again to Prof. Dr. Wanda Alberts who states: "*The current policy towards RE in Germany, which privileges the Christian churches over all other religions is confronted*

²³ Niedersächsisches Kultusministerium. (2018). Kerncurriculum Werte und Normen Sek II, Hannover, p. 5.

²⁴ Alberts. 2019, p. 62.

²⁵ Alberts. 2007, p. 333.

²⁶ Alberts. 2019, p. 53.

²⁷ Wittmer/ Waldhoff. 2019, p. 1058.

*with serious educational and organisational difficulties since more and more religions have claimed their right to also offer confessional RE. Of course, within the dominant separative framework, it is only consistent that all religions may offer their particular version of confessional RE. However, this is generally a development in the wrong direction, leading to a further fragmentation of society, which is neither politically nor educationally desirable, and whose disastrous effects on national and international levels cannot be overlooked.*²⁸ and *“It is obvious, however, that the separative model has its limits in terms of the number of confessional subjects that may be organised”.*²⁹ These problems go along with the fact that most pupils’ education regarding religion happens only in a confessional frame. Alberts explains that this maintains the hegemonic situation that a big part of society has only an emic Christian understanding of Christianity and also a Christian understanding of other religions and traditions. The majority never learns other religious perspectives, contrasting content and views or secular approaches to speaking about religion.³⁰ There is no obligation to attend confessional Religious Education in Germany and the concept of the separative model and the constitutional conditions would make different approaches possible but Alberts explains that *“It is a more subtle process, which is the result of a system that privileges the traditional established religions, limits choice in various manners, operates with inclusion, exclusion and various types of ‘othering’ and stereotyping.”*³¹ Furthermore she problematizes the fact that the general framework requires a clear decision between the subjects in a young age and also an active deregistration from the regular subject of confessional Religious Education.³² Finishing the explanations with her analysis; Religious Education in Germany maintains both *“the hegemonic discourse on religion”* as well as *“the right to define what religion is and how it should be studied”*³³.

Read more:

- Alberts, Wanda. (2007). Integrative Religious Education in Europe: A Study-of-Religions Approach, Berlin, Boston.
- Alberts, Wanda. (2019). Religious education as small 'i' indoctrination: how European countries struggle with a secular approach to religion in schools - In: CEPS Journal 9, 4, pp. 53-72.
- Niedersächsisches Kultusministerium. (2017). Kerncurriculum Evangelische Religion Sek II, Hannover.
- Niedersächsisches Kultusministerium. (2018). Kerncurriculum Werte und Normen Sek II, Hannover.

²⁸ Alberts. 2007, p. 342.

²⁹ Alberts. 2019, p. 57.

³⁰ Alberts. 2019, p. 63.

³¹ Alberts. 2019, p. 64.

³² *ibid.*

³³ Alberts. 2019, pp. 69/70.

- Wittmer, F./ Waldhoff, C. (2019). Religious Education in Germany in Light of Religious Diversity: Constitutional Requirements for Religious Education. German Law Journal 20.