Communicating religion - a question of clarity

Exploring the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec (2008) 12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education

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Summary

The Council of Europe is engaged in promoting education for democratic citizenship through an intercultural education approach. Within this approach is a religious dimension. A Recommendation by the Committee of Ministers was issued in 2008: '*The Recommendation CM/Rec (2008) 12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education'*. This is a policy document on how to introduce the concept in education policies, institutions and the development of teacher training. The aim of the Recommendation is to ensure the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education is accepted as a contribution to strengthen human rights, democratic citizenship and participation, and to the development of competences for intercultural dialogue.

The study is an exploration of the communication on religion described in the above policy document. An interpretative approach was used to search for different meanings of 'religion' and 'religious dimension'. A tentative impression was that different actors had employed diverging meanings of the concepts in the Recommendation, and that this resulted in a textual tension in the document. A document analysis was performed with tools from domain analysis and text revision theory with an appreciation of how discourses are established. The Recommendation was compared with a draft version and supplementary material. The analysis was interpretative and focused on meaning and intention. A theoretical discussion followed with the aim of seeing how discourses on religion and society were reflected in the Recommendation.

The analysis showed that there had been many amendments to the text. These appeared as adjustments and conceptually new meanings of policy. Traces of different discourses were found, especially on 'religion' and 'religion as a cultural fact'. Partial, rather than complete replacements of concepts, resulted in a lack of clarity in the Recommendation and uncertainty regarding Council of Europe Policy on the role and place of religion. 'Religion' was for instance defined both including and excluding secular worldviews. 'Religion as a cultural fact' and 'religions and non-religious convictions as cultural facts', were used intermittently in an inconsistent manner in the Recommendation and its Explanatory Memorandum. The conclusion was that there is a textual tension in the Recommendation. I suggest that the

alterations that were presented in the analysis might be a result of the background of the various contributors to the writing and editing process. There is also reason to question whether the intention of the Council of Europe in paying attention to an increasing religious diversity through building competence for dialogue is maintained. The Council recognised that the earlier lack of attention to the importance of religion and values for individual and social identity had to be reversed in order to build a cohesive society. I suggest that the introduction of 'non-religious convictions' is blurring this intention. The communication on religion does not display the clarity that would seem required in order to promote the project of learning about religion and values in an intercultural education approach.

Acknowledgements

My interest in religious and cultural diversity started when I lived in the United Arab Emirates and Malaysia for eight years. I remember being discriminated at times because I was a white Christian. At other times I was greatly respected for being a believer and not a 'Western apostate'. My interest deepened when I realised how much religion meant to many people. Anyone entering a country in the Middle East knows that you need to put some kind of religious affiliation on your entry application: you cannot be a heathen or agnostic or 'could not care less'. I also realised it was not enough to answer 'Christian', or even 'Protestant', when strangers asked you about your faith. They wanted to know which denomination! These were illuminating experiences for an easy-going Norwegian Lutheran.

Moving back to Norway I wanted to find out more about how different peoples of the world could manage to live together, and how religion and society could co-exist. Studying at MF Norwegian School of Theology satisfied some of my curiosity. When I was searching for a theme for the Master's thesis, chance put me in contact with the European Wergeland Centre. This is a 'European resource centre on education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship'[1]. One of their recent tasks is proposing a road map for implementing the ideas from a 2008 Recommendation from the Council concerning intercultural education and its dimension of religions and non-religious convictions. The Recommendation awakened my curiosity. It claims there is a religious dimension that has to be acknowledged in how children are being educated in plural societies to become interculturally competent citizens. More than that, this dimension has to be related to the core values of Europe, namely human rights, plural democracy and the rule of law. How do they communicate on religion and other beliefs and how is this related to an intercultural approach to learning that is also consistent with European values?

This study would have been impossible without all the help I received from so many kind people. First of all, I want to pay a tribute to my main supervisor, Liv Ingeborg Lied. With gentle irony and never-ending smiles she is the main reason this thesis is in your hands. Her wealth of knowledge and inspiration has been the engine driving a year of frustration and joy. My co-supervisor Claudia Lenz has shown patience with my wandering around different

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[1] Available from: http://www.theewc.org/content/about.ewc/, [accessed 25 March 13]

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1. Introduction

There are many places from which to start this study. I could begin with early family immigration into Europe. The Council of Europe started conceptualising intercultural education in the seventies. I could start with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, when East and West Europe were reunited and there was a huge process of integration, not least in Germany. Both these events reflect a change in the views on religion. The first is related to the spread of Islam in former Western Europe, and the other with the complicated relationships with religion in former Eastern Europe. I could mention for instance the communist regimes' suppression of religion in the public sphere, the strong position of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland, and also the important role of the Orthodox Church, which has never been equally strong in Western Europe for historical reasons going back to the schism between the Western and Eastern Church in 1054 (Haraldsø, 1997).

I have however chosen to begin with the Council of Europe's decision in 2002 to include religion in their focus on intercultural education at all levels of public schooling in Europe. The events in the United States in 2001, and the rise of phenomena like fundamentalism, discrimination, stereotyping and increasing divisions in society were factors behind this decision. The Council concluded that religion could not be ignored and that intercultural education and dialogue had to accommodate a religious dimension (Council of Europe, 2008b). The challenge was how to do this in a multicultural Europe with different views on the place of religion in the public sphere. In addition to organisational and denominational religious pluralism in Europe there is immigration. After a temporary halt in immigration to many European countries in the mid seventies, there is now a steady increase in terms of those rejoining family, UN refugees and political asylum seekers. EU regulations implemented in the nineties have made it possible to move freely across the EU/EEC area to seek work, resulting in additional diversity in the religious and non-religious beliefs of member states.

1.1. Scope of study

The time period I have chosen for the study is 2002 to 2008. My decision was guided by the time frame for the project on religious diversity (2002-06)[2] and the production of the Recommendation (2007-08). Prior to 2002 'religion' was not really a priority for the Council

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[2] 'Intercultural eduaction and the challenge of religious diversity and dialogue in Europe'

of Europe. It was seen as a national issue, and in many cases as a private one. The description in 2.1 says more on this. Post 2008 there has also been development in the field of intercultural education and its religious dimension. An important contribution is the work of a joint expert group established by the Council of Europe and the European Wergeland Centre[3]. The main objective of the work of this group is to propose a roadmap for implementing the ideas set out in the Recommendation.

A graduate thesis has limitations in terms of scope, resources and time, and I have therefore chosen to concentrate on the production phase of the 2008 Recommendation. This has also influenced my choice of a documentary analysis complemented with conversations and correspondence rather than a field study. A limitation is that I have had no access to any initial drafts from the working group who wrote the Recommendation proposal in 2007. This hampers the analysis somewhat, but I have tried to counter that by exploring preparatory documents from the Council, the report from the Oslo Conference and the Reference Book for Schools. These, and other related documents, give insights into the aims and to the academic thinking that predate the writing of the Recommendation draft.

The Council of Europe is also involved in other intercultural projects. Some may be mentioned here. An important project is Education for Democratic Citizenship, which started in 1997. Religion is not a part of this project, but intercultural education (where religion is a dimension) is seen as a subset of education for democratic citizenship (Jackson, 2010 p.1135). This Council of Europe project is closely linked with the 2008 Recommendation through the attention given to intercultural education. A White Paper on intercultural dialogue instigated by the Committee of Ministers, will be referred to in this paper because of its indirect link with religion. Projects related to the White Paper are continuing in the Council. There is also a campaign for youth in the Council called 'All different all equal', which has been active since 1995. The Parliamentary Assembly has made resolutions and recommendations in the field of religion, democracy and education. The North-South Centre, established in 1989 in Lisbon, promotes dialogue and cooperation between Europe, the South of the Mediterranean and Africa (Council of Europe). Finally, The Annual Exchanges on the Religious Dimension of Intercultural Dialogue (Council of Europe, 2008d), engage the Council with religious and other convictional organisations throughout Europe.

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[3] The European Wergeland Centre, Oslo. Available from: http://www.theewc.org [Accessed 20 June 2012]

The European Wergeland Centre does much work in this field as well, in accordance with its mandate to promote education for democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural education. The centre is engaged in linking policy and research to educational practice, among other through the organisation of teacher training workshops and seminars such as the Summer Academies or workshops in cooperation with the Pestalozzi Programme.

The European Council is not the only organisation in Europe paying attention to the issues of religion, education and citizenship. The Toledo Guiding Principles on religious education in Europe presented by the ODIHR office of OSCE[4], relate to policy on how to organise this type of education in Europe and mainly focus on the level of teacher training (OSCE, 2007). The European Commission has, through its REDCo project (2006-09), contributed greatly to the understanding of whether religious diversity causes dialogue or conflict, especially among young people. This project has resulted in several books and papers. I will come back to REDCo in Chapter 3. A UN initiative through UNESCO is the Alliance of Civilisations (UNESCO), which is involved with many of the same issues. This initiative was established to foster global co-operation on cross-cultural issues and to promote initiatives aimed at encouraging dialogue and building bridges. The organisation co-operates with the Council of Europe in the field of intercultural dialogue.[5]

Although much of this work is relevant to how organisational Europe communicates and understands religion, I have chosen in this study to concentrate on the Recommendation 2008 by the Committee of Ministers.

1.2. Statement of Problem

'Religion' as a subject or phenomenon is talked about, described and defined most eloquently by scholars. On the other hand, 'religion' is also revered, feared or ridiculed with the same intensity or engagement by 'lay' people. 'Religion' is a complicated phenomenon, not monolithic, as the Recommendation rightly says in paragraph 3 (Council of Europe, 2008a), and can be viewed from a generic or particular perspective. This dichotomy can cause communication problems, not because of the phenomenon itself, but because of the various meanings ascribed to the term. It is as such a contested concept like music, art or democracy

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[4] ODIHR: Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
[5] Available from: https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1347275, [accessed 25 March 2013]

(Tweed, 2006 p.41). The debate can cause frictions or tensions because people ascribe different meanings to 'religion' depending on 'where they come from'. I have chosen the *'Recommendation on the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education'* as an example of this tension. I am interested in the divide between the religious and the secular, and my feeling on reading the Recommendation was that this document expressed the ambiguity of meaning mentioned above.

The research question is: ' How does the Council of Europe through this recommendation communicate on the phenomenon of religion in intercultural education?'. The sub-questions are: 'What is the Council's policy on religion in an intercultural approach to education?', 'What does the Council mean by religion?' and 'Why is the Council concerned with religion?'.

My approach is of an interpretative nature, exploring what the Recommendation from 2008 attempts to communicate when it talks about religion and the religious dimension. I am interested in the process its production, and the actors or writers involved. I want to investigate whether the background of the actors influence the end product, and whether there are traces of different discourses that have affected the intended communication of policies. Finally, I want to explore if the intention of the Council has remained consistent, that is, if the intent verbalised by the Secretary General (Wimberley, 2003; Council of Europe, 2001) and through the Conference in Athens 2003 (Council of Europe, 2003a) is represented in the final Recommendation.

1.3. Layout of thesis

The thesis will commence with a presentation of the background of the case study and an overview of the religious and intercultural education situation in Europe. I will present the organisation Council of Europe briefly in order to facilitate an understanding of the environment of the case. There has been hardly any research on the Recommendation, but I will indicate other research that indirectly concerns this thesis in Chapter 3. The chosen theoretical perspectives are explained and the case material is presented in Chapters 4 and 5. In Chapter 6 there will be an analysis of findings from the text and related material, followed in Chapter 7 by a discussion with context related theories. The study ends with a Chapter 8 offering concluding remarks on the exploration of the Recommendation.

2. Background

Recommendation 2008: 'The dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education' (Council of Europe, 2008a) was one of the outcomes of a project called Intercultural Education and the Challenge of Religious Diversity and Dialogue in Europe (2002-06). The project was aimed at 'learning about religions and beliefs' as a part of intercultural education whereas other projects, like the development of the White Paper (Council of Europe 2008c) were more specifically targeted at intercultural dialogue and also dialogues between religious communities and between the Council of Europe and religious communities (Jackson, 2010).

The Council of Europe has to be neutral on the question on religion and so has to couch its language in neutral terms, which are still consistent with the values of Europe; a pluralist democracy, human rights and rule of law. The Council does not have any formal authority over member states, but it makes recommendations and policy proposals[6]. This means that consensus is vital when proposals and recommendations are put forward. The text has to be phrased in a way that appeals and make sense to the member states. This is especially important for a sensitive issue such as religion.

The immediate context of the Recommendation is the situation of Religious Education in Europe and the developments in Intercultural Education. I will give a brief overview of these two areas in the following. A wider context is the role of religion in the public sphere and of secular thinking. Those issues will be raised in Chapter 7.

2.1. Religious education in Europe

The subject of Religious Education (RE) is organised very differently in Europe's many countries. There are three main models for teaching of religion: 'education into religion', 'education about religion' and 'education from religion' (Schreiner, 2007 p.9).

Education *into religion* means mainly learning about one specific religion or denomination. This model is found in some central and eastern European countries and has a high priority there. In the majority of countries this method of learning is no longer the province of state

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[6] Cf. Chapter 2.2 for Conventions and Charters

schools, but that of families and religious communities. Education *about religion* consists of religious knowledge and religious studies. Pupils learn about values, beliefs, and practices and how religion influences communities. 'Education *from religion* gives pupils the opportunity to consider different answers to major religious and moral issues, so that they may develop own views in a reflective way' (Schreiner, 2007 p.9). This model puts the experiences of pupils at the centre of teaching.

RE can, and many would say it ought to, include elements from all these models. European countries have different approaches to RE and there are several factors that decide how RE is taught; religious landscape in the particular country, role and value of religion in society, relation state/religion, structure of education system, history and politics (Schreiner, 2007 p.9). The models of RE in Europe can be divided into those with a denominational or confessional approach and those with a religious studies approach. Content, curriculum, teacher training and so on are mainly the responsibility of either the religious communities or the state (Schreiner, 2007 p.11).

2.2. Intercultural education in Europe

This concept is fairly old in a European perspective. Intercultural activities are probably older (Rey, 1986 p.8), but in 1977 the 'intercultural principle' was chosen as a guiding principle. Intercultural education became the focus for activities and theoretical work, initially aimed at migrant children.

An expert group 'The Working Party on the Training of Teachers', was mandated in 1975 by the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education to develop activities for the training of teachers of migrant children. The group, with members from Turkey, West Germany, Sweden, Portugal, and France and two observers from Yugoslavia, was lead by Michele Rey of Switzerland (Rey, 1986 p.13). They developed not only activities but also a theoretical framework for an intercultural approach. The report entitled 'Training Teachers in intercultural education? The work of the Council for cultural Co-operation (1977-1983)' (Rey, 1986), is interesting reading because it supports many of the same principles that are used today in intercultural education. The focus is on an approach to teaching of already existing subjects and not on introducing new ones. The importance of this approach being applied not only in the whole school, but also in activities in the local communities and with

parents, is emphasised. A noticeable point is, at that time, the distinct possibility of migrants returning to their country of origin. That meant considerable energy was put into the teaching of children's mother tongues, training of teachers from countries of origin, and the maintenance of cultural links with country of origin, to ease children's eventual return (Rey, 1986).

The approach was seen as a point of departure for use elsewhere as well. An intercultural approach to education is viewed as 'the only one capable of meeting the present and future needs of Europe and of a world in which mobility and interdependence are becoming increasingly important' (Rey, 1986 p.16). And further:

> It was important to show the effects of the intercultural approach in a well-defined area of life. Once the dynamic aspects of the approach and its interconnections had been demonstrated in a school context and in relation to the migrant and indigenous populations, it could be transferred to other contexts in which analogous interconnections would be found. (Rey, 1986 pp.16-17)

The religious dimension is not discussed in her report, but Rey writes that the training should prepare teachers to respect the diversity of areas such as religion.

This work resulted in the adoption in 1984 of the 'Recommendation No.R (84) 18 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the training of teachers to education for intercultural understanding, notably in a context of migration' (Council of Europe, 1984).

2.3. The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is an organisation of 47 member states. The organisation has grown steadily since 10 countries founded the Council in 1949. The largest expansion came in the early 1990s after the end of the Cold War, when several former East European Countries joined. 'The primary aim of the Council of Europe is to create a common democratic and legal area throughout the whole of the continent, ensuring respect for its fundamental values: human rights, democracy and the rule of law' (Council of Europe, n.d.). These values are based on the European Convention on Human Rights, and other reference texts on the protection of individuals. The organisation aims to find common solutions to challenges facing European society such as discrimination against minorities, xenophobia and intolerance, promote awareness and encourage the development of Europe's cultural identity and diversity. The Council wants to consolidate democratic stability in Europe by backing political, legislative and constitutional reform (Council of Europe, n.d.). In addition to the 47

member states, Canada, the Holy See, Japan, the United States of America and Mexico have observer status within the Council of Europe's intergovernmental bodies (The Council of Europe, 2004b p.8). For an understanding of the production process of a Recommendation, parts of the Council needs to be described in more detail.

2.3.1. Institutions and structure of the Council

There are five institutions in the Council of Europe: the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the European Court of Human Rights and the Conference of International NGOs (Council of Europe, n.d.). My main attention will be on the Committee of Ministers.

The Committee is a forum for policy-making, approval of the budget and programme of activities. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of member states meet once a year for a review of political issues and the Permanent Representatives (ambassadors or chargés d'affaires) meet once a week in the Ministers' Deputies meetings. The permanent diplomatic representatives have the same decision making authority as the Ministers (Council of Europe, n.d.) (See Figure 2.1)
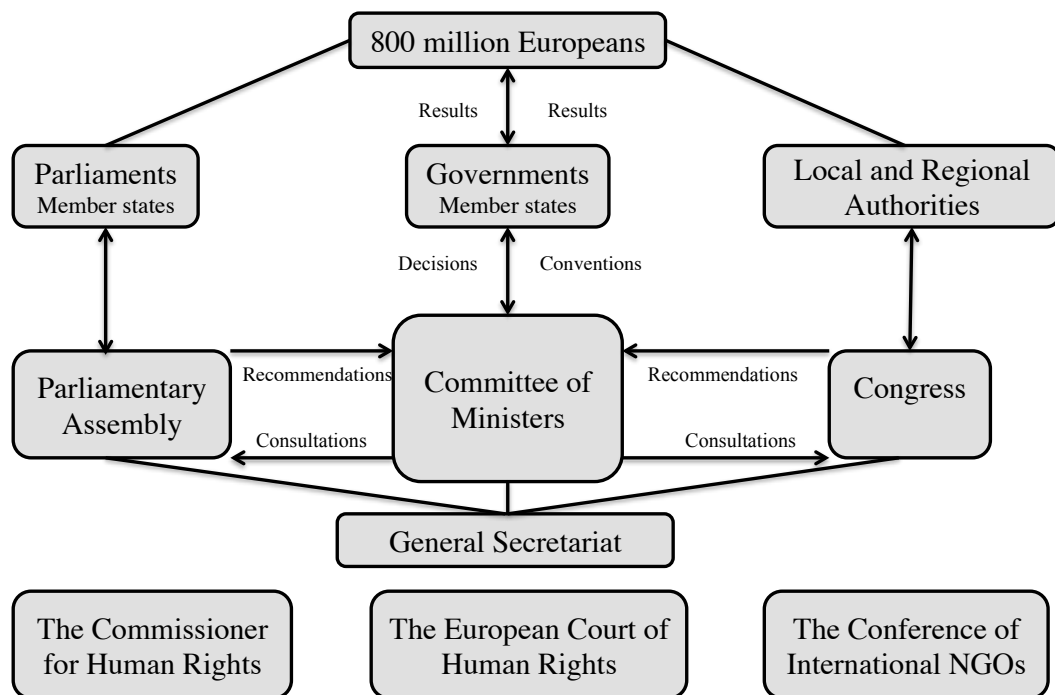
Figure 2.1. Council of Europe institutions
Source: Council of Europe, n.d. Available from:
http://www.coe.int/AboutCoe/media/interface/publications/outreach_en.pdf, [Accessed 20th
August 2012]

The representatives also meet in Rapporteur Groups (preparing the meetings of Deputies) or
Working Groups (ad hoc) to study special issues in depth. Information is gathered from
relevant ministries in home countries.[7] Underlying expert committees consisting of
representatives of specialised ministries in the capitals prepare many cases. There are also
continuous consultations between the delegation in Strasbourg and the relevant Ministries in
member states: for instance the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Ministry of Education.[8]
Government experts, responsible to the Committee of Ministers, draft these Conventions and
Recommendations by 'harmonizing political interests with technical and sectorial
considerations' (The Council of Europe, 2004b pp. 11-12).

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[7] Email correspondence with Kristin Hefre, 23 November 2012
[8] Conversation with Gunnar Mandt, 15 January13

The Committee of Ministers' work includes political dialogue, interacting with the Parliamentary Assembly, concluding conventions and agreements, and ensuring Recommendations are adopted by member states (see Figure 2.2).
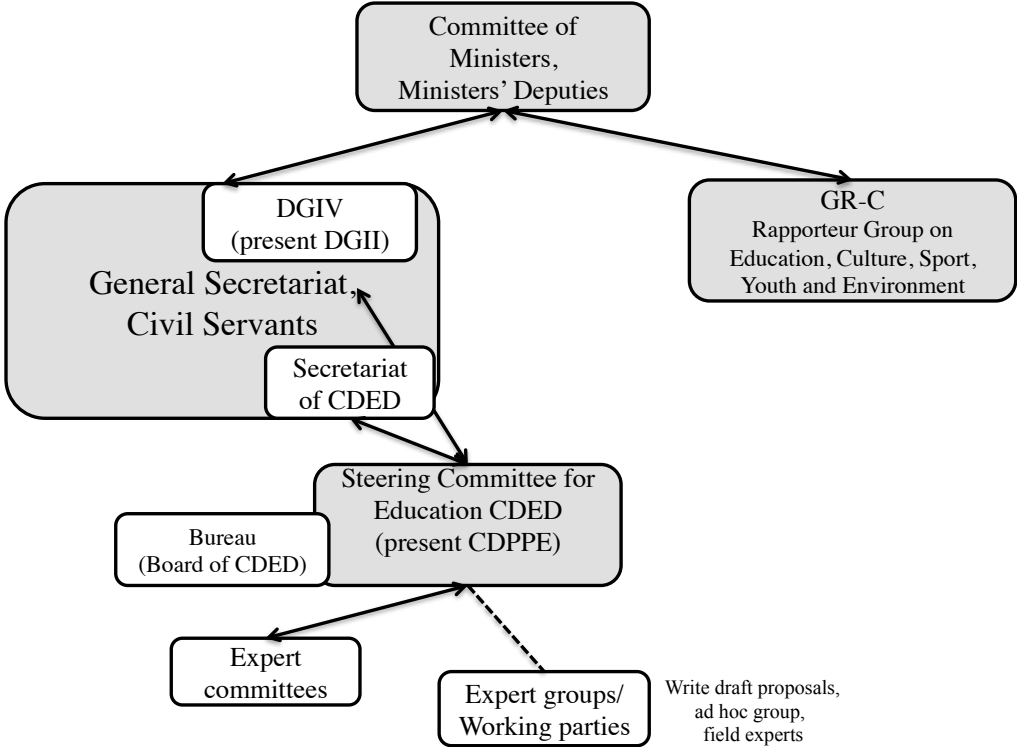
Figure 2.2 The Committee of Ministers.
Source: Author's model

The Parliamentary Assembly is the deliberative body of the Council of Europe, and represents the main political tendencies in its member states. The 318 members are appointed by the national parliaments of each member state and they meet three times a year for a week. The Assembly's interests include current social problems and aspects of international politics. 'Its deliberations provide significant guidelines for the Council's Committee of Ministers and intergovernmental sectors, and they influence governments when members relay them to their own national parliaments' (Council of Europe, 2004b p. 15*)*. Specialist committees prepare the Assembly's work.

The Parliamentary Assembly elects the **Secretary General** and the Deputy Secretary General for a five-year term (Council of Europe, n.d.). A permanent workforce of 2,000 international civil servants, recruited from the member states, works for the Secretary General (The Council of Europe, 2004b p.11) in the **General Secretariat**. The Directorates General and also Secretariats of the Steering Committees like CDPPE are parts of the General Secretariat. At the time of the Recommendation production (2008), they were respectively DG IV and CDED.[9]

There are two other institutions in the Council. The first is the **Summit meetings** between heads of states and governments that have been held three times so far: in Vienna in 1993, Strasbourg in 1997 and Warsaw in 2005. At the summit in Warsaw, an Action Plan was presented, in which 'fostering intercultural dialogue' was one of the tasks for the coming years (Council of Europe, 2005a). The second are the three-yearly **specialised ministerial conferences**, like for instance the Athens conference of Ministers of Education in 2003 (Council of Europe 2003a). These conferences analyse major problems in different sectors and promote contact between counterpart ministries in other member states. They work out the projects to be implemented jointly and propose activities for the Council's work programme (The Council of Europe, 2004b pp. 8-9). The conference in Athens endorsed the project Religious Diversity: The New Challenge of Intercultural Education.

2.2. Legal instruments

The Council of Europe **Conventions** and **Charters** are international legally binding instruments created through debate and agreement involving particularly the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly. One example is the European Culture Convention of 1954. Some subjects are not suitable for inclusion in conventions and so the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly can make **Recommendations** and **Resolutions** to its member states on the agreed 'common policy' (The Council of Europe, 2004b p.16). The Recommendations must be subject to a unanimous vote in the Committee, but are not legally binding on the member states.[10] Resolutions and Recommendations are policy documents recommending action to be taken within a field. The Ministers' Deputies make the day-to-day

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[9] Reorganisation in January 2012. Email correspondence with Ilya Subbotin, 4 December 2012

[10] Interestingly, Explanatory Memoranda to the Recommendations are not adopted, but just 'taken note of'. This will be explored in the findings and analysis. On the question of legality cf. also the European Centre for Law and Justice (2012): *Status of the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers in the legal field of the Council of Europe*

decisions in the Committee of Ministers in Ministers' Deputies Meetings, i.e. they have decision-making authority.[11]

2.3. Steering committees

The responsibility for the Council of Europe Education programme lies with the Steering Committee for Education (Figure 2.2). The representatives in this body come from Ministries of Education in the countries that have signed the European Cultural Convention. At the time period of this study there were two committees for the educational field: the Steering Committee for Education, CDED, and the Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research, CD-ESR, (The Council of Europe, 2004b p.57). As of January 2012 these two are now one committee: the Steering Committee on Educational Policy and Practice, CDPPE.[12] The Committees meet twice a year.[13] There are similar Steering Committees for other fields in the Council such as Culture. Recommendations such as the one in this study are often written at the instigation of the Steering Committees.

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[11] Email correspondence with Kristin Hefre, current Deputy Permanent Secretary at the Norwegian Delegation in Strasbourg, 23 November 2012. See also Statutes article 15a) and article 20a): Available from: http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/001.htm, [accessed 21 January 2013]
[12] Email correspondence with Ilya Subbotin, 4 December 2012
[13] Email correspondence with Ilya Subbotin 15 April 2013

3. Other Research in the Field

Communication on religion is a wide area. Narrowing it down to approaches of interest to this study, 'Religion in education', I have looked at three different perspectives: pedagogics, Europeanisation and radical democracy. All three overlap partly with my focus, and are indirectly linked. Some are connected to work done in relation to the Recommendation. They all concern communication, but follow a different direction from the one I have taken. Whereas contributors in these fields explore educational contexts specifically, my point of departure is exploring communication of 'religion' in a policy document, concentrating on meanings of religion and consistency in presentation. In this chapter I talk about Robert Jackson and Heid Leganger-Krogstad who are important contributors in the field of 'religion in intercultural education', and give an overview of the REDCo project. Further I will discuss Peter Schreiner's doctoral dissertation on religion from the Europeanisation perspective, and finally talk about Lovisa Bergdahl who uses radical democracy as a perspective in education about religion.

3.1. Pedagogics and religion

The pedagogical aspect of religious education in an intercultural education (Jackson, 2004) can make use of different approaches: the phenomenological, the interpretative, the dialogical and the contextual. These four are described in the Recommendation as a way of teaching, or communicating, about religion in school.

Robert Jackson has written extensively on this field in the light of research in the UK and in Europe, and he is also an experienced educator. Jackson is Professor at the University of Warwick and at the European Wergeland Centre. He was part of the project behind the Recommendation, the REDCo project[14], the Toledo Guiding Principles project and various other projects in this field across Europe and in the UK (cf. 5.4.). His research and publications are too manifold to include here, but I would like to mention his 'interpretive approach' to learning about religion.[15] This was developed as early as 1997 and has been used in several countries. It is also an approach used in the REDCo project. The aim is to enable school children of all ages to understand different religious traditions. It remains neutral

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[14] REDCo stands for **R**eligion in **E**ducation, a contribution to **Di**alogue or a factor of **Co**nflict in transforming societies of European countries.
[15] Available from:
http://www.theewc.org/library/category/view/studying.religions.the.interpretive.approach.in.brief/ [Accessed 04 April 2013]

regarding the various beliefs and looks at both diversity within religions and the interactions between religion and culture. Its main components are representation, interpretation and reflexivity. In *Religious Education Research through a Community of Practice, Action Research and in the Interpretive Approach* (Ipgrave, Jackson and O'Grady Eds. 2009), collaborative research of a group of professionals is presented. Key ideas of the interpretative approach and action research are set out together with reports from case studies and connections to findings from the REDCo project.

Robert Jackson's work has been very helpful in providing understanding of the terminology used in religion in intercultural education, and also of the historical background to this field. Whereas his focus is on how to communicate to children on religion, mine is on communicating religion in a public policy document.

Heid Leganger-Krogstad is Professor in Religious Education at MF Norwegian School of Theology, Oslo, Norway, and is a principal proponent of the 'contextual approach'. She was one of the experts at the conference in Oslo 2004 on the religious dimension of intercultural education and a contributor to *Religious diversity and intercultural education: a reference book for schools* (Keats, ed. 2007). Her PhD dissertation is entitled *The Religious Dimension of Intercultural Education: Contributions to a Contextual Understanding* (Leganger-Krogstad, 2011). Leganger-Krogstad argues for the double role of religion: both as the reason for deep cultural differences and the contributory role in intercultural dialogue. The dissertation promotes 'contextual understanding' as a way of addressing religious diversity in schools (Leganger-Krogstad, 2011).

The material is drawn from an explorative field study in a plural context in Alta in Finnmark, Norway, a comparative field study, curriculum studies and a teacher survey. Her research questions were two: (1) how can competence in worldview differences embedded in religions contribute to intercultural education in school and to dialogue in RE? and (2) on what terms can a contextual religious education in Norway be developed? (Leganger-Krogstad, 2011 p.262). Two sub-questions are included in the first research question: how can education in schools come closer to a genuine acceptance of worldview differences embedded in religions? and why is acknowledgment of difference a necessary precondition for dialogue and the quest for commonalities across worldviews? (Leganger-Krogstad 2011:262)

It is the first of the research questions that is of particular interest in my study. She points to the role intercultural education has for the whole school community and how RE is a contributor in this. Leganger-Krogstad sees RE as (1) a way for pupils to understand the 'deep, rooted cultural differences' embedded in religion, (2) providing for competence of worldviews, religions and beliefs and (3) training in dialogical practice (Leganger-Krogstad 2011, p.262). The religious dimension in education is embedded at the institutional level, and not as just as a discrete subject (Leganger-Krogstad 2011, p.30). This is described in the *Reference book for schools 2007* (Council of Europe, 2007d pp.115-120). Leganger-Krogstad argues that since religion is the reason for deep, cultural differences, knowledge of religions and beliefs are crucial both for understanding differences in student backgrounds, and for educational approaches.[16] The importance of a contextual approach is based on empirical findings and also on Roland Robertson's thinking on the process of glocalisation. This is a process of universalisation towards homogeneity, and at the same time a local adaptation of this, causing heterogeneity (Leganger-Krogstad, 2011 p.31).

There is a parallel here with the Council of Europe's thinking on the quest for common European values and standards, while at the same time recognising national autonomy and adaptations. I would argue that the challenge of the contextual context approach is that of the local adaptation of a global phenomenon, to use Roland Robertson's vocabulary. The local approach inherent in the contextual could arguably end up too local to prepare pupils for their inevitable contact with wider experience later in life.

The findings in Leganger-Krogstad's studies show that religion plays a key role in intercultural education. This concerns both value conflicts and worldview differences between the ideals of a circular holistic worldview vs a linear dualistic worldview. Leganger-Krogstad has pointed to the reason for why religion can be important in a European context and how it can be implemented in education. She has provided valuable information on terminology that will be used in this thesis. Her assumption of deep cultural differences embedded in religion will not be my focus. I see religion and culture as more dynamic structures, and would question the necessity for 'digging too deep' in trying to find local essentialised traces of culture. That these cultural differences are always embedded in religion might also be contended. My point of departure would be of a more socially constructive character, recognising how these entities continuously changes and criss-cross each other (Baumann,

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[16] Conversation with Heid Leganger-Krogstad 04 April 2013

1999). I do not deny the value of knowledge of worldviews, but see their individual and group forms as equally interesting.

REDCo is both a European Commission project and a series of publications (Religious Diversity and Education in Europe). The project period was from 2006 to 2009, but the publication of books is continuing. Ten projects from eight European countries participated in the REDCo project.[17] The coordinator of the REDCo project was Wolfram Weisse. The project's aim was to investigate the potentials and limitation of religion in the educational fields of some European countries and the researchers came from both the humanities and social sciences (REDCo, 2009). Qualitative and quantitative research done in eight European countries focused on young people from 14 to 16 and their personal experience with religion, the social dimension of religion and religion in school. Findings showed that knowledge of religion helped in understanding people from different backgrounds, that young people were generally interested in this but that prejudices still existed. An interesting finding was that dialogue was not as popular among student as among teachers (REDCo, 2008).

Religious Diversity and Education in Europe is a series of books which started in 2006 was written by the two European research groups, ENRECA[18] and REDCo, but now includes texts from a wider range of sources, like doctoral theses, collections of essays and reports from national and European research projects.[19] REDCo concerns the investigation and reflection on the changing role of religion and education in Europe (Jackson et al Eds. 2007). The focus of the series is on the importance of strengthening pluralist democracies. The contributions emphasise active citizenship and mutual understanding through intercultural education. Special attention is given to the educational challenges of religious diversity and conflicting value systems in schools and in society. Some of the books will be referred to in this study.

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[17] The following countries were involved: Estonia, Russia, Germany, Norway, England, Spain, the Netherlands and France (REDCo, 2009)

[18] The European Network for Religious Education through Contextual Approaches

[19] Some of the contributions to Religious Diversity and Education in Europe are: *Religion and Education in Europe, Developments, Contexts and Debates* (2007) by Robert Jackson, Siebren Miedema, Wolfram Weisse, Jean-Paul Willaime (Eds.) Geir Skeie has edited a volume on *Religious Diversity and Education, Nordic Perspectives* (Skeie, 2009). Authors in this volume include Karin Sporre, Sidsel Lied and Robert Jackson. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, Robert Jackson has developed the 'interpretive approach'. In *Religious Education Research through a Community of Practice, Action Research and in the Interpretive Approach* (Ipgrave, Jackson and O'Grady Eds., 2009), collaborative research of a group of professionals is presented. Finally I want to mention Geir Afdals contribution *Tolerance in Curriculum: conceptions of tolerance in the multicultural unitary Norwegian compulsory school* (Afdal, 2006). See the following link for a list of all publications: http://www.waxmann.com/?id=21&cHash=1&reihe=1862-9547, [Accessed 04 April 2013]

They do not concern the thesis directly, since I approach religious education and intercultural education more in by discussing communication and perception than the empirical aspects of a plural student environment and pedagogies for education. REDCo is not related to the Recommendation by the Council of Europe, but is valuable for the theoretical insights and concrete information it offers to my study.

3.2. Europeanisation and religion

There does not seem to be much research on the Recommendation itself. For discourse of religion in Europe I would like to point to Peter Schreiner's doctoral dissertation of 2012: *Religion im Kontext einer Europäisierung von Bildung*[20] (Schreiner, 2012). This dissertation is published in the REDCo series. Although his work approaches religion from a different perspective from mine, and covers a much wider area than this study, it is valuable when it comes to investigating the Recommendation. Whereas Heid-Leganger Krogstad had a local focus, Peter Schreiner views the role of religion in a regional, European context, as a part of the Europeanisation of education.

Peter Schreiner is Deputy Director, Education in the Context of Schooling at the Comenius-Institut in Münster, Germany. He was a member of the project group involved in the production of the Recommendation. He is actively engaged with work in the field of Religious Education in Europe.

Schreiner's dissertation focused on the role of religion in a Europeanised education, and on the variety of understandings of religion and education in the context of the Council of Europe and the European Union. The Recommendation of 2008 was one of the many documents he analysed. Schreiner claims that education has become part of European public policy, and that so-called 'soft' processes provide European solutions to European challenges in education. Europeanisation,[21] a theory developed in political science, is used as a theoretical perspective (2012 p.345). In his reflection on the findings, Schreiner used a Protestant perspective (2012 p.345). This perspective derives from the following understanding: 'a) Protestantism accepts secularisation and plurality in society, b) Protestantism and education are closely related, education is seen as a "life form of faith" and

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[20] Religion in the Context of a Europeanisation of Education, author's translation
[21] Peter Schreiner uses Johan P. Olsen's approach in defining Europeanisation. Olsen differentiates between the following processes of Europeanisation: (1) changes in external boundaries, (2) developing institutions at the European level, (3) central penetration of national systems of governance, (4) exporting forms of political organisations, (5) a political unification project (Schreiner, 2012 p.346)

c) Protestant churches contribute to justice and peace in Europe' (Schreiner 2012, p.352). He points to theological reasoning as a contribution to deal with the issue of common values in Europe and how this can be effective in providing a framework for coexistence in a cultural and religious plurality. Schreiner especially emphasises the concepts of solidarity, human dignity, reconciliation and peace (2012 p.347).

The main findings in Schreiner's dissertation concern the interrelatedness of religion and education. This is found explicitly in Council documents and implicitly in EU documents (Schreiner, 2012 p.349). The findings can be thematized under the headings of (1) religion, (2) education, (3) religious education, (4) religious communities as valid partners of politics, and finally (5) the manifold relationships between religion, democracy and society. He found that the Council of Europe has different perspectives on religion: private, collective and organised, and cultural fact (Schreiner, 2012 p.350). The EU has no explicit concept of religion. Second, he found that education had a high value and a positive image in the Council, whereas education had a special role and value for economy and growth in the EU (Schreiner, 2012 p.351). Third, he found a preference for a knowledge-based concept of 'teaching about religions' (2012 p.349). The fourth issue of religious communities shows that the religious communities are seen as valid partners of politics in creating a democratic society. Schreiner underlines the dangers of a functionalised perception of religion and religious communities in this respect (2012 p.351). Finally, when it comes to the issue of the relationship between religion, democracy and society, this is seen as complex and varied. Concerning the Protestant perspective, Schreiner posits a critical view on privatisation of religion and marginalisation of religion's role in the public sphere. Further, he calls for a comprehensive, multi-dimensional concept of education, and for religious education to include more than the knowledge aspect (Schreiner, 2012 p.352).

Peter Schreiner's PhD dissertation incorporates a much wider field than my study both temporally and in the choice of material. His work covers the period from 1993 to 2011, and he uses documents from both the European Union and the Council of Europe. His focus is linked to the Europeanisation of education, and of religion's role in this. He also has a Protestant perspective on his discussion that is different from my outsider's perspective. Having said that, I find that Schreiner's dissertation is tangential to the study I undertake and I will use it in the analysis. Of particular interest is his qualitative content analysis of the 2008 Recommendation.

3.3. Radical democracy and religion

Lovisa Bergdahl is currently a senior lecturer in Religious Studies at Mälardalen University, Sweden. Her PhD dissertation is entitled '*Seeing Otherwise - Renegotiating Religion and Democracy as Questions for Education*' (Bergdahl, 2010). This does not analyse the Recommendation directly, but discusses aspects from some of the earlier work in the project on religious diversity by the Council of Europe.

What is the relation between 'democracy' and 'religion in intercultural education'? A plural democracy is one of the Council of Europe's core values. Religion has a role in the public sphere in a deliberative democracy (Habermas, 2005). Lovisa Bergdahl argues in her thesis that deliberative democracy is the wrong model. She claims that this form of governance does not make room for different opinions and is too consensus seeking. She argues for the better solution of a radical democracy, using the theories of Hannah Arendt, Talal Asad and Chantal Mouffe. In her thesis she assesses the work done by the Council of Europe in this field and claims that their solutions are too simple. I would argue that this conclusion is grounded in a misreading or misciting of Council of Europe documents.

Bergdahl wrote her dissertation in the field of Educational Philosophy. She grounds her thesis on the 'comeback of religion' and the consequences this has for education and democracy in a European context. The purpose of the dissertation is to renegotiate the relationship between 'education', 'democracy' and 'religion' by placing the religious subject at the centre of attention. She queries what happens to education if predefined ideas on democracy and religion are questioned. This is based on the assumption that all definitions are contingent and that no definition is ever 'politically innocent', to use Ola Sigurdsson's phrase[22] (Bergdahl, 2010:3).

As part of the background to her dissertation she describes (1) the emergence of political visions within the Council of Europe on 'how to handle the "religious dimension" in European education', (2) secularisation's effect on democracy and religion and (3) the articulation of the theoretical relationship between democracy and religion (Bergdahl, 2010 p.3).

Lovisa Bergdahl makes interesting observations, especially on shifting the focus from religion

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[22] *Det postsekulära tillståndet – religion, modernitet, politik* (The post secular society – religion, modernity, politics) (Sigurdsson 2009)

as a field to religious subjects. Keeping individuals at the centre of attention is important in a relational perspective, and in developing good societies. I would suggest though, that instances in the thesis[23] show that her over-emphasis on the religious students, limits the usefulness of her observations for my study. I recognise that she also includes students in general,[24] but my impression is that a stronger weight is given to religious, and especially Muslim, students.

Bergdahl's dissertation is included here because of her use of Council of Europe documents[25]. She does not discuss 'intercultural education' *per se*, although her conclusions might be interesting for scholars in this field. My concerns are twofold. First, my interpretation is that she has not read these documents very thoroughly, and second she seems to have misunderstood some of their content. Bergdahl claims that the Council deems religious pluralism 'one of the main sites of tension in European societies' and that the primary solution 'is to incorporate the religious dimension in such a way that it can serve the democratic purposes of society' (Bergdahl, 2010 p.6). Further she combines sentences from a Parliamentary Recommendation,[26] a speech from the opening of the conference in Oslo in 2004, and quotes from the *Reference book for schools* (2007) and posits that this 'collection' is the Council's policy. It can be problematic to combine statements from these different documents, although they indirectly are related.

Second, her statement: 'What we see appearing today, according to the Council, is a distorted kind of religion, a religion abused to stir up mistrust and hate, which in turn can provide a breeding ground for conflict and war' (Bergdahl, 2010 p.7), must be a misunderstanding on her part. The sentence is incorrectly quoted and more importantly, is not 'according to the Council' (Bergdahl, 2010 p.7). This misquoted sentence was uttered by the then Norwegian

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[23] See pages 32, 46, 66, 104 and 178 in her thesis.

[24] See for instance pages 32 and 66 in her thesis.

[25] Bergdahl bases her observations on the following documents: *Recommendation 1720* from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council (Council of Europe, 2005), The proceedings from the Oslo Conference 2004: *The religious dimension of intercultural education* (Council of Europe, 2004a), *Religious Diversity and Intercultural Education – a reference book for schools* (Council of Europe/J. Keast ed. 2007), and Pieter Batelaan's *Intercultural education and the challenge of religious diversity and dialogue* (2003), that was used as a discussion paper in the early project phase of the Council religious diversity project.

[26] The PA recommendation is referenced as authored by European Ministers of Education (Bergdahl, 2010 p.187). This is not correct. European Ministers of Education are not members of the Parliamentary Assembly. They meet in the forum of Standing Conferences of Ministers for Education, which are three-yearly specialised ministerial conferences.

Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik, in his opening speech at the conference in Oslo.[27]

What Bondevik actually said was:

> Religion is a vital force in today's world. Religion it can be a meeting place for inspiring new ideas and fostering deeper understanding. But sadly, religion can also be used to create and reinforce misunderstanding Religion is all too often distorted and abused to stir up mistrust and hate, which in turn provide a breeding ground for conflict and war (Bondevik, 2004 p.21-22).

As with my first example, it is problematic to combine his statement as that of a political leader of one member state with Council statements and even more so to present his statement as Council policy. I am highlighting this because of the way in which Bergdahl has used statements from divergent, sometimes non-compatible, sources to credit the Council of Europe with the following argument: 'The answer to why religion is causing tension in liberal democracies begs a more complex response than simply suggesting that "bad versions" of religion need to be twisted from the hands of the heretics' (Bergdahl, 2010 p.7).

Bergdahl has used the documents from the Council of Europe as instances of what she claims is an over-simplified way of looking at a complex issue. The example above seems to imply that she has not studied these documents thoroughly enough. This argument is supported by her conclusion.[28] She is using Levinas' classic metaphor of 'seeing the face of the other'[29] to argue for the importance of seeing the religious subject. Bergdahl continues: 'Whether religious students are welcomed or rejected in education is therefore an act that physically begins with one's way of looking at them' (2010 p.175). She seems to be more concerned for the religious students than 'the rest'. The Council of Europe is in no position to favour a select group of individuals[30] but must make policies that are relevant for all students. Further, what is a religious student? She has not problematized this issue. The Council of Europe *is* concerned with 'seeing the other' and has developed various pedagogical approaches to both recognising differences and 'learning to live together'.[31] The Council's perspective is rooted, as I read it, in a deliberative democratic tradition, whereas Bergdahl wants to use a radical

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[27] All the speeches from the Conference and essays, discussions and best practice examples were collected in the Proceedings report and published by the Council of Europe. The flyleaf makes it clear that '*The opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe*' (Council of Europe, 2004a).
[28] *Conclusion: An Education of Small Gestures* (Bergdahl, 2010 pp.174-178)
[29] Cf. Levinas *Ethics and Infinity* (1985)
[30] There are exceptions to this policy: for instance, regarding positive discrimination related to Freedom of Religion and Belief, see Haas (2008)
[31] This is also reflected in the approach of 'learning from religion' (Schreiner 2007) see 2.1.

democracy approach to religion in education. Bergdahl claims that when dialogue is used to achieve democratisation, solve conflicts and attain collective agreement, this is a limiting way of looking at dialogue. She sees more possibilities in a conflictual dialogical approach. Her approach to religious literacy is that it is necessary, but not from a liberal democratic point of view.

Lovisa Bergdahl's dissertation is tangentially connected to my study through her use of documents from the Council of Europe, although she unfortunately does not use the Recommendation of 2008. What makes it relevant is the manner in which she interprets the content of the documents, which adds to my argument that there are many ways of reading these documents, and many possibilities of meaning, depending on the reader's perspective and background.

3.4. Study perspectives

I have given an overview of three perspectives used by other scholars in the field of religion in education in Europe. They vary from very concrete approaches in pedagogics, to the more abstract analysis of education about religion in a perceived radical democracy.

As I said in the Introduction, there has not been much research done on the Recommendation of 2008. Peter Schreiner's dissertation (2012) is the most direct link. His perspective is different from mine, as he uses the theory of Europeanisation of education and and tries to locate religion's role from that perspective. He approaches his study from an insider's perspective, using a Protestant lens (cf. 3.2.) to reflect on his findings. Bergdahl's contribution is in the perspective of radical democracy. Her dissertation came to my attention because of her use of Council of Europe documents. I disagree with her interpretation of the Council's policy. Further, I would argue that her view of deliberative democracy is too limited. I believe that recognising differences and arguing these in public is one of the strengths of this type of governance. A positive result of her contribution in this chapter is that it illustrates how varied the methods of communicating on religion are and how varied the response to this communication can be. The first perspective, pedagogics, is the very concrete forms of communication on religion in an educational field. It introduced me to terminology and thinking, which were of importance prior to my exploration of the Recommendation.

The language of 'religion' is very much connected to the field of operation, so to speak. I find it intriguing how much room there is for misunderstandings in the communication on religion, especially when one crosses r from one field to another. My perspective in this study is to (try to) place myself firmly on the outside and study the communication on 'religion in education' in a public policy document. I want to explore it with the aim of looking for meaning and consistency in the text. In other words, does the message come through clearly? To do this I have used the Recommendation as a case exemplifying this kind of communication. The unique character of a document such as this is that the audience receiving the communication is also a participating writer. In other words, the document is written for an audience, and this audience response by revising the text in the document. What this revision does to the clarity of the document is one of my areas of enquiry.

Contextually, the Recommendation is a challenging document. It is challenging to write because the audience has very different perceptions of 'religion in education'; some are even quite negative to religion as an issue in school. It is challenging to read, because 'religion' is a contested concept, and diverse groups of readers might understand the language used in the text in different ways. This is an explorative study, looking not at the dogmas or theology of religion, but how the term is communicated and with what meaning content.

4. Theoretical Perspectives and Study Approach

Documents from the Council of Europe are the main source of data material in this study. Analysing documents and documentary reality is a special form of qualitative analysis (Atkinson and Coffey, 2011 p.79). Documents are in a way a glimpse of the organisation they represent, but more than that they have a reality of their own. Inevitably they will be coloured by what they are supposed to accomplish and whom they are written for (Bryman, 2012 p.555). Documents are also linked to other documents in the way they respond to or are a response to another document. I shall focus on one Recommendation, but in order to understand the meaning manifest in this document, and to explore the aspects teased out by the research question more fully, the material includes other documents and literary sources.

'*Recommendation on the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education*', a policy document from the Council of Europe, will be used in this case study as an example of different ways of understanding and using the concept of 'religion' and 'religious dimension'. I want to emphasise the meaning-making process. Specifically, what do the actors in this study mean when they communicate religion? Do they infuse related concepts (in the Recommendation) with the same meaning? How do they talk about them?

The analytic perspective I have chosen calls for a combination of theoretical tools to explain the findings properly. Documents can be analysed in different manners. I have chosen to draw elements from two theoretically grounded models in analysing the material. They are both within the field of semiotic approaches, but approach text from different angles. I will present the domain Analysis of James Spradley (1979) and the fluid text revision theory of John Bryant (2002) and describe how I plan to use these. The models are supplemented by a general understanding of discourses. I have consciously tried not to categorise statements in the material, but rather looked at variances and inconsistencies. Here I follow the thinking in discourse analysis as viewed for instance by Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell (1987). As also seen in Fluid Text revision theory, text and thereby discourse can be seen as social text. I do not agree that analysis should limit itself to the discursive level, but argue for the need to take external context into consideration as well. Here I follow Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldberg (2009) and also Tonje Raddum Hitching, Anne Birgitta Nilsen and Aslaug Veum (Hitching et. al, ed. 2011) in paying attention to the ideational level and the level of action and

social conditions (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2009 pp.235-236).[32]

4.1. Domain analysis

There are several broad semiotic approaches to a qualitative analysis of text (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). One such approach is the ethnographically inspired Domain Analysis developed by James Spradley (1979, cited in Coffey and Atkinson, 1996 p.98). I believe that social and cultural groups construct reality differently to a some extent,. I likewise believe that this applies to writing and experiencing text as well. Consequently, groups have various conceptions of text depending on their backgrounds. This is a major reason for my finding Domain Analysis a fruitful theoretical tool for analysing a policy document containing ambiguous concepts like religion. Spradley differentiates between four types of ethnographic analysis; domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, componential analysis and theme analysis (Spradley, 1979 p.94), and I have concentrated on the first type. This is a relational theory of meaning (Spradley, 1979 p.95).

Domain analysis is a tool for discovering the meaning of concepts as they occur in different cultural groups. Spradley's 'cultural groups' will in this study be denoted as the different groups of writers involved in the production of the Recommendation. Available information like the decision-making structure of the CoE (see figure 2.2) indicates that these groups existed. Briefly, these 'cultural groups' can be called 'scholars', 'civil servants', 'politicians' and 'diplomats'. The challenge is to find out if they do belong to different 'cultures'. The contention is that different groups have 'local languages' in which terms are used in certain ways[33]. This can be traced by looking at the semantic relationships between particular terms (Spradley, 1979 pp.108-109). I will use parts of this approach to locate the possible various discourses in the Recommendation.[34]

It should be mentioned that this theory was written at a time (1979) when much social science followed a positivistic trend of formulating hypotheses, collecting data and analysing them without changing the hypothesis for fear of 'contaminating the results' (Spradley, 1979 p.93).

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[32] See also 4.3.

[33] Cf. Boréus and Bergström (2005 p.184) for a similar understanding of different understandings in diverse cultural and intellectual contexts

[34] For a similar analytical approach, see Dvora Yanow's *Interpretive Policy Analysis* (2000). This approach explores contrasts between authored text (intended policy meanings) and various or conflicting constructed texts (other policy-relevant groups) (Yanow, 2000 p.9). The author uses terms like 'local knowledge' and 'category analysis', similarly to 'cultural domains' and 'domain analysis' (Spradley 1979). As regards 'local knowledge' Yanow refers to J.P. Spradley (1979) and to Clifford Geertz (1983) who coined this expression.

Today social research applies more abductive approaches, which affects the premises and analytic tools used.[35]

Spradley used the domain approach when analysing ethnographic interviews. As pointed out above, this was originally an ethnographic approach and I need to make certain adjustments to make it useful for the purpose of this study. My 'field notes' are the Recommendation 2008 and added written work, such as the *Reference book for schools* (Council of Europe 2007d) and the Conference proceedings from 2004 (Council of Europe 2004a).[36] I have studied these to search for cultural symbols and for relationships among those symbols. The documents and books gave me ideas about relationships. As mentioned, documents present their own reality, but they are also texts written with a particular purpose. As such, they do not necessarily reflect the organisational or social reality. To see how the Council talks about religion, the exploration of the Recommendation consequently needs to be followed up with information from other sources of data (Bryman, 2012 p.555). I collected more data by talking/writing to people involved in the process, studying documents again and continuing analysing[37].

In the examples in his book, '*The ethnographic interview*', Spradley (1979) uses 'folk terms', that is, everyday language used in ordinary situations. He also states, that his method can be used for 'analytical terms' (terms used by academics in analysis), which is something quite appropriate for this study. I attempt to show, though, that there might be a mixture of analytical and folk terms in the documents under scrutiny in the present thesis. This mixture could be a result of different 'cultures' being involved in the writing process. These terms and their semantic relationship will suggest how diverse groups have used them differently. In other words, showing how a term is used in various ways in different parts of the text (different semantic relationships) may be an indicator of more than one cultural group[38] being involved.

Spradley posits that the aim of domain analysis is to discover the internal structure, that is, how groups organise cultural meaning, and not to impose outside categories, as an analyst

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[35] Dvora Yanow's *Interpretive Policy Analysis* is a good example (Yanow 2000).
[36] An adjustment from Spradley's field notes of interviews and additional questioning of informants (1979 p.112).
[37] An adjustment of the process described by Spradley (1979 p.116)
[38] I am using culture in two ways in the thesis; as expressed in my source material, indicating different cultures, religious diversity and so on; and as an analytical tool, showing that the different writers/editors belong to different cultural groups (academics, civil servants, politicians, diplomats), these being the actors in the study.)

often does. Critically, this structure is often tacit (Spradley, 1979 p.93). We see here a correlation with discourse analysis (Potter and Wetherell 1987), which pays attention to variations at the discursive level and does not categorise the source material.

In domain analysis the term 'category' is used to creating order and reduce complexities (Spradley, 1979 p.98). We will for instance say: 'look at all the beautiful trees over there'. We do not say: 'look at the birch and the two maples and the four spruces'. All of these symbols or terms are included in a category. Categorising is a way of creating meaning in a cultural system. An arborist would perhaps not include spruce in the above group. She would split the trees into two categories: deciduous trees and coniferous trees. Categories, symbols and folk terms can be used interchangeably, as I wrote above; a category could consist of different sub-categories (Spradley, 1979 p.98). In the language of domain analysis, 'analytical terms' is also a category. I mention this as to emphasise the fact that I will not categorise my material but search for categories and semantic relationships to locate cultural domains.

James Spradley writes that a domain will typically consist of a *cover term*, or category (for instance 'tree'), at least two *included terms* (for instance 'birch' and 'maple'), and *a semantic relationship* between the cover term and the included terms (for instance ' A birch is a kind of tree'). There will also be a *boundary* to this domain (for instance 'a holly bush is not a tree'; it is outside the boundary for the cover term of 'tree'). An analysis of domains discovered in texts will show how meaning is created in cultural groups (Spradley 1979: 101). I posit that the Recommendation shows traces of different cultural groups involved in creating the document, and the domain analysis attempts to show how this is manifested in the text.

A relational theory of meaning is based on the following premise: 'The meaning of a symbol is its relation to other symbols' (Spradley, 1979 p.97). The point of interest is that the meaning of a term is more accessible through asking 'what do you use it for?' rather than 'what is it?' curiously enough. In other words: when you ask what a term is, you get a referential definition, but when you ask how it is used, you will find out about the relationship of that particular term with other terms, and this will say something about meaning systems in a certain group (Spradley, 1979 p.97). The 'asking' in my case will be to search for information both in the text and also in other sources as to meaning of terms. This type of asking is also helpful in establishing the boundaries of the domains.

The 'ethnographic' task I want to pursue in this study is the decoding of cultural symbols (folk terms) and identify the underlying coding rules. Discovering the relationships among these terms will accomplish this. In other words, what I want to achieve is to find out how 'religion' and its related concepts are defined and used, how they are encoded and related to other terms, and whether there is a divergence in the text when 'religion' is talked about. Such findings might imply that different cultural groups have written the text, and infused different meanings into that text. The value of this lies in extracting how different cultures talk about 'religion'. What feelings does the term evoke, what does it conventionally contain and what function does it have?

I am not conducting a study according to ethnographic 'rules'. Rather than being on the inside, I study text from an outside perspective. I will therefore not strictly adhere to Spradley's use of the actors' own structure. Through text I will endeavour to find traces of discourses corresponding to Spradley's structure of categories of a phenomenon. This inevitably means that I will be using my own knowledge of the field and the inevitable preconceptions that follow this knowledge. The challenge will be not to let my own understanding of terms influence how I read the meaning found in text. The findings in the texts are supplemented by information gathered from other documents/books, and informal correspondence and conversations with informants. I believe that in sum this will paint a broad picture of how religion is communicated by the different groups of actors in my documents, and that it will satisfy the demand for interpretation that is part of most qualitative work.

Having shown *how* religion is communicated in the field of intercultural education, I am also interested in *when* changes occurred, *by whose instigation*, and whether the alterations causes a mere fine-tuning of the text or a major change in conceptualisation and thereby create a new version of the text. The fluid text revision theory gives me the tools I need for this.

4.2. Fluid Text - a theory of revision and editing
Understanding the process of revision and editing of a text is invaluable as an extension of the domain analysis in explaining the way in which culture groups influence text. In other words, whereas domain analysis can highlight the existence of different cultural groups or domains involved in the production process, the text revision theory can be used for analysing the

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consequences of the presence of these groups. The concept of 'fluid text' is useful in analysing the flow of the text from a draft to a final adopted version as it separates 'fine-tune changes' from deliberate 'intentional changes' (Bryant, 2002).

Initially, I want to explain the concept of fluidity. A text is not fluid because words have different meanings or are interpreted in different ways. This is actually the nature of domain analysis. The fluidity symbolises how writers, editors, translators, and other actors change words materially in revisions. The material revisions often cause just minor changes or emendation to the text, but can also attest, as written above, to new conceptualisation of the entire work (Bryant, 2002 p.4), also called 'turning points'. A turning point is the moment where a text, through authorial or collaborative editorial interventions, becomes something other than it was before; hence a new version (Scheibe as cited by Bryant, 2002 p.75).

James Bryant emphasises that by editors he means the many types of actors (friends, family, professional and scholarly editors, publishers) who cause text to change. In saying this, he turns text into social text, by including those readers who also materially alter texts (Bryant, 2002 pp.6-7). Importantly for this study a fluid text is the material evidence of shifting intentions, and manifests the intent to alter the meaning of a text. This is helpful in placing boundaries on speculation of intent (Bryant, 2002 p.9). James Bryant points to an interesting observation regarding fluidities. He says that they 'enable us to construct the historical moment of the interpenetrations of an individual writer and a culture's discourse' (2002 p.13). I would not say that the Recommendation is in any way historical in the sense that it happened a long time ago, but I appreciate the value of ascertaining when changes occurred, and how a culture's discourse influenced that amendment. This could be related to the discourses in the different cultural groups or domains.

As with domain analysis I draw pertinent elements from this analytical tool. I see 'fluid text' as a fruitful means both of presenting the changes and of gaining knowledge about the type of change. Bryant is concerned with the inspection of earlier versions to meet the controversy of 'what is the critical edition' of a manuscript (2002 p.20). In this case I know which is the critical edition, namely the final adopted version. The point is still valuable, because inspection of earlier versions will be able to show whether the intention behind the Recommendation was maintained throughout the revisions. The emendations in a manuscript

can show attempts to fulfil the author's intention. I do not have access to the original proposal, and there is no possibility of evaluating the original writers' revisions. Emendations may on the other hand also be the result of some sort of censorship, and can in therefore tell us how external forces shaped the intended text (Bryant, 2002 pp.22-23). I am relating this to my description of documents as genre and the many readers/editors involved in a document production.

Changes made in a text that create a new version can be expressed in the distance between versions, or in the degree of difference. Individuals, or a social demand, or often a combination of the two, can induce changes (Bryant, 2002 p.62). Again, these types of changes are interesting as they show how external forces may have changed how the Council's policy on religion is expressed. The primary focus of a fluid-text analysis is how and why a version emerges as a materialism of authorial and cultural pressures (Bryant, 2002 p.88). As mentioned above, my analysis of revision will be only of editorial and not authorial revisions. In fact, I have only access to one revision. This could mean a reduction in the value of a fluid text analysis. On the other hand, I see great merit in the principles of this theory of revision and edition, especially in establishing intent and scope of change. This revision theory also gives me the language I need to describe both the type of changes and the type of writers who have been involved in the process. I will use preparatory documents to confirm the Council's initial intentions in this project.

4.3. Discourse

Discourse is relevant in terms of how it represents different ways of communicating and understanding religion. This is linked to the theoretical perspective I employ in my thesis. The possible discursive traces may say something of how different actors view the position of religion in the public sphere, and consequently how the groups view a secular society.
It is my belief that the different understandings of religion and its place in society explain inconsistencies in the Recommendation, which I attempt to show in my analysis.

In terms of realities, documents will always show a representation of facts coloured by the author(s) and recipient readers. They will reflect implicit assumptions about who will be the reader (Silverman, 2011 p.89). This differs from the transcription of an interview that shows representation of self, reflected by self. The representation of facts in a document such as the

Recommendation of 2008 will be a compromise result of discussions and revisions. It is feasible that the text will show not a single cultural meaning system from one particular group, but traces of different cultural group discourses.

The overall principle of discursive analysis, according to Hitching, Nilsen and Veum (2011), is to combine analyses of expressions, texts, and communicative actions with analyses of culture and society. 'The aim of investigation is creation of meaning and communicative praxis at a micro level seen in relation to societal and sociocultural structures at a macro level' (Hitching, Nilsen and Veum eds. 2011 p.11, my translation). It will be difficult within the limitations of the scope of a Master's thesis to fulfil this aim of investigation at a micro- and macro level satisfactorily. I still believe that the principle is workable for this study, if it relates to some extent the creation of meaning by different actor groups to external societal factors. Hitching, Nilsen and Veum describe how all text and creation of meaning that take place within different arenas in society influence how we think, and how we understand different phenomena in the world (2011 p.11, my translation). The understanding of religion can be seen through the lens of a social constitution of the term, making it established and 'natural'.

I have tried to combine Spradley's domain analysis (1979) and Bryant's fluid text revision theory (2002) with principles from discourse analysis to attempt to give a more comprehensive picture of how religion is communicated or talked about in the Recommendation.

4.4. An eclectic approach

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, a combination of analytical tools is required to explore the empirical material in the best possible manner. From domain analysis I have taken the investigation into how different cultural groups use language differently to convey meaning systems. Observing the semantic relationships between terms can help with this. Having discovered possible different usage, I will employ elements from fluid text revision theory to see how and when these changes in use occurred. This will provide me with insights into the rhetoric used and revisions that are simply fine-tunings of text and revisions that transform text (Bryant, 2002 p.73) In addition to this, I shall use the concept of intertextuality to see how findings from the main document (Recommendation 2008) are confirmed by looking at other documents/ books. Above all I aim to keep the general principles of discourse

analysis as written above in mind. This approach will, I hope, give a broad picture of how the Council communicates on religion in Europe as portrayed through the Recommendation.

5. Presentation of the Material

This chapter will present the documents I am analysing, and also the use of other sources. This is a case study of how language and discourse can influence the communication of policies, in this case how to implement the education of different worldviews in schools in Europe. The material is complex and I will in the cause of this thesis only be able to delve into a minor part of these very interesting processes. The structure and decision making process in the Council of Europe is multi-layered, and so is the interlinking of the Council and policy-makers and decision-takers in member states. The process of making a Recommendation involves actors from different fields. Such processes very often have an outcome coloured in compromise. Another striking feature is the temporal aspect of producing documents in a bureaucracy such as the Council of Europe. The road from commendable proposals and positive intentions to concrete recommendations can be very long. Lastly I want to point to the issue of motivation. Recommendations made by the Council of Europe are not legally binding on member states,[39] and must therefore be couched in terms that give incentives to action.

The main document, the Recommendation 2008, and the two additional books will be presented in this chapter. The Council of Europe produces its documents in French and English. I have consistently used the English version. The different actors 'on stage' in the material are also introduced. I will be using supplementary documents like Council of Europe consultation papers for reference when necessary.[40] In addition to the books and documents I have also gathered information in the from of informal communication through email and conversations with central figures in the production process and the Council setting. These will be presented at the end of the chapter.

5.1. The CM Recommendation 2008: on the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education

This is a policy document regarding how member states should introduce the issue of religious belief and other worldviews in an intercultural education approach.

The text of this Recommendation went through a process of alterations, both before the draft was presented to the CDED (Steering Committee for Education), and when it was debated in

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[39] Email correspondence with Peter Schreiner, 24 September 2012
[40] Documents used can be found in the list of references.

the GR-C group[41] before being submitted for adoption to the Committee of Ministers on 10 December 2008 at the 1044th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies. I believe it is vital with an exploration of these alterations in order to analyse how 'religion' is communicated. I have consequently included a draft version of the Recommendation: '*Draft Recommendation CM/Rec (2007) of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the religious dimension of intercultural education: principles, objectives and teaching approaches*' from September 2007 (Council of Europe, 2007a).

It was the permanent representatives (ambassadors or charges d'affaires) who voted on Recommendation 2008 (Council of Europe, 2008a), not Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The decision has no binding function in a legal sense, which is why the documents are called 'recommendations'. Some recommendations are later taken into the legislation of a member state.[42]

Recommendations from the Council of Europe are policy documents. They have a particular structure (standard Council structure) consisting of certain elements:[43] The documents have a *preambl*e with a specific reference to the European Cultural Convention of 1954. In the Recommendation of 2008 (Council of Europe, 2009) the reference is to the 'need for education to develop mutual understanding between peoples'. There are references to all relevant documents preceding the recommendation being written. This means prior recommendations and resolutions within the same field of interest, or those that have specific relevance to the recommendation draft that is submitted for adoption. The references will typically have the prefixes 'bearing in mind', 'considering', 'having regard to', 'recalling' and 'noting'. The *formal recommendation text* that follows the introduction underlines what the Council wants its member states to implement or pursue. This is normally a fairly short text. Following the Council's recommendation is *the Appendix* where the details of action are set out. In Recommendation 2008 we find: (1) 'Scope and Definitions'; (2) 'Principles for taking the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions into account in the framework of intercultural education'; (3) 'Objectives of an intercultural approach concerning the religious and non-religious convictions dimension in education';(4) 'Requirements for dealing with the diversity of religions and non-religious convictions in an educational context'; (5) 'Teaching

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[41] Rapporteur Group responsible for preparing cases for the Committee of Ministers
[42] Email correspondence with Peter Schreiner, 24 September 2012
[43] Cf. Figures 6.2 and 6.3 for layout of the Recommendation and the Explanatory Memorandum

aspects of an intercultural approach to religions and non-religious convictions' and (6) 'Consequences for state policies on the initial and in-service training of teaching staff'.

Attached to the Recommendation is an *Explanatory Memorandum*. This document explains in more detail, justifies and arguments the issues raised in the main document. It also forms part of the published version of a Recommendation.

5.2. The Oslo Conference 2004: The religious dimension of intercultural education

A European conference 'The religious dimension of intercultural education' was held in Oslo in June 2004 as a part of the 'The new challenge of intercultural education: religious diversity and dialogue in Europe*'* project (Council of Europe, 2004a). The declaration by the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education in Athens, 2003, 'Declaration by the European ministers of education on intercultural education in the new European context*'* gave general policy guidelines for the Steering Committee for Education (CDED) and its project group on this subject (Council of Europe, 2003a). The aim of the conference was to provide the general principles from the Declaration with more substance and to develop concrete recommendations and models of good practice (Battaini-Dragoni, 2004 p.17).

The project group, established by the CDED at a two-day conference in Paris, 2003, presented their ideas to the participants at the Oslo Conference for debate and proposals (Jackson, 2010 p.1133). The participants comprised experts in the fields of religious education and intercultural education (members of the project group), educational decision-makers from member states (and observer states), and Council of Europe officials. Discussions were focused on the issue of 'how education can be organised so that the aim of learning to live together can be achieved' (Clemet, 2004 p.23). The Council later published a report on the conference (Council of Europe, 2004a). It contains the proceedings, including speeches, reports from different plenary sessions and case studies.

I will refer to this report, as it is an important source of the preparatory work for the *Reference book* of 2007 and t Recommendation 2008. The conference in 2004 laid the groundwork for the theory, the content, and the process of how to introduce the religious dimension of an intercultural education approach.

5.3. Religious diversity and intercultural education: a reference book for schools 2007

As a follow up to the conference of 2004, the Council established an expert group to develop a guide for teachers, teacher trainers, administrators and policy-makers (Council of Europe 2007d). The main task of the guide was to give recommendations and provide examples of how to attend to the issue of religious diversity in schools. The examples were drawn from current practice in different European countries. Again, the experts came from the fields of religious education and intercultural education, and some of the members came from the project group mentioned in 5.2.

The focus was on constructing an approach to intercultural learning that promotes dialogue, mutual understanding and 'living together'. The religious dimension was to be addressed from the human rights and intercultural learning perspective (Bîrzéa 2007:11).

The *Reference book* has four parts. The first deals with the theoretical and conceptual basis of religious diversity and intercultural education. The second talks of educational conditions and methodological approaches. The third part is concerned with whole school issues of intercultural education and the religious dimension. Finally, in part four, there are examples of current practice in Europe.

5.4. Actors in the material

The documents and books presented above are not the product of one author. The Recommendation proposal was a result of several actors discussing and suggesting formulations. These formulations were influenced by other documents, either preceding the Recommendation, or written in connection with it. Religious education professionals, intercultural education professionals and linguistic professionals were involved in the writing of the Recommendation (*Group 1: Scholars*).[44] After the proposal was written it was sent via the Bureau (Board of CDED[45]) and CDED to the DGIV[46] in the General Secretariat where it

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[44] Email correspondence with Robert Jackson 18 October 2012

[45] A reorganisation in the Council of Europe took place in 2011 and the CDED and the CDESR (Steering Committee on Higher Education and Research), was combined to create a new committee, CDPPE (Steering Committee on Educational Policy and Practice) as of January 2012. Email correspondence with Ilya Subbotin, Political Advisor, Council of Europe Liaison Office with the European Union, 4 December 2012

[46] Directorate General for Education, Culture, Heritage, Youth and Sport, reorganised as DG II, Democracy in 2012

was edited into 'official Council of Europe language' (see Figure 6.1).[47] These actors were civil servants from various member states (*Group 2: Civil servants*).

Documents are a particular genre of text. They always have a production side and a reception side. I posit that we have to see the Recommendation as a two-phase product. The first phase was described above, with the different groups giving input, and leaving discursive traces in the text. In the second phase, the draft Recommendation was then presented to the CDED, the Steering Committee for Education. Members of this committee as we saw in 2.3 are civil servants from Ministries of Education in member states (*Group 2: Civil servants*). They discussed the Recommendation draft and made several contributions in the form of revisions of the text, before sending it back to the General Secretariat. The Secretariat sent the draft on to the Committee of Ministers, who then sent it to GR-C to be prepared for a Committee of Ministers meeting (CM). The GR-C is a sub-group of CM, which prepares cases for CM meetings. The members are permanent representatives of the member states (*Group 3: Diplomats)*. They are diplomats representing their home countries and often consult with their respective Foreign Ministries or other relevant ministries *(Group 4: Politicians)* when preparing cases.[48] Finally, the draft was sent to CM and was adopted by the Ministers' Deputies. The Deputies have the same decision powers as the Ministers and do most of the day-to-day business of the CM. As mentioned above they are diplomats from member states.

5.5. Supplementary sources

To gain more insight into the research theme and to expand comprehension of information, I have used two additional types of sources. First I have traced textual links to supplementary documents. These include preparatory documents,[49] related recommendations and resolutions. Second, I have had personal communication with relevant people through mail, telephone and direct conversation. Personal talks have been recorded and notes taken from telephone conversations. All the persons I talked to gave their permission for the recording, and approved any direct citations that I used in the thesis.

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[47] Email correspondence with Robert Jackson 18 October 2012 and conversations with Gunnar Mandt 15 January 2013 and 15 February 2013
[48] Conversation with Gunnar Mandt 15 February 2013
[49] Leclercq (2002), Batelaan (2003), Wimberley (2003), '*Preparing "The White Paper on Intercultural dialogue"'* (Council of Europe, 2007e)

I have corresponded with Professor Robert Jackson from the Institute of Education, University of Warwick. He is also Professor at the European Wergeland Centre. Robert Jackson worked on the Recommendation from the first meeting in Paris 2002 in the project group established by the Steering Committee for Education (CDED) for the project entitled 'The new challenges to intercultural education: religious diversity and dialogue in Europe' (2002-06). He was part of the group that wrote the Reference book in 2007 and is today a central figure in the writing of the before mentioned road map (Cf. chapter 1).

Further, I have corresponded with Dr Peter Schreiner who is Deputy Director, Education in the Context of Schooling at the Comenius-Institut in Münster. He was also a member of the above-mentioned project group, involved in the Oslo Conference, and the writing of the Reference book. He is actively engaged with work in the field of Religious Education in Europe and has written a PhD dissertation on the theme 'Religion in the context of a Europeanisation of Education'.

At the Council of Europe I have corresponded with Ilya Subbotin, Political Advisor at the Council of Europe Liaison Office with the European Union. His portfolio includes Intercultural Dialogue and its religious dimension, especially with regard to relations between the Council of Europe and the European Union. Gabriele Mazza, former Director of Education at the Council, was very helpful in a telephone conversation concerning the production process of the Recommendation. Kristin Hefre, current Deputy Permanent Representative, the Norwegian Delegation to the Council of Europe, has answered many questions. Sarah Mahoney, Publishing, Directorate of Communications, and Isabelle Lacour at the Directorate of Education and Languages, both with the Council, have also helped me with information.

I have had two informal conversations with Gunnar Mandt, former Special Advisor at the European Wergeland Centre. He has a background as deputy director of the Ministry of Education, Norway, and was one of the founders of the Wergeland Centre. I also had informal conversations with Heid Leganger-Krogstad, Professor in Religious Education at MF Norwegian School of Theology. She was one of the experts at the Oslo Conference in 2004, participated in the writing of the Reference book and has written a PhD dissertation on the theme. I have talked to Ingvill Thorson Plesner from the Norwegian Centre for Human

Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Oslo, on the subject of religion and belief. I have also had a telephone conversation with Turid Kongsvik, former Deputy Permanent Representative, Norwegian Delegation to the Council of Europe. She was a member of the GR-C group that debated the Recommendation in 2007/08.

The aim of the talks was to collect facts and information to obtain best possible picture of the production process of the Recommendation, and thereby to explore the discourses on religion in intercultural education in Europe. That being the case, I did not prepare any standard list of questions for my contacts, but rather asked each of them specific questions pertaining to their field of expertise, or talked about background issues, to obtain a broader picture.

6. Findings and analysis

The Recommendation of 2008 is a complex document. The text itself reflects the effort of trying to find common ground in a landscape full of differences and variations. There is a pragmatic side to what the Council hope to achieve with this addition to the education scene in Europe: '…the Ministers requested that the content and context of intercultural education be redefined…in order to provide member states with examples of teaching tools which take into consideration respect for human rights and cultural and religious diversity'.[50] The Council of Europe grounds the introduction of 'religions and non-religious convictions as a dimension in intercultural education' in the belief that 'Learning to live together implies respect and respect implies that the (other) person's spiritual and intellectual motivations are taken seriously' (Batelaan, 2003 p.3).

The analysis of this Recommendation will involve a close and theoretically inspired reading of documents. As mentioned in the Introduction, the first reading of the Recommendation text gave an impression of certain linguistic tensions or inconsistencies. A document such as this one is, as I wrote in Chapter 1, often a result of a compromise reached after a process of debate and revision. Consequently, I searched for any draft version or proposal of the Recommendation in order to try to confirm my initial impression. Accordingly, findings from the draft version of the Recommendation presented in September 2007 will be used in this chapter for comparison with the final version of December 2008.[51]

In the introductory part of this chapter I will give a short presentation of the process leading up to the Recommendation. This will I hope give a clearer picture of how the policy document came into being (see also Figure 6.1). As stated above, this is a complex text. Consequently it is difficult to extract separate concepts for discussion. Terms are used in many ways and relate to each other in different degrees. As a means of structuring the analysis, the section headings relate to the types of examples I have found. Many terms will appear and reappear in the themes I discuss. I will look at changes in the text of the view on 'religion' as a concept, and on the view of 'religion as a cultural fact'. One section will focus on the role of 'religion in the public sphere' and another on the aims and values related to the

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[50] Explanatory Memorandum, § 3
[51] I have not been able to locate any other published version of the draft Recommendation, apart from commentaries in later documents, which will be referred to in the analysis as and when appropriate. In one instance I will use a revision proposal presented at a GR-C meeting on 20 November 2008. See more on this in 6.4.

discourse on religion in education found in the text. I want to underline that I am not trying to arrange the findings into set categories. The themes I have chosen are a pragmatic solution for structuring of the following analysis and discussion.

First I will illustrate the communication in the final text by the use of examples and compare them with a draft version from 2007. Second, the findings from these two versions will be investigated with analytical tools from Domain Analysis (Spradley, 1979). The analysis will continue with an investigation of the process of production. This includes a search for information on possible reasons for changes made (or not made as the case may be), in supplementary documents. Principles from fluid text revision theory (Bryant, 2002 will be applied. A summary of alterations and possible consequences of these will come at the end, followed by a more theoretical discussion in Chapter 7.

6.1. Introduction

As I described in Chapter 5, the *Reference book for schools* was published in March 2007 as a practical guide for teachers. Following this production, the writing of the Recommendation started. The working group responsible for this was drawn from the team that produced the book. The Members included academic professionals from the UK, Canada and Switzerland. The draft proposal went through modifications related to the understanding of ambiguous concepts, translation issues and formality of language, to mention a few.[52] This was done in the Secretariat in consultation with the CDED. The Recommendation draft was first submitted by the CDED for the CM Deputies 1005th meeting on 26 September 2007. The draft was studied on 11 September 2007 by the GR-C group, which prepared cases for the CM meetings. A discussion by the delegates followed. One wanted to change the title of the draft 'to reflect more closely the topic addressed, namely teaching of the religious facts' (Council of Europe 2008e).[53] Some wanted to coordinate finalising the text with on-going reflections in the area of intercultural dialogue. It was decided to resume the discussion at a later meeting. The case was therefore postponed at the CM meeting on 26 September 2007 (1005th) and moved to the next meeting Further postponements followed. In December 2007, the Bureau of CDED, having received no further comments from delegates, 'decided on behalf of the CDED to suggest that the Committee of Ministers adopt the said Recommendation' (Council

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[52] Email correspondence with Robert Jackson, 18 October12
[53] In a preparatory paper written for the GR-C meeting in May 2008, Background Information was presented to explain what had happened hitherto regarding the draft Recommendation.

of Europe 2008e). They did not advise any change in title because the project[54] 'dealt with a special aspect of intercultural education, i.e. the religious diversity of pupils as an integral part of their cultural diversity' (Council of Europe 2008e). At its meeting in May 2008, the GR-C asked the CDED to reconsider the draft in light of the events of the '2008 Exchange on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue', the 'White Paper on intercultural dialogue' and the setting up of the European Resource Centre in Oslo (Council of Europe 2008f). At this same meeting it was hoped that the draft could be transmitted to the Committee of Ministers for adoption at their 1029th meeting on 11 June 2008.
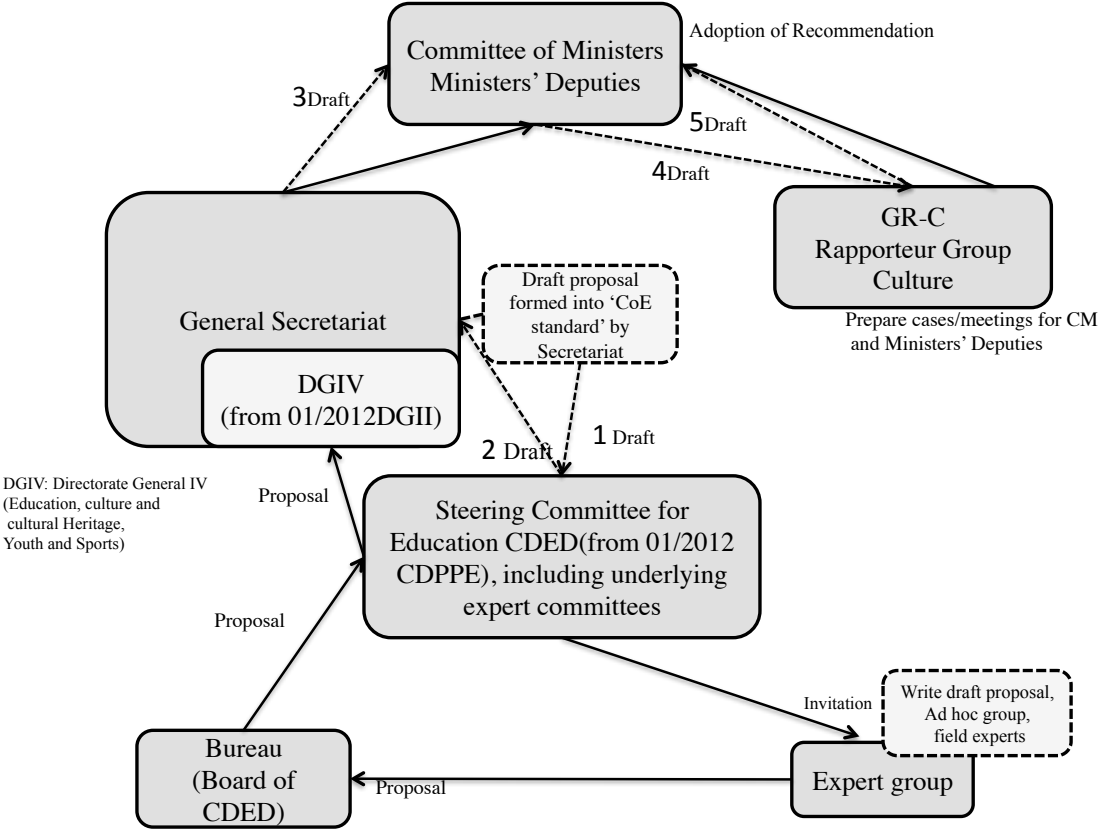
Figure 6.1. The Process of the revisions and adoption of the Recommendation in the Council of Europe
Source: Author's model, based on conversations with Gunnar Mandt and email correspondence with Robert Jackson.
Proposal: The draft proposal that was written by the expert group. Draft: The version that was revised through various processes until adoption.

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[54] 'The new challenge of intercultural education: religious diversity and dialogue in Europe'

The decision to adopt the draft was again postponed to a later meeting (Council of Europe 2008g). Finally, in October 2008, the GR-C suggested the finalising of the draft Recommendation on *the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education*. At some point between June and October the title of the draft changed.[55] At the GR-C meeting on 24 October (Council of Europe 2008h), it was announced that the CDED had worked on the draft again, and that it might be ready for consideration by the GR-C soon. At the GR-C meeting on 20 November, the draft issue was raised after viewing the reworking of the Recommendation by the CDED. Several delegates proposed amendments to the text. The Secretariat agreed to produce a revised draft including all comments and amendments. This document was presented on 8 December 2008 (Council of Europe 2008i), and was the final revision before the draft was submitted to the Committee of Ministers for adoption on 10 December 2008. Figure 6.1 is a visualisation of the process of revisions and the adoption of the Recommendation.

6.1.1. Layout of the Recommendation and the Explanatory Memorandum
The Recommendation consists of three parts (Figure 6.2). The first is an introduction or a preamble before the second part, the formal Recommendation text, is presented. The Appendix that follows as the third part is a crucial and large part of Recommendation 2008. It contains much more text than the formal Recommendation text does, and even more than is often seen in other recommendations from the Council, which says something about the complexity of the issue. It is closely linked to the attached Explanatory Memorandum, and presents in detail the scope, definitions, principles, objectives, requirements and consequences of the document. The Memorandum (Figure 6.3) is a more detailed and expanded document presented at the end of the Recommendation. This part is just 'taken note of' and not 'adopted' by the Committee of Ministers.

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[55] This point will be discussed under 6.8.

The Recommendation CM/Rec (2008) 12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 December 2008 at the 1044th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies*)*

Preamble/Introduction	References to legal standards, previous documents of relevance to the proposed Recommendation
	References to previous events of special interest to the recommendation
Formal Recommendation text	Actions that the CM wants member states to consider or implement
Appendix to Recommendation	The Appendix explains in detail how the Recommendation may be implemented
Scope and definition *Paragraphs 1,2,3*	
Principles for taking the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions into account in the framework of intercultural education *Paragraph 4*	
Objectives of an intercultural approach concerning the religious and non-religious convictions dimension in education *Paragraph 5*	
Requirements for dealing with the diversity of religions and non-religious convictions in an educational context *Paragraph 6*	
Teaching aspects of an intercultural approach to religions and non-religious convictions in an educational context *Paragraph 7*	
Consequences for state policies on the initial and in-service training of teaching staff *Paragraph 8*	

Figure 6.2. Model of Recommendation 2008

Explanatory Memorandum

*(*Noted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 December 2008 at the 1044th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies*)*

Introduction and Context *Paragraphs 1-9*	Explains the background and context of the Recommendation. Refers to Europe, process behind Recommendation, and understanding of 'religion'.
Preamble *Paragraphs 10-12*	Describes the introduction of the Recommendation
Scope and definitions *Paragraphs 13-14*	Amplifies Appendix
Principles for taking the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions into account in the framework of intercultural education *Paragraphs 15-21*	Amplifies Appendix Comments on key concepts Suggestions on implementation
Objectives of an intercultural approach concerning the religious and non-religious convictions dimension in education *Paragraphs 22-28*	Amplifies Appendix Comments on key concepts Suggestions on implementation
Requirements for dealing with the diversity of religions and non-religious convictions in an educational context *Paragraphs 29-33*	Amplifies Appendix Comments on key concepts Suggestions on implementation
Teaching aspects of an intercultural approach to religions and non-religious convictions in an educational context *Paragraphs 34-43*	Amplifies Appendix Comments on key concepts: educational preconditions, various learning approaches Suggestions on implementation
Consequences for state policies on the initial and in-service training of teaching staff *Paragraphs 44-46*	Amplifies Appendix

Figure 6.3. Model of Explanatory Memorandum 2008

6.2. From Religion to Religions and non-Religious convictions

The recommendation of the Commission of Ministers was adopted in December 2008 and is entitled 'Recommendation on the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education'. The project on religious diversity (2002-06) and the draft version (2007) used the term 'religious dimension'. The amendment to the text in 2008 may have caused complications because it placed the writer(s) in the difficult situation of judging how much the text could be changed without loss of consistency. My analysis will explore whether the Council of Europe presented a consistent policy document to its member states. In this section I will look at the most frequent change, that of 'religion' to 'religions and non-religious convictions'. I will show examples of what happens linguistically and to the meaning content as a consequence of this change of terms. Further I will look at normative/descriptive aspects and to the replacement of 'philosophical' with 'non-religious', and finally at the concept of 'diversity of religions and non-religious convictions'.

Change of terms

The first section in the Appendix is called 'Scope and Definitions'[56] (Figure 6.2). The first paragraph in this section describes the aim of the Recommendation, and hence is a good place to start the analysis:

Paragraph 1, Final version 2008:

> The recommendation's aim is to ensure taking into account <u>the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education</u> as a contribution to strengthen human rights, democratic citizenship and participation, and to the development of competences for intercultural dialogue, at the following levels:
> * Education policies, in the form of clear-cut education principles and objectives
> * Institutions, especially through open learning settings and inclusive policies
> * Professional development of teaching staff, through adequate training

The paragraph explains that the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education will be taken into account at the policy, institutional and teacher

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[56] The paragraphs in this Recommendation and its Explanatory Memorandum will be used extensively in this chapter. I will not cite the whole paragraph unless for reasons of comprehension. For a full text I refer to the list of references at the end of the thesis. Refer to Council of Europe (2007a) for draft Recommendation and explanatory memorandum, Council of Europe (2008a) for Recommendation and Council of Europe (2008b) for Explanatory Memorandum. The Council has published the adopted Recommendation incl. Explanatory Memorandum (Council of Europe, 2009).

training level. Was this text altered in revision? A look at the draft version from 2007 shows how this text was altered in the process:

Paragraph 1, Draft version 2007:

> The recommendation's aim is to ensure taking into account <u>the religious dimension of intercultural education</u> at the following three levels:
> - Education policies, in the form of clear-cut education principles and objectives
> - Institutions, especially through open-learning settings and inclusive policies
> - Professional development of teaching staff, through adequate training

The paragraph in the draft version describes how the religious dimension will be taken into account. In other words, whereas the final version has 'the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions', the draft version has 'the religious dimension'. Two aspects deserve our attention.

First, I want to point to the replacement of the generic term 'religion' (religious dimension) with the particular term 'religions'. The change from a generic description of religion to a depiction of particular religions and non-religious convictions is seen even in the title of this Recommendation providing evidence of its communicative importance.

Second, I want to draw attention to the linguistic change from 'religious dimension <u>of</u> intercultural education' to 'the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions <u>within</u> intercultural education'. 'Of' as a preposition means the relation between a part and the whole, or indicates the association between two entities, typically one of belonging: the first being the head phrase and the second something associated with it.[57] 'Within' as a preposition means inside something or as an adverb means inside or indoors[58]. 'Within' is more of an embedded position, possibly even not visible on the surface, in contrast to one part of something, which the 'of' implies. This could be just an unconscious change of words, but it may possibly reflect a difference in how the religious/non-religious is to be related to intercultural education.

In order to illustrate the change and the effect on meaning content, the sentences in the final version and the draft version respectively can be presented in a domain structure:[59]

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[57] Available from: http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/of?q=Of, [Accessed 11 December 2012]
[58] Available from: http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/within?q=within, [Accessed 11.12.2012)
[59] Cf. 4.1 for a description of domain analysis

Final version 2008:

Semantic relationship: Included term (X) is embedded in intercultural education (Y)

Included terms (X)	Semantic relationship	Cover term (Y)
Dimension of religions	Is embedded in	Intercultural education
Dimension of non-religious convictions	Is embedded in	Intercultural education

This shows how the dimensions of religions and non-religious convictions are related to intercultural education. We see that they are 'embedded' (or within as the text said).

The same structure can be used to show the semantic relationship in the draft version:

Draft version 2007:

Semantic relationship: Included term (X) is a part of intercultural education (Y)

Included terms (X)	Semantic relationship	Cover term (Y)
Religious dimension	Is a part of	Intercultural education

As seen here, the semantic relationship is different. To show the difference between the draft and the final version in a in a way that brings in more included terms, I will use the same structure, but include paragraph 1 of the Explanatory Memorandum in the comparison. This paragraph has the same semantic relationship, namely that it 'is a part of'. This feature makes a comparison plausible. I will first give the text of paragraph 1 (EM):

Paragraph 1 (explanatory memorandum):[60]

> Within the Council of Europe, an approach <u>to intercultural education</u> has been defined over the years, (…). <u>This approach has been developed in projects in the fields of history, education for democratic citizenship, foreign languages and the education of Roma children</u>. Issues relating to religion and non-religious convictions have been raised, but to a lesser extent. However in the context of growing pluralism, the large-scale migration of populations of various origins and in order to promote a harmonious culture of co-existence between citizens belonging to different religions and cultural traditions, the Council of Europe wanted to draw particular attention to the <u>religious dimension of intercultural education</u>

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[60] See example 2 for a complete presentation of § 1, Explanatory Memorandum

This is the domain structure for *paragraph 1 (EM):*

Semantic relationship: Included term (X) is a part of intercultural education (Y)

Included terms (X)	Semantic relationship	Cover term (Y)
Religious dimension	Is a part of	Intercultural education
History	Is a part of	Intercultural education
Education for democratic citizenship	Is a part of	Intercultural education
Foreign languages	Is a part of	Intercultural education
Education of Roma children	Is a part of	Intercultural education

As we can see, there are many 'included terms' that are part of the same cover term 'intercultural education' and have the same semantic relationship as in the draft version.

I observe two different meanings here. In the final version 2008 (see previous page), the meaning seems to be that the dimensions of particular religions and non-religious convictions are infused in the intercultural education approach, meaning all aspects of this approach. In the draft version 2007 and also in the Memorandum, the religious dimension is shown as one of many parts of the intercultural education approach. This means that the religious dimension is not an *integrated* part of History for instance, but *equal to* History (see domain structure above).

All paragraphs in the Appendix and Memorandum that changed from 'religion' to 'religions and non-religious convictions' have altered the use of 'of' to 'within'. This suggests that the change from a generic to a particular understanding of religion caused a meaning change in relation to education. The textual tension exists in the spaces where these alterations were not implemented. This brings me to the second example.

The second example explores paragraph 1 in the Explanatory Memorandum (EM) more thoroughly. The Memorandum is where all the arguments and explanations regarding the content of the Recommendation are found[61] (Figure 6.3).

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[61] See also §§ 1 (formal Recommendation text), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 in the Appendix, and §§ 7, 12, 14, 16, 26, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34 and 40 in the Explanatory Memorandum for further examples.

In this example I focus on the latter part of *Paragraph 1(EM) Final version 2008:*

> …Issues relating to <u>religion and non-religious convictions</u> have been raised, but to a lesser extent. However, in the context of growing pluralism, the large-scale migration of populations of various origins and in order to promote a harmonious culture of co-existence between citizens belonging to <u>different religions and cultural traditions</u>, the Council of Europe wanted to draw particular attention to <u>the religious dimension of intercultural education.</u>

The first sentence that less attention has been paid to 'issues relating to religion and non-religious conviction' than to other areas. It concludes that because of developments in Europe and to better the relationship between citizens of different 'religions and cultural traditions', the Council 'now wants to pay particular attention to the religious dimension of intercultural education'. Let us compare this with the draft version to see what was originally said:

Paragraph 1 (EM) Draft version 2007:

> …Issues relating to <u>religion</u> have been raised, but to a lesser extent. However, in the context of growing pluralism, the large-scale migration of populations of various origins and in order to promote a harmonious culture of co-existence between citizens belonging to <u>different religions</u>, the Council of Europe wanted to draw particular attention to <u>the religious dimension</u> of intercultural education

The first sentence in the draft version describes the scant attention previously paid to religion. In light of developments in Europe and to better the relationship between different religions, the Council of Europe now wants to pay particular attention to the religious dimension of intercultural education. The draft version does not include the promotion of better relationship between all citizens, but only those belonging to 'different religions'.

The alteration from the draft to the final version seems minor, with only the addition of: 'and non-religious conviction', but it could be argued that this small amendment changes the meaning of the paragraph. In the draft version, it is recognised that little attention has been paid to religious issues compared with others. This recognition combined with developments in Europe has led to a greater focus on the religious dimension of intercultural education. This sounds logical. In the final version, however, the reason for paying closer attention to the religious dimension of intercultural education is, in addition to developments in Europe, the lesser attention paid to 'religion *and non-religious convictions'*. This relationship strikes me as slightly less logical than the first.

There are two possible explanations; either that 'the non-religious conviction issues' is not pertinent or does not require any special attention or that 'non-religious convictions' has been forgotten in the last sentence and should have been there. If the first explanation is right, one needs to ask the question why 'non-religious convictions' was inserted in the revision. The second amendment from draft to final version is the exchange of 'religions' for 'religions and cultural traditions'. This could mean an extension in terms of recognising not only different religions but also various cultural traditions not seen previously in Europe. A question mark remains as to whether these cultural traditions have anything in common with the concern for non-religious convictions raised earlier in the paragraph. In other words, the intention of the alteration remains unclear.

Use of different terms

Further variations between the final version and the draft version are the aspect of 'a normative vs a descriptive perspective' and the aspect of 'non-religious vs philosophical'. I will first explore paragraph 4 in the Appendix (Figure 6.2).[62] In this section I want to draw attention to the following extract:

Paragraph 4, Final version 2008:

> The following principles should form the basis and define the perspective from which religions and non-religious convictions have to be taken into account in a framework of intercultural education:
> - […]
> - Religions and non-religious convictions develop on the basis of individual learning and experience and are not entirely predefined by one's family or community.

This sub-paragraph posits a descriptive claim that these convictions are not entirely predefined by one's family or community.

A comparison with *Paragraph 4, Draft version 2007* is relevant:

> The following principles should form the basis and define the perspective from which religion has to be taken into account in a framework of intercultural education:
> - […]
> - Religious or philosophical conceptions of the world and beliefs develop on the basis of individual learning and experience, and should not be entirely predefined by one's family or community

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[62] Many issues are raised in this paragraph and I will use findings from it in more than one instance.

The draft version posits the normative claim that religious or philosophical conceptions of the world and beliefs <u>should not be</u> entirely predefined by one's family or community.

In other words, the communication in the draft version is a policy saying that an individual should not feel entirely bound by his or her family/community, but can develop his/her own views on the basis of learning and knowledge. The final version has shifted the policy to one in which the individual's autonomy is given far more weight, and the influence of the family/community respectively less weight. This can be depicted as a descriptive claim, compared with the more value-laden normative claim in the draft version of 2007.

Second, one must ask why 'philosophical conceptions of the world and beliefs' in the draft version was altered to 'non-religious convictions' in the final version. Does this revision imply a fine-tuning of text or is it a conceptual change?[63] Another sub-paragraph of paragraph 4 has the same alteration:[64]

Final version 2008:

> - Information on and knowledge of <u>religions and non-religious convictions which influence the behaviour of individuals in public life</u> should be taught in order to develop tolerance as well as mutual understanding and trust

Draft version 2007:

> - Information on and knowledge of <u>religions and philosophies</u> fall within the public sphere and should be taught in order to develop tolerance as well as mutual understanding and trust.

In the above paragraph the phrase 'information on and knowledge of religions and philosophies' (2007) has been replaced with 'information on and knowledge of religions and non-religious convictions' (2008).

There are two possible explanations. Either the revision implies that 'philosophies' and 'non-religious convictions' are one and the same (synonyms) or the intention is to say that 'philosophies' is a part of the 'non-religious convictions', meaning that 'non-religious convictions' is a wider concept than 'philosophies'. This leads to paragraph 5 and the third variety.

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[63] The argument relates to paragraph 16 in the Memorandum: see 6.2.1 for more on this.
[64] See also § 5 for another example.

Religious diversity

As pointed out in the first variety 'Change of terms', there is a change from a generic to a particular understanding of religion. This understanding of religion influences how the expressions 'religious dimension' and 'religious diversity' are understood. As a third variety I will give some examples of the latter.[65]

Paragraph 5 describes the Objectives of an intercultural approach (Figure 6.2) and displays an effect of this change.

Paragraph 5, Final version 2008:

> Education should develop intercultural competences through
>> - nurturing a sensitivity to <u>the diversity of religions and non-religious convictions</u> as an element contributing to the richness of Europe.
>> - […]

This sub-paragraph suggests that being sensitive to the fact that there is a diversity of religions and non-religious convictions that contribute to the richness of Europe is one way of developing intercultural competence. This sensitivity should be part of education.

In *Paragraph 5* of the *Draft version 2007* this sentence reads like this:

> Education, through formal syllabuses or by developing cross-disciplinary competences should,
>> - nurture a sensitivity to <u>religious and philosophical diversity</u> as an element contributing to the richness of Europe.
>> - […]

The draft version says that education should nurture sensitivity to religious and philosophical diversity either through formal syllabuses or by developing cross-disciplinary competences. This version recognises, as does the final version that worldviews other than religious worldviews contribute to Europe's richness and I assume this means a cultural richness.

There is reason to discuss whether the meaning of the phrase remains the same. Religious and philosophical diversity may mean the diversity within religion and philosophy in Europe, the diversity among religions or the diversity within one denomination, whereas diversity of religions and non-religious convictions may mean the many different religions and non-

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[65] See § 6 in the Appendix for another example.

religious convictions existing in Europe. Hence, it is difficult to see whether the focus is on nurturing sensitivity to the many worldviews that exist in Europe or the many variations within worldviews in Europe. The reason for the alteration of focus remains open.

This brings me to a second ambiguity in the above quotes. Is it feasible to exchange 'religious diversity' for the 'diversity of religions' without altering the meaning of the paragraph, and is the eventual change explained or argued in the text? This change appears again to be a change from a generic to a particular perspective in the revision of the draft version of the Recommendation.

I move to another sub-paragraph in paragraph 5 that writes about the kind of worldviews that should be taught and why.

Paragraph 5 Final version 2008:

> Education should develop intercultural competences through
> - ensuring that teaching about <u>the diversity of religions and non-religious convictions</u> is consistent with the aims of education for democratic citizenship, human rights and respect for equal dignity of all individuals.

This paragraph states that a way of developing intercultural competence would be to ensure that education about the diverse religions and non-religious convictions is consistent with Council of Europe core values.

Paragraph 5 Draft version 2007:

> Education, through formal syllabuses or by developing cross-disciplinary competences should,
> - ensure that teaching about <u>religious diversity</u> is consistent with the aims of education for democratic citizenship and human rights.

This draft version claims that it is teaching about religious diversity that has to be consistent with the aims of education for democratic citizenship and human rights. It is interesting to note that philosophical diversity does not have a place in this sub-paragraph.
The change seen above may mean that teaching should not be about the diversity within religions, or among religious worldviews, but about different religions and non-religious convictions. This seems plausible in an education regime where both religions and other

worldviews ought to have a place, but it remains to be seen if this is consistent with the total communication presented in the recommendation.

I have presented some examples above of how the change from 'the religious dimension' and 'religious diversity' to 'dimension of religions and non-religious convictions' and 'diversity of religions and non-religious convictions' can cause some ambiguity in the meaning of the text. Examples of 'generic/particular', 'non-religious/philosophical', 'normative/descriptive' and 'religious diversity/diversity of religions and non-religious convictions' have been shown. I have also argued that the revisions can be related to the understanding of religion. This leads to the second section where I will investigate findings related to how religion is understood and used.

6.3. Religion and religious dimension

As an academic term, 'religion' is often given as a generic description of the social and cultural phenomenon commonly associated with rituals, belief, values and ethics. Defining religion, however, is not easy. John Smith phrases it aptly: 'The moral of Leuba is not that religion cannot be defined but that it can be defined with greater or lesser success, more than fifty ways' (Smith, 1998 p.281). One might say that defining religion is *per se* a part of an academic endeavour, and so definitions of religion will continue to multiply. However, being an academic term does not mean that 'religion' is not also used outside this field, and suggests that there are even more ways of understanding the term. As shown in 6.2 a particular understanding of religion is prevalent in the Recommendation of 2008. I contend that the many ways of understanding religion, inside and outside the academic sphere, are one of the reasons for the lack of clarity in communication in the Recommendation.

Religion is *the* central focus of the Recommendation, admittedly in various linguistic shapes. This section will address these shapes. As the analysis in 6.2 showed, the 'non-religious' entered the scene through a revision and this revision will be part of the following discussion. I have chosen five examples related to (1) the definition of religion, (2) the definition of non-religious convictions, (3) the use of religious dimension, (4) stereotypes and (5) The European Convention on Human Rights.

The definition of religion

The first example is taken from the Appendix part of the Recommendation. In the section Scope and definitions, religion(s) and non-religious convictions are defined along several dimensions (Figure 6.2).

Paragraph 3, Final version 2008:

> Religious and non-religious convictions are diverse and complex phenomena; they are not monolithic. In addition, people hold religious and non-religious convictions to varying degrees, and for different reasons; for some such convictions are central and may be a matter of choice, for others they are a subsidiary and may be a matter of historical circumstances. The dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education should therefore reflect such diversity and complexity at a local, regional and international level.

As this quote clearly shows, the final version gives a rich definition of convictions. It is descriptive in nature and includes non-religious convictions. The paragraph states that the dimension of particular religions and non-religious convictions must reflect the diversity and complexity of the phenomena of religious and non-religious convictions. Specifically, the paragraph describes the various ways in which individuals can hold these convictions. In all this gives a detailed scope and definition of religious and non-religious convictions.

Paragraph 3, Draft version 2007 gives a very different picture*:*

> Religion is a diverse phenomenon, so the religious dimension of int.cult.education should reflect the diversity of religions at local, regional and global level.

The draft version gives a fairly general description of religion as a generic phenomenon and of the need for intercultural education to include the diversity of particular religions[66].

My impression of the evolution of this paragraph is that it has changed from expressing (1) an aim that the religious dimension of intercultural education should include the many religions (denominations and traditions) at different levels to (2) an aim that the dimension of different religious and secular worldviews in intercultural education should reflect the many varieties of worldviews, as well as the ways and degrees of holding them.

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[66] § 3 is repeated almost verbatim in § 17/14 in the Memorandum (2008/07).

The definition of non-religion

The second example of the linguistic shaping of 'religion' in the Recommendation is found in the Explanatory Memorandum in the section on Principles (Figure 6.3).

Paragraph 16, Final version 2008:

> The <u>religious dimension of human experience</u> is of relevance to intercultural education as this dimension is a constituent part of many people's culture and identity. Of course the values on which this identity is based are underpinned by moral principles, and moral preferences can also derive from non-religious convictions, <u>such as</u> philosophical, humanist and agnostic ones. Accordingly, the term <u>'religious dimension'</u> is not used to define a type of 'religious education'. Attaching importance to <u>the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education</u> is aimed primarily at fostering reciprocal awareness and respect as well as learning how to live together in order to promote social cohesion and civic participation.

The text explains how the religious dimension of human experience is important to intercultural education, namely because it is a constituent part of many people's culture and identity. The last paragraph states that the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education is meant to reflect that living together means respecting the identity of others, including the religious dimension. This is a paragraph where the use of 'religions and non-religious convictions' may confuse more than it clarifies. The text includes philosophical, humanist and agnostic convictions in the religious dimension, and the stress on 'non-religious convictions' in the last sentence therefore seems superfluous.

This paragraph in the final version was edited only slightly. The draft version shows that a few sentences were changed:

Paragraph 13,[67] Draft version 2007:

> The <u>religious dimension of human experience</u> is of relevance to intercultural education as this dimension is a constituent part of many people's culture and identity. Of course the values on which this identity is based are underpinned by moral principles, and moral preferences can also derive from philosophical, humanist and agnostic convictions. Accordingly, the term <u>'religious dimension'</u> is not used to define a type of 'religious education'. Attaching importance to the <u>religious dimension of intercultural education</u> is aimed primarily at fostering reciprocal awareness and respect as well as learning how to live together in order to promote social cohesion and civic participation.

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[67] Owing to revisions, the paragraph numbers are not identical in the two versions

In the first sentence both versions state that 'the religious dimension of human experience' is a constituent part of many (but not all) people's culture and identity. The second sentence goes on to explain that the value base for this identity is moral principles, and that these principles not necessarily come from religious convictions. In the draft version, this is expressed as 'moral preferences can also derive from philosophical, humanist and agnostic convictions.' The final version states 'moral preferences can also derive from non-religious convictions, <u>such as</u> philosophical, humanist and agnostic ones.'

This is the first instance in this Recommendation of a definition of what non-religious convictions are, namely philosophical, humanist and agnostic convictions. An interesting reflection is that this inclusion of other convictions was stated in the draft version, and yet there seems to have been a need to change the wording[68]. I believe I see a discordance of how these terms are replacing each other. Either the revision implies that 'philosophical convictions' and 'non-religious convictions' are one and the same (synonyms) or the intention is to say that 'philosophical convictions' are a part of 'non-religious convictions'.[69] A domain structure illustrates the textual tensions.

Paragraph 16, Final version 2008:

Semantic relationship: Convictions (X) are a source of moral preference (Y)

Included terms (X)	Semantic relationship	Cover term (Y)
Religious convictions	Are a source of	Moral preference
Non-religious convictions	Are a source of	Moral preference

We see two sources of moral preferences here.

Semantic relationship: Included term (X) is a kind of non-religious conviction (Y)

Included terms (X)	Semantic relationship	Cover term (Y)
Philosophical conviction	Is a kind of	Non-religious conviction
Humanist conviction	Is a kind of	Non-religious conviction
Agnostic conviction	Is a kind of	Non-religious conviction

Further we observe three kinds of non-religious convictions in the same paragraph.

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[68] See my discussion in 6.2 on §§ 4 and 5 (Appendix), and § 4 (EM), and the ambiguity between 'philosophies and non-religious'.
[69] See also § 4 (EM) for a similar tension.

We need to see how this is phrased in the draft version:

Paragraph 13, Draft version 2007:

Semantic relationship: Included term (X) is a source of moral preference (Y)

Included terms (X)	Semantic relationship	Cover term (Y)
Philosophical conviction	Is a source of	Moral preference
Humanist conviction	Is a source of	Moral preference
Agnostic conviction	Is a source of	Moral preference
Religion	Is a source of	Moral preference

We find four sources of moral preferences in the draft version, compared with two in the final version.

There is clearly a difference between paragraphs 16 and 13 on the level of expressions, but the meaning might be intact. Both versions say that there are many sources of moral preferences or principles, but the final version makes a distinction between religious and non-religious convictions sources. This leaves an impression in the final version that a person cannot have both a religious and a philosophical conviction at the same time. It confirms philosophical convictions as a non-religious conviction.

The use of the religious dimension

The third example concerns the latter part of paragraph 16 in the Final version (paragraph 13 in draft version). For clarity I will repeat the whole paragraph:

Final version 2008:

> The <u>religious dimension of human experience</u> is of relevance to intercultural education as this dimension is a constituent part of many people's culture and identity. Of course the values on which this identity is based are underpinned by moral principles, and moral preferences can also derive from non-religious convictions, <u>such as</u> philosophical, humanist and agnostic ones.

> Accordingly, the term '<u>religious dimension</u>' is not used to define a type of 'religious education'. Attaching importance to <u>the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education</u> is aimed primarily at fostering reciprocal awareness and respect as well as learning how to live together in order to promote social cohesion and civic participation.

I understand the last two sentences to imply that because the constituent part of people's culture and identity is based on values that are not necessarily religious, the focus on the 'religious dimension' does not mean that the Recommendation suggests that schools will offer a religious education. The point of this dimension of religions and non-religious education seems to be the fostering of reciprocal awareness and respect and learning how to live together. Is this meaning changed in any way from the draft?

Paragraph 13,[70] Draft version 2007:

> The religious dimension of human experience is of relevance to intercultural education as this dimension is a constituent part of many people's culture and identity. Of course the values on which this identity is based are underpinned by moral principles, and moral preferences can also derive from philosophical, humanist and agnostic convictions.
>
> Accordingly, the term 'religious dimension' is not used to define a type of 'religious education'. Attaching importance to the religious dimension of intercultural education is aimed primarily at fostering reciprocal awareness and respect as well as learning how to live together in order to promote social cohesion and civic participation.

The only difference in the two versions is the exchange of 'religious dimension' for 'dimension of religions and non-religious convictions'.

One way of reading the last two sentences is an understanding that one should recognise any eventual religious/moral dimension as a part of the students' identity, and not referring to any intended education curricula. This could imply that the religious dimension is instrumental in reaching the political objectives of social cohesion and civic participation, and not necessarily implying any specific kind of education. A problem related to this understanding is how to comprehend the religious/moral dimension of fellow students without learning anything about these dimensions. The switch from 'religious' to 'religions and non-religious convictions' in the final version contributes to the difficulty of understanding the meaning in this paragraph.

Stereotypes and stereotyping

The section in the Memorandum called **'**Objective**s** of an intercultural approach…' is a fairly uncontroversial section where objectives in line with Council policy are set out. I note the use

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[70] Due to revisions, the paragraph numbers are not identical in the two versions

of different terms regarding worldviews.[71] The paragraph of interest that I have chosen as the fourth example is from the sub-section of 'Suggestions on implementation' (see Figure 6.3). It will be explored in the company of paragraph 6 from the Appendix. First let us have a look at the text in the Memorandum:

In *Paragraph, 26 Final version 2008* we read:

> From the point of view of teaching and learning about the <u>diversity of religions and non-religious convictions</u>, we need pedagogical models that resist stereotyping and allow for differences within <u>religious and non-religious traditions</u> to be expressed and understood. It is also very important that manuals and other teaching materials do not contain any stereotypes regarding <u>religions and non-religious convictions</u>, women or minorities.

What is the aim of this paragraph? I see it as a clarification of the call for good pedagogical models that emphasise the fact that people are religious/non-religious in different ways (see also paragraph 14 on this*),* and resistance against stereotypes of any kind. Let us turn to the draft version to see how the concern is described here:

Paragraph 24, Draft version 2007:

> From the point of view of teaching and learning about <u>religious diversity</u>, we need pedagogical models that resist stereotyping and allow for difference within <u>religious traditions</u> to be expressed and understood. It is also important that manuals and other teaching materials do not contain any stereotypes regarding <u>religions</u>, women or minorities.

First of all, I read this paragraph as in line with the mandate of Athens (Council of Europe 2003). Observing an increase in stereotyping (cf. introduction to Recommendation) in Europe, it is seen as important that teaching materials and pedagogical models avoid this. Further, an increased diversity of and within religious traditions in Europe leads to attention given to this aspect of religion.

When we compare the two versions, what stand out in the text in the final version is a concern for the understanding of different non-religious traditions, and perhaps even more, a concern for stereotypes regarding non-religious convictions. One the one hand, this addition to the text may constitute merely the inclusion of new groups. However, when it is compared and read

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[71] *Paragraph 22* uses 'different worldviews', probably meaning both theistic and non-theistic. *Paragraph 24* has changed from 'religious belief' in the draft version to 'religious convictions', and *paragraph* 25 from 'values and beliefs' to 'values and convictions'. These amendments will be discussed in 6.7.2.

together with paragraph 6 from the Appendix (Figure 6.2), a possible misunderstanding may arise. It expresses the same concern for non-religious convictions, but is angled slightly differently.

Paragraph 6, Final version 2008:

> The following attitudes should be promoted in order to remove obstacles that prevent a proper treatment of <u>the diversity of religions and non-religious convictions</u> in and educational context:
> - […]
> - overcoming prejudices and <u>stereotypes concerning religions and non-religious convictions, especially the practices of minority groups and immigrants</u>, in order to contribute to the development of societies based on solidarity.

This sub-paragraph can be read as a concern for prejudices and stereotypes against non-religious convictions from religious minority groups and immigrants.[72] It may be an unintended interpretation of the text, but arguably not one without merit, given the conflicts in today's society.[73] A comparison with the draft version is necessary to clarify the meaning:

Paragraph 6, Draft version 2007:

> The following attitudes should be promoted in order to remove obstacles that prevent a proper treatment of <u>religious diversity</u> in an educational context in relation to intercultural education:
> - […]
> - overcoming prejudices and <u>stereotypes concerning religions, especially the practices of minority groups or recently arrived immigrants</u>.

In the draft version the concern is for overcoming stereotypes concerning religions, especially the practices of minorities. This seems to me to be a plausible description of today's European society. The public debate *is* concerned with the discrimination and stereotyping of religious minority groups.

Introduction to the Memorandum (paragraph 6) mentions the ethnic and religious forms of intolerance, racist incidents and discrimination. The issue is considered in the introduction to the Recommendation, which refers to the Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation on 'Blasphemy, religious insults and hate speech against persons on grounds of their religion' of 2007 (Council of Europe, 2007c), and in preparatory documents such as Batelaan (2003) and

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[72] This issue has been raised in Harper (2007) and Saroglou, Yzerbyt and Kashten (2011)
[73] § 31 (28 in draft version) talks of stereotyping in the same manner.

Wimberley (2003). All these documents show concern for different conflicts related to religion. They do not focus on 'non-religious convictions'. I would also like to refer to the Parliamentary Recommendation on 'Education and Religion' of 2005 (Council of Europe 2005b). This document states in paragraph 6: 'Education is essential for combating ignorance, stereotypes and misunderstanding of religions'. Again the focus is on 'religions'. It remains an open question whether the concern expressed in the Recommendation about possible stereotyping of 'non-religious convictions' is a new Council policy or an unintended consequence of the textual alteration.

European Convention on Human Rights

A final example of the linguistic shapes of religion is taken from Paragraph 4 in the Appendix (Figure 6.2), and relates to Article 9 in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR):

> Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance[74].

This article from the ECHR is used in a fashion in a sub-paragraph of *Paragraph 4* of the Recommendation, but with an interesting distinction:

> - the principle of the freedom of conscience and of thought includes the freedom to have religion or not to have one, and the freedom to practice one's religion, to give it up or to change it if one so wishes

'Religion' is removed from the first part of the sentence 'borrowed' from the ECHR and inserted in the second, placing 'religion', perhaps unconsciously, at a sub-level vis-à-vis conscience and thought. This sub paragraph is a *new* addition to the Recommendation, not present in the draft version. Again, this may be an unintended use of words, but if not it is certainly an interesting interpretation of ECHR, since the intention of the Convention is to legally protect the freedom of all 'thought, conscience and religions', and not placing religion as an addition.

This section has discussed examples of the different linguistic shapes of religion in the Recommendation and the perceived textual tension they may cause in communication. In a sub-section I will look closer at how the concept of 'religious education' or 'education about religion' is used.

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[74] Available from: http://www.echr.coe.int, [Accessed 21 January2013]

6.3.1. Religious education

Findings related to religion and religious dimension revealed a need to clarify the position on 'Religious Education' and 'the religious dimension of education'. What does the Council of Europe mean when using these concepts in the Recommendation: is it to be a discrete subject or an element of knowledge to be broached in education? The title of the Recommendation implies that the Council wants such education to be an embedded part of the intercultural approach,[75] and not a discrete subject. Let us have a look at what the paragraphs say.

Paragraph 4, Final version 2008, Appendix:

> The following principles should form the basis and define the perspective from which religions and non-religious convictions have to be taken into account in a framework of intercultural education:
> - [...]
> - an <u>interdisciplinary approach to education in religious, moral and civic values</u> should be encouraged in order to develop sensitivity to human rights (including gender equality) peace, democratic citizenship dialogue and solidarity.

I understand the quoted principle in paragraph 4 to mean that an approach based on disciplines from many fields should be used in education in religious, moral and civic values. The approach has an instrumental aim, which is developing sensitivity to the Council of Europe's core values. How is it phrased in the draft version from 2007?

Paragraph 4, Draft version 2007, Appendix:

> The following principles should form the basis and define the perspective from which religion has to be taken into account in a framework of intercultural education:
> - [...]
> - an <u>integrated approach to religious, moral and civic values should be encouraged in education.</u>

In this version I read 'integrated approach' as a principle for drawing on or learning about religious, moral and civic values in all subjects or courses in education with no instrumental aim attached. The approach seems to have changed from an integrated to an interdisciplinary one after the revision. What does this do to the meaning?

Presenting the two in a domain structure will visualise the difference between the two versions:

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[75] Cf. discussion in 6.2.

Paragraph 4, Final version 2008:

Semantic relationship: Interdisciplinary (X) is an approach to education in values (Y).

Included terms (X)	Semantic relationship	Cover term (Y)
Interdisciplinary	An approach to	Education in values

Paragraph 4, Draft version 2007:

Semantic relationship: An integrated approach (X) to values is encouraged in education (Y).

Included terms (X)	Semantic relationship	Cover term (Y)
Integrated approach to values	Encouraged in	Education

My understanding of this principle is that the category (cover term) has altered from values in education to education in values. In other words, the focus seems to have changed, and this can imply a new conceptual meaning (Bryant 2002).[76]

Other paragraphs talk of 'teaching about the diversity of religions and non-religious convictions' without stating clearly how this can take place.[77]

The Explanatory Memorandum is very specific when it says in paragraph 4 (EM) that the working group recommended that regardless of the system of religious education in any particular state 'children should have education that takes religious and philosophical diversity into account as part of their intercultural education, irrespective of how this is included in the curriculum'. Is this view reflected in the rest of the Memorandum? Paragraph 16 (EM) states that 'religious dimension' is a constituent part of many people's culture and identity and that the term is not used to define a type of 'religious education'. The aim is to 'foster reciprocal awareness and respect as well as learning how to live together in order to promote social cohesion and civic participation'.[78] Paragraph 27 (EM) explains how the aims of recognising differences and avoiding stereotypes 'may be included in various school subjects (e.g. citizenship education, social studies, religious education) developed by means of cross-curricular themes or included in certain extra-curricular projects'. In other words, the Memorandum text indicates an approach, rather than a subject. Other paragraphs emphasise

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[76] I must underscore that in this 'domain structure' I have taken great liberties with Spradley's model (1979), which requires a minimum of two included terms to be called a domain. The image it produced of two different ways of looking at education made me use the model all the same.

[77] Cf. for instance § 5

[78] Cf. 6.6 for a more thorough discussion of this paragraph

the importance of learning about religion and learning from religion without reference to a discrete subject[79].

It may be argued that the revision makes the Recommendation 2008 more in tune with the premises described at the beginning,[80] namely 'regardless of the system of religious education in any particular state' and 'irrespective of how this is included in the curriculum' as seen in paragraph 4 in the introduction of the Memorandum, by leaving the organisational aspects to the member states.

Religious Education, despite its different modes of operation in European states, seems to have caused no lasting debate. Paragraph 40 (EM) has undergone a change and I will quote it in full because it shows both the Council's view on religion (in both versions) and the ambiguities that appear when some words are changed and others not:

Paragraph 40 (EM), Final Version 2008 in 'Teaching aspects, Comments on key concepts: various learning approaches' (Figure 6.3):

> The interpretative approach rests on key concepts of how <u>religions and non-religious convictions</u> are represented and by whom, how such representation is inevitably interpreted and mediated, and how important it is for young people to be reflective in their understanding of <u>religions and non-religious convictions</u>. This is very relevant to understanding the nature and roles of <u>religion</u> in Europe today, for <u>religion</u> is not static but dynamic, not fixed but changing; <u>religions</u> interact and are interpreted and lived differently by different followers. How <u>religion</u> is interpreted and understood is an important part of the educative process.

This view of religion can arguably be described as a good presentation of how religion appears in Europe today, but it says nothing about the eventual dynamic and changing natures of non-religious convictions. The Council of Europe thinks it important to underscore how religion is interpreted and understood in an educative process but seemingly not religions and non-religious convictions.

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[79] Cf. for instance § 36 (EM)
[80] Phrases like '…the concept of a religious education that consists of "learning about religion" and "learning from religion" ' from § 34 (EM) in the draft version 2007, which has been altered to '…the concept of an education about religion…'in § 36 (EM) in the final version.

Compare then *Paragraph 37 (EM)* in the draft version of 2007:

> The interpretative approach rests on key concepts of how <u>religions and beliefs</u> are represented and by whom, how such representation is inevitably interpreted and mediated, and how important it is for young people to be reflective in their understanding of <u>religions and belief</u>. This is very relevant to understanding the nature and roles of <u>religion</u> in Europe today, for <u>religion</u> is not static but dynamic, not fixed but changing; <u>religions</u> interact and are interpreted and lived differently by different followers. How <u>religion</u> is interpreted and understood is an important part of the educative process.

The draft version gives a more complete argument for the case of using an interpretive approach. The exchange of terms, as this example shows, does not always fulfil the continuity of an argument, since the first and last part of the passage do not refer to the same concept.[81]

It seems fairly clear from these examples that the Council does not want confessional religious education in the state school system, but an education about religion. Whether that education will take place as a discrete subject or throughout the school curricula remains open and probably deliberately so.[82]

6.4. Religion as a cultural fact

Having looked at religion and its changing linguistic appearances in the final and draft version of the Recommendation I will now turn to the view of 'religion as a cultural fact', a precondition for the religious diversity project, or 'religions and non-religious convictions as cultural facts' as the final version claims.

Many paragraphs in the Recommendation refer to the fact of 'religions and non-religious convictions' as 'cultural facts [within the larger field of social diversity]', but there are other paragraphs saying that 'religion is a cultural fact'. The project of religious diversity (2002-06) uses the phrase 'religion as a cultural fact'.[83] The question is, do these two varieties express the same meaning? If they do not, a consequence might be that the alterations change the intent of the Council in the Recommendation. Why was the amendments executed in some places and not others? These questions are not easy to answer, but in the following I will

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[81] The concept of 'religions and beliefs' will be discussed in 6.8.2

[82] Paragraph 4 (EM):'In terms of policy, the working group recommended that, regardless of the system of religious education in any particular state, children should have education that takes religilous and philosophical diversity into account as a part of their intercultural education, irrespective of how exactly this is included in the curriculum.'

[83] See for instance Batelaan (2003), Wimberley (2003) and *'The religious dimension of intercultural education, project description'* (Council of Europe 2004c)

present four examples of how the phrases manifest themselves in the final text and in the draft: (1) change of terms, (2) the argument, (3) consistency and (4) the contribution and the boundary

Change of terms

My first example is from the Scope and Definitions part of the Appendix (Figure 6.2).

Paragraph 2, Final version 2008:

> For the purpose of this recommendation 'religions' and 'non-religious convictions' are considered as <u>cultural facts</u> within the larger field of social diversity.

In other words, different worldviews, religious and secular are seen as one of many cultural facts or phenomena in society. The pragmatic 'For the purpose of this recommendation' means that, in other situations, 'religions' and 'non-religious convictions' could be defined differently.[84]

Now, let us compare the phrase in the final version with *Paragraph 2,* in the *draft version 2007:*

> For the purpose of this recommendation '<u>religion</u>' is considered as a <u>cultural fact</u>.

The draft version speaks of the generic concept 'religion' as a cultural fact, whereas the final adopted version denotes empirical 'religions and non-religious convictions' as cultural facts.

In the Principles section there is another example of this exchange:

Paragraph 4, Final version 2008:

The following principles should form the basis and define the perspectives from which <u>religions and non-religious convictions</u> have to be taken into account in a framework of intercultural education:
> - [...]
> - agreement that <u>religions and non-religious convictions</u> are at least 'cultural facts' that contribute, along with other elements such as language and historical and cultural traditions to social and individual life.

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[84] Robert Baird writes of three types of definitions: lexical, real and functional. A functional or stipulative definition means that it is not true or false but more or less useful (Tweed, 2006 p.35).

Expressed in another way, this means that different types of worldviews are cultural facts that contribute to all aspects of life. Other cultural facts used in this paragraph are language, historical and cultural traditions.

When we compare this with *Paragraph 4 Draft version 2007* we see that again, the draft version depicts 'religion' as a cultural fact:

The following principles should form the basis and define the perspective from which <u>religion</u> has to be taken into account in a framework of intercultural education:
- Agreement that <u>religion</u> is at least a '<u>cultural fact</u>' that contributes, along with other elements such as language and historical and cultural traditions, to social and individual life.

Hence both these paragraphs (2 and 4) show that the original intent in the use of religion was a generic one. Religion is seen as a cultural fact. This is compatible with the words 'For the purpose of...' Religion might be explained as a term created by scholars for their intellectual purposes. This means that scholars define the term in the way they find most suitable for the purpose in question (Smith, 1998 p.281). In the context of this recommendation, it is seen as necessary to consider religion as a cultural fact. This is an example where the change from the generic (religion) to the empirical level (religions and non-religious convictions) seems inconsistent in and by itself, showing perhaps two colliding discourses. If the change is, as one might speculate, a desire to bring in all kinds of worldviews[85], it makes little sense in this paragraph. As shown in 6.4, religion in the generic understanding of the draft version included secular worldviews. From that perspective, there seems to be no reason for a change of wording.

The argument of 'cultural fact'

Cultural fact is explained more comprehensively in the Explanatory Memorandum. The second example is taken from the introduction (Figure 6.3):

Paragraph 7 (EM), Final version 2008:

It was also underlined that taking into account <u>the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education</u> requires that, despite different views on <u>religion</u> at the personal and societal levels, all can agree that <u>religion</u> is at least a '<u>cultural fact</u>'. Knowledge and understanding of <u>religion</u> at this basic level is highly relevant to good community and personal relations and is therefore a <u>legitimate concern of public policy.</u>

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[85] I use 'worldview' as an aggregate term to cover all kinds of religious, philosophical and non-religious beliefs.

This paragraph sets out to explain that even if there are different personal and societal views on the generic concept of religion, everyone can agree that religion is at least a cultural fact. This is used as an argument for taking the dimension of particular religions and non-religious convictions into account within intercultural education. It is also argued that generic knowledge at a basic level is relevant to co-existence and therefore legitimised as part of public policy.

Paragraph 8 (EM) of the draft version of 2007 looks slightly different:

> It was also underlined that taking into account <u>the religious dimension of intercultural education</u> requires that, despite different views on <u>religion</u> at the personal and social levels, all can agree that <u>religion</u> is at least a 'cultural fact'. (This does not deny that for many it is much more, such as an expression of ultimate meaning and truth or source of ethics). Knowledge and understanding of <u>religion</u> at this basic level is highly relevant to good community and personal relations and is <u>therefore a legitimate concern of public policy.</u>

Compared with the final version, the draft version has a clearer use of terms. It uses the terms 'religion' and 'religious dimension' throughout the paragraph and it has a parenthesis not included in the final version.

First, the final version holds a tension between the terms 'religion' and 'religions and non-religious convictions'. In this context, I would argue that the meaning is generic, given the wording of the paragraph. Being a cultural fact seems to be a legitimising reason for religion being a concern of public policy. The problem occurs when 'religion as a cultural fact' becomes the reason for introducing a dimension of non-religious convictions within intercultural education. Does that mean that the writers ground the paragraph in the generic, inclusive understanding of religion? If so, there would be no reason to alter the previous wording expressing that understanding of religion. If on the other hand the understanding behind the paragraph is particular, one would maybe not expect the use of 'religion' as an argument for bringing in 'non-religious convictions'.

The other point of interest is the parenthesis in the draft version, which actually sets out the boundary for 'religion as a cultural fact'. Religion outside the boundary of cultural fact can be an expression of ultimate meaning and truth or a source of ethics. This parenthesis, this boundary, is removed in the final adopted version. What is the reason for the exclusion? It is possible that the first phrase 'despite different views on religion at the personal and social

levels' is supposed to equal the sentence on boundaries. This is difficult to evaluate. The paragraph expresses, like the final version, an instrumental reason for including knowledge of religion in intercultural education, namely its relevance to good community and personal relations.

Consistency

A third example is a paragraph in the final version that was not a part of the draft Explanatory Memorandum 2007. Paragraph 14 (EM) (Figure 6.3) is almost a verbatim repetition of paragraphs 2 and 3 in the Appendix.[86]

Paragraph 14 (EM), Final version 2008:

> For the purpose of this recommendation 'religions' and 'non-religious convictions' are considered as cultural facts within the larger field of social diversity. Religious and non-religious convictions are diverse and complex phenomena; they are not monolithic. In addition, people hold religious and non-religious convictions to varying degrees, and for different reasons; for some such convictions are central and may be a matter of choice, for others they are subsidiary and may be a matter of historical circumstances. The dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education should therefore reflect such diversity and complexity at a local, regional and international level.

The paragraph describes the diversity and complexity of religion and non-religious convictions, and that the dimension of these within intercultural education should reflect this diversity and complexity at all levels. The term changes from 'religions' to 'religious' in the second sentence. I do not know if this is an intended change or just a graphical error.

There can be no comparison with an earlier version since this paragraph was not present in the 2007 draft Recommendation. A glance at paragraphs 2 and 3 in the Appendix confirms the frequently found replacement of 'religion' with 'religions and non-religious convictions'. It is worth pondering upon the fact that in *paragraph 7 (EM), Final version 2008* that I used as the second example, it is claimed that:

> …taking into account the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education <u>requires</u> that, despite different view on religion at the personal and societal levels, <u>all can agree that religion is at least a 'cultural fact'</u>.

This must be compared with the wording in paragraph 14 (EM):

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[86] Cf. 6.3 and 6.4 for a discussion of these paragraphs

> For the purpose of this recommendation <u>'religions' and 'non-religious convictions' are considered as cultural facts </u> within the larger field of social diversity.

This implies that in the final version there are two opinions on religion and cultural fact. In paragraph 7 the generic religion is a cultural fact, and in paragraph 14 the particular religions and non-religious convictions are cultural facts.

The contribution and the boundary

Comparing these two paragraphs (7 and 14 (EM)) with paragraph 17 (EM) is of interest, and I will use this comparison as the fourth example. The paragraph expands on the topic of 'cultural fact' and is taken from the Principles section under Comments on Key Concepts (see Figure 6.3). I will quote it in its entirety, as it is crucial to the understanding of the background to this Recommendation. This is underscored by the fact that the draft text was hardly altered, suggesting that none of the actors saw a need for change.

Paragraph 17, Final version 2008:

> The agreement on the fact that <u>religion is at least a cultural phenomenon</u> is an important principle. For many, religion is more than this. Religion may be a way of life, an embodiment of revealed truth, and/or linked with important ethical convictions. <u>This concept provides a basic agreement on the nature of religion that allows the Council of Europe to begin to develop further the implications of religion for intercultural education, and to release the potential for considering how religion can contribute to positive intercultural education that would not be possible otherwise.</u> It must be said, however that some are now talking of Europe not as a post-Christian society but as a post-secular society. The reasons for this are themselves complex and debatable, but no one can doubt that religion is still a cultural phenomenon (or set of phenomena) that is of significance in all European societies. This concept also allows the scope of religion to include <u>humanist viewpoints or other philosophical and moral convictions</u>. This is particularly important in Europe where there are many people (and children) who do not have traditional religious, theistic beliefs, but yet have beliefs and values.

The paragraph states that 'religion is a cultural phenomenon'. It further states an allusion to the argument from paragraph 8 (EM), draft version 2007, that for many, religion is more than that. It can be 'an embodiment of revealed truth' and/or 'linked with ethical convictions', meaning a combination of religious/secular worldviews. This way of seeing religion is the reason why the Council sees the potential of religion as a contribution to positive intercultural education. Because religion is seen as a cultural phenomenon it can include humanist

viewpoints or other philosophical and moral convictions. I notice that there is no reference to 'religions and non-religious convictions'. What did the draft version say?

Paragraph 14 (EM), Draft version 2007:[87]

> The agreement on the fact that <u>religion is at least a cultural phenomenon</u> is an important principle. For many, religion is more than this. Religion may be a way of life, an embodiment of revealed truth, and/or linked with important ethical convictions. <u>This concept provides a basic agreement on the nature of religion that allows the Council of Europe to begin to develop further the implications of religion for intercultural education, and to release the potential for considering how religion can contribute to positive intercultural education that would not be possible otherwise.</u> It must be said, however that some are now talking of Europe not as a post-Christian society but as a post-secular society. The reasons for this are themselves complex and debatable, but no one can doubt that religion is still a cultural phenomenon (or set of phenomena) that is of significance in all European societies. This concept also allows the scope of religion to include <u>humanist viewpoints as well as theistic ones</u>. This is particularly important in Europe where there are many people (and children) who do not have traditional religious, theistic beliefs, yet have beliefs and values.

As seen, the draft version is very similar to the final adopted version. Religion is recognised for its qualities and for 'how religion can contribute to positive intercultural education that would not be possible otherwise.' The definition shows that religion can be understood as a 'way of life' and that also worldviews other than theistic ones are included. This is indicated by the phrase 'an embodiment of revealed truth and/or linked with important ethical convictions'.

The way in which religion is defined in the above paragraphs may indicate how society can 'learn from religion'.[88] I think that there may have been a slight error in both versions, and that the sentence that begins 'this concept provides…' should end '…*how religion can contribute positively to intercultural education…*' and not '…*how religion can contribute to positive intercultural education…*'. The use of religion as a generic concept is present throughout, and both versions include humanist and theistic viewpoints. This in itself is interesting. I understand this paragraph as a justification for the obligations I assume the writers in the revision were trying to fulfil in the question of how to include the 'non-religious' convictions in the text. The paragraph appears as a summing-up of the reasons for bringing in religion, and of the pragmatic view the Council takes on religion. At the same

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[87] Because of revisions the paragraph numbers in the two versions do not match.
[88] See 1.2 Religious education in Europe

time, given that this paragraph was hardly altered at all, it seems to undermine the reason for many of the word replacements that have happened during revision. There seems to be a tension between giving attention to religion and on the other hand not forgetting non-religious convictions. This is solved in the draft version of the Recommendation by giving religion a very inclusive definition, defended by the importance of viewing religion as a cultural fact. The final version of the Recommendation seems to have overlooked this, and has exchanged 'religion' for 'religions and non-religious convictions' in many places, which I have shown in 6.2.

In paragraph 14 'religions' and 'non-religious convictions' were 'cultural facts'. In paragraph 17 'religion' is a cultural fact. The assumption must be that these terms are equivalent to each other. A generic term cannot be equivalent to a particular term. The correct interpretation may be that the generic term of 'religion' in this context includes both 'religions' and 'non-religious convictions'. Paragraph 17 exposes a gradually more inclusive definition of the term 'religion'. 'Religion as a cultural phenomenon' contains expressions like 'way of life', 'embodiment of revealed truth' and/or 'important ethical convictions'. This sentence opens up the term of religion to embrace *either* a supernatural dimension *and/or* an important ethical belief. The last sentence in the paragraph widens the term even more. It clearly states that the fact that religion is a cultural phenomenon <u>allows the scope of religion to include humanist viewpoints or other philosophical and moral convictions.</u>

Seeing 'religion' as a cultural domain will give the following structure:

Semantic relationship: included term (X) is included in Religion (Y)

Included terms	Semantic relationship	Cover term
Way of life	Is included in	Religion
Embodiment of revealed truth	Is included in	Religion
Important ethical conviction	Is included in	Religion
Humanist view points	Are included in	Religion
Philosophical convictions	Are included in	Religion
Moral convictions	Are included in	Religion

In this Recommendation 'religion' is used as an inclusive concept, going beyond what the layperson might agree is the boundary of 'religion'. In fact, the boundary of this concept, as I

understand it in the Recommendation, seems to be that individuals without moral convictions are not included in 'religion'. Spradley (1979 p.93) claims that the internal structure of a domain, and therefore also the boundary, is often tacit, which seems to hold for this paragraph. The boundary is not manifest, but is revealed by what is included in the category. Going back to Paragraph 14 of the Explanatory memorandum2008, we see that 'religions' and 'non-religious convictions' were considered as cultural facts. If this is an attempt at a switch from 'religion', it seems slightly superfluous considering the terms included in the cover term of 'religion', seen in this example.

6.5. Religion in the public sphere

The Council of Europe believes that religion has a role in society. This role is described in the Preamble, Appendix and the Explanatory Memorandum of the Recommendation.[89] The relevant paragraphs on this issue give an impression of a textual tension. This makes it reasonable to make a comparison with the draft version to seek clarity. I will use three examples related to the role of religion in the public sphere: (1) the relevance of religion in the public sphere, (2) the place of religion and (3) moderation of expression.

The relevance of religion in the public sphere

The first example is taken from the Appendix, in the section on Principles (Figure 6.2), and relates to why religion is relevant in the public sphere and how to approach it:

Paragraph 4, Final version 2008:

> The following principles should form the basis and define the perspective from which religions and non-religious convictions have to be taken into account in a framework of intercultural education:
>> - The principle of the freedom of conscience and of thought includes the freedom to have religion or not to have one, and the freedom to practice one's religion, to give it up or to change it if one so wishes
>> - […]
>> - Information on and knowledge of religions and non-religious convictions which influence the behaviour of individuals in public life should be taught in order to develop tolerance as well as mutual understanding and trust

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[89] Cf. also Resolution Res (2003) 7 on the Youth policy of Europe, Recommendation 1396 (1999) of the PA on Religion and democracy, Recommendation 1720 (2005) of the PA on Education and Religion, Recommendation 1804 (2007) of the PA on State, religion, secularity and human rights, and the Introduction and context in the Explanatory Memorandum.

The principles that govern the perspective from which religions and non-religious convictions are to be taken into account in intercultural education are described in paragraph 4. The first is the principle of religion and belief,[90] which amongst others points to the right to practise one's religion. Another principle is that 'information on and knowledge of religions and non-religious convictions <u>which influence the behaviour of individuals in public life</u> should be taught in order to develop tolerance, mutual understanding and trust'. The wording 'which influence the behaviour' seems to imply that some parts of 'religions and non-religious convictions' influence behaviour and others not. What does the draft version say about this?

Paragraph 4, Draft version 2007:

> The following principles should form the basis and define the perspective from which religion has to be taken into account in a framework of intercultural education:
> - [...]
> - Information on and knowledge of religions and philosophies fall within the public sphere and should be taught in order to develop tolerance as well as mutual understanding and trust.

The draft version from 2007 does not contain the sub-paragraph on 'freedom of religion and belief'. It states 'the information on and knowledge of religions and philosophies <u>falls within the public sphere</u> and should be taught as a way to develop tolerance, mutual understanding and trust'. In other words, knowledge is an important way of promoting the goals of tolerance, mutual understanding and trust, and information and knowledge are a part of the public sphere.

I observe a change in meaning in how the text describes the public sphere. In the final adopted version, the meaning seems to be that individuals take with them part of their religion or their non-religious conviction as a mode of behaviour in public life, and that these aspects of religions and non-religious convictions should be taught in order to develop tolerance, mutual understanding and trust. To phrase it differently, the draft version claims that knowledge and information on different religions and philosophies belong in the public sphere, and as such should be taught, for instance in schools, as a way to improve tolerance and understanding. The final version does not say that information and knowledge belong in the public sphere. The emphasis here is on stating that the behaviour of individuals in public life is partly influenced by their worldview, and that the specific part of behaviour that originates in this worldview has to be learned about to develop tolerance and understanding. Both versions

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[90] See also 6.3.

recognise the presence of religion(s) in the public sphere, but, as seen here, in very different ways.

There seems to be a change in meaning with respect to public life. Presenting the paragraph in a domain structure may illustrate this:

Paragraph 4, Final version 2008

Semantic relationship: Religions and non-religious convictions (X) influence behaviour in public life (Y)

Included terms (X)	Semantic relationship	Cover term (Y)
Religions	Influence	Behaviour in Public life
Non-religious convictions	Influence	Behaviour in Public life

Paragraph 4, Draft version 2007:

Semantic relationship: Information and knowledge of religions and philosophies (X) belong in the public sphere (Y)

Included terms (X)	Semantic relationship	Cover term (Y)
Information (of religion and philosophies)	Belong	The public sphere
Knowledge (of religion and philosophies)	Belong	The public sphere

The final version says that convictions influence behaviour in public life and information/knowledge about this should therefore be taught. The draft version claims that information/knowledge about different convictions belong in the public sphere and should therefore be taught.

I would also like to draw attention to the phrase in both versions: '…information on and knowledge of…should be taught in order to develop tolerance and mutual understanding and trust'. The implication is that information and knowledge *ipso facto* leads to tolerance, understanding and trust. This instrumental view is present in both versions. Whether it is a true statement remains to be verified. As Robert Jackson so aptly phrases it: 'There are some very well-informed racists and bigots' (Jackson, 2004 p.47), supported by Martine Abdallah-Pretceille: 'Ignorance is not the only cause of prejudice' (Abdallah-Pretceille, 2004 p.55). Jackson goes on to say that knowledge and understanding are necessary but not sufficient for removing prejudice. A change in attitude is also required.

The place of religion

The section on Requirements …(Figure 6.2) will be used in my second example, regarding the place of religion.

Paragraph 6, Final version 2008:

> The following attitudes should be promoted to remove obstacles that prevent a proper treatment of the diversity of religions and non-religious convictions in an educational context:
> - recognising the place of religions and non-religious convictions in the public sphere and at school as a topic for discussion and reflection

This paragraph in the final version calls for the recognition of the place of religions and non-religious convictions in the public sphere and at school. This recognition should be a topic for discussion and reflection.

Again, let us compare it with *Paragraph 6, sub-paragraph 1, Draft version 2007*:

> The following attitudes should be promoted to remove obstacles that prevent a proper treatment of religious diversity in an educational context in relation to intercultural education:
> - recognising the place of religion in the public sphere as a topic for discussion and reflection.

The draft version is similar apart from the by now well-known exchange of 'religious diversity' for 'the diversity of religions and non-religious convictions' and 'religion' for 'religions and non-religious convictions'. In addition, the final version adds 'at school', which was a proposed amendment by the French delegate.[91] This amendment might have been made because religious education has no place in the state schools of France, and because the representatives wanted to clarify where this discussion would take place.[92]

More interesting though, is 'the place of religion'. The background documents for this recommendation argue that religion is not absent from the public sphere (cf. Batelaan, 2003; Wimberley, 2003). The phrase must be meant to underscore this fact in the face of opposing opinions. How, then, can the statement 'recognising the place of religions and non-religious convictions in the public sphere' be explained? The argument about religion has either gone

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[91] A revision proposal from 20 November 2008, used in the second and third example. Cf. note in introduction to Chapter 6, (Council of Europe, 2008i)
[92] See more on this in Chapter 7

along the lines of a return of religion to the public sphere (Habermas, 2005) or suggested that religion has never been absent from the public sphere (Calhoun, Jürgensmeyer, and van Antwerpen, eds. 2011). The intention of including the 'place of non-religious convictions in the public sphere' is more difficult to pinpoint. Is not 'the non-religious convictions' the basis of a public sphere, a sphere where religion has been marginalised (Casanova, 1994)? This raises the question of how to define non-religious convictions. If they are defined as in paragraph 16 in the Explanatory Memorandum (philosophical, humanist and agnostic), it could be argued that there is no need for wanting to secure their place in the public sphere in a democracy. Another explanation could be a concern for the potential exclusion of secular humanist rites in the public sphere, which might more relevant in some European states than others[93].

Moderation of expression

Discussions on religion in the public sphere often concern manifestation of symbols and behaviour. I will use two examples from the Appendix (Figure 6.2) to show how this issue is alluded to. There are two paragraphs that possibly refer to the boundary of religion in the public sphere. The first example of the limits of expression is seen in *Paragraph 5, Final version 2008:*

> Education should develop intercultural competences through:
> - […]
> - promoting civic-mindedness and moderation in expressing one's identity.

This could be a case of creating boundaries for the manifestation of identity in public. The *Draft version of 2007* said 'asserting one's identity', which is a slightly stronger use of words than 'expressing'.

The view on moderation is even expressed in *Paragraph 6, Final version 2008:*

> The following attitudes should be promoted in order to remove obstacles that prevent a proper treatment of the diversity of religions and non-religious convictions in an educational context:
> - […]
> - recognising that the expressions of religious allegiance at school, <u>without ostentation or proselytising exercised with due respect for others, public order and human rights</u>, is compatible with a secular society and the respective autonomy of state and religions.

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[93] Conversation with Ingvill Thorson-Plesner, 29 April 2013

One of the attitudes that should be promoted according to Paragraph 6 is recognising that the expressions of religious allegiance at school is compatible with a secular society. The expressions must be without ostentation or proselytising and with due respect. How was this expressed in the draft version?

Paragraph 6, Draft version 2007:

> The following attitudes should be promoted in order to remove obstacles that prevent a proper treatment of religious diversity in an educational context in relation to intercultural education:
> - […]
> - recognising that laicity and secular society are compatible with the expression of religious allegiance exercised with due respect for others, public order and human rights.

As suggested by this quote, the draft version gives expression to the same thinking, but here 'laicity' is included as compatible with the expression of religious allegiance. The terms 'ostentation' and 'proselytising' are absent in this version. I am presenting a third version as well in this example:[94]

Paragraph 6, Draft version 20 November 2008:

> The following attitudes should be promoted in order to remove obstacles that prevent a proper treatment of the diversity of religions and non-religious convictions in an educational context:
> - […]
> - recognising that the expressions of religious allegiance in the public sphere, exercised with due respect for others, public order and human rights, is compatible with a secular society and the respective autonomy of state and religions

This is a version that was also referred to in the previous category of examples (Council of Europe, 2008i). It was presented in a GR-C meeting after a process of revision earlier that autumn[95] by the CDED. Some amendments were proposed at this GR-C meeting on 20 November. The document is basically the same as the draft version of 2007 that I have used throughout this thesis. The above example indicates that there must have been some additional revision work between the draft version and the final version. The point I want to raise here is that 'laicity', which was in the draft version of 2007, is absent from the version

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[94] Cf. also 'the place of religion' previously in this chapter.
[95] Cf. the narrative of this in the introduction to this chapter.

produced on 20 November 2008. The terms 'ostentation' and 'proselytising' did not enter this version.

The French delegates proposed some of the alterations at the GR-C meeting (Council of Europe, 2008i). Both these paragraphs (5 and 6) could be on the one hand a response to factions critical of a 'too visible religion'. On the other hand, it may also be argued that this is the Council's way of showing that civic-mindedness and moderation are relevant for all groups, including religious individuals. The concept of 'civic-mindedness' is expanded in the Memorandum. *Paragraph 24 (EM)* explains that one aspect of civic-mindedness is that 'it does not forbid the expression of identity, affiliation and religious convictions, but it does mean that the extent of such expressions should not remove the equal right of another to such expression, or to be offended or diminished by such expression.' This is an area where the Council must keep a neutral stand, and where different member states may have very different opinions depending on demography, history and culture.

This has been a presentation and discussion on three types of examples relating to religion in the public sphere. In the last section on findings and analysis from the Recommendation I will investigate the values and aims of religions and non-religious convictions and how they manifest themselves.

6.6. Values and aims

The aim of the Recommendation is for information and knowledge of religions and non-religious convictions to be an aid to promoting the core values of human rights, democracy and rule of law in an intercultural education approach. What does this say about the value of a religious worldview in the Council of Europe? Does religion have a value in itself and to individuals 'belonging' to a religion, or is the role of religion purely instrumental? There seems to be a textual tendency in the Recommendation to see religion, or knowledge about religion (and as a consequence in the revised version, non-religious convictions), as an instrument for reaching the goals of social cohesion, tolerance, solidarity and 'living together'.

Expressions like 'in order to promote a harmonious culture of co-existence'; 'in order to develop tolerance as well as mutual understanding and trust' and 'how religion can contribute

to positive intercultural education that would not be possible otherwise' are seen in both the Appendix and the Memorandum in the draft version of 2007.[96] The formal Recommendation text itself says:'(…) recommends that governments...pursue initiatives in the field of intercultural education relating to religious diversity in order to promote tolerance and the development of a culture of "living together" '. The goals of 'social cohesion' and 'civic participation' are underscored in paragraph 12 in the Explanatory Memorandum.

The final version of 2008 seems to have strengthened the instrumental value even more by adding a focus on the Council's core values in revisions to paragraphs. Two examples illustrate this point.[97] A third example shows how the Recommendation recognises the intrinsic value of worldviews.

Instrumental value

The first example on the emphasis of the instrumental value is paragraph 1 in the Appendix (Figure 6.2):

Paragraph 1, Final version 2008:

> The recommendation's aim is to ensure taking into account the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education <u>as a contribution to</u> strengthen human rights, democratic citizenship, participation and the development of competences for intercultural dialogue at the following three levels:

This paragraph is very much in line with the aims of the project on religious diversity, apart from the use of 'religions and non-religious diversity'. How is this described in the draft version?

Paragraph 1, Draft version 2007:

> The recommendation's aim is to ensure taking into account the religious dimension of intercultural education at the following three levels:

In this version no specific reason is given for taking account of the 'religious dimension of intercultural education'. In the final version 'religions and other convictions' are given a specific purpose. The introduction to the Recommendation in the draft of 2007, and the

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[96] §§ 4 (App), 1(EM), 14 (EM)
[97] In this section I will not discuss the concept of religious/non-religious convictions unless it has direct relevance to the focus on instrumental/inherent values.

Explanatory Memorandum as well, describes the aims of this education, which is no different from what is seen in the final version. Consequently this must be seen as a general strengthening or even just a clarification of the instrumental argument, not a conceptually new focus (Bryant, 2002).

The second example is from paragraph 4 where there is a similar strengthening of instrumental aims. The paragraph concerns the principles for taking the convictions dimension into account in intercultural education.

Paragraph 4, Final version 2008:

> The following principles should form the basis and define the perspective from which religions and non-religious convictions have to be taken into account in a framework of intercultural education:
> > - [...]
> > - (...) religions and non-religious convictions are at least 'cultural facts', that contribute (...) to social and individual life
> >
> > - (...) information on and knowledge of religions and non-religious convictions (...) taught in order to develop tolerance as well as mutual understanding and trust.
> > - [...]
> > - an <u>interdisciplinary approach to education in religious, moral and civic values</u> should be encouraged in order to develop sensitivity to human rights (including gender equality) peace, democratic citizenship dialogue and solidarity.

These first three sub-paragraphs have been discussed earlier[98] but I have included them to show the instrumental aims. Let us look at the last sub-paragraph, which is concerned with the importance of intercultural dialogue:

> > - <u>intercultural dialogue and its religious and non-religious convictions dimension</u> are an essential precondition for the development of tolerance and a culture of 'living together' as well as for the recognition of our different identities on the basis of human rights.

This is a very inclusive paragraph that pays attention to the importance of intercultural dialogue, here given both a religious and a secular worldview dimension. Intercultural dialogue is a prerequisite for development of European core values (Cf. Batelaan, 2003;

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[98] Cf. 6.4, 6.5 and 6.3.1

Wimberley, 2003), but is also necessary for identity reasons which admittedly are quite hard to decipher. The sub-paragraph is in a manner related to *paragraph 1 of the Appendix*:

> The recommendation's aim is to ensure taking into account the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education <u>as a contribution to</u> strengthen human rights, democratic citizenship, participation and the development of competences for intercultural dialogue…

In paragraph 1 the dimension of religions/non-religious convictions is a contribution to the development of competence for intercultural dialogue.

In other words, these two paragraphs together, state that the religious/non-religious convictions dimension is important in order to <u>develop competence</u> for *engaging in* intercultural dialogue (§1), and at the same time constitutes <u>an important dimension</u> *of* intercultural dialogue (§4). Is this a marked change from the draft version of 2007?

Draft version 2007:

> - intercultural dialogue and its religious dimension are an essential precondition for the development of tolerance and a culture of 'living together'.

This version includes the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue as a precondition for the development of tolerance and a culture of living together; a simpler paragraph altogether. Intercultural dialogue is not mentioned in the draft version of paragraph 1, meaning there is no possibility of comparing the two. I do not intend to posit that bringing in the core values of the Council of Europe is inconsistent with the aim of the Recommendation 2008. The revision seems to create an ambiguity regarding the role of religion as an inherent value, as something instrumental in advancing the core values or as something subservient to these. Despite that, there is of course no disadvantage in religion having all of these values. My point is that there ought to be clarity in any policy.

Intrinsic value

Does the Council of Europe appreciate an intrinsic value in religion? Four examples illustrate this.

The first example is from the *Preamble* to the Recommendation (Figure 6.2), referring to the Recommendation on education for democratic citizenship (Council of Europe, 2002), a

central document. The Committee of Ministers states that: 'education for democratic citizenship is a factor for social cohesion, mutual understanding, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue and solidarity', and 'that the implementation of education for democratic citizenship requires recognising and accepting differences…'. This suggests a strong commitment to recognising religion in society, both in terms of accepting differences and in terms of the role given to intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. Agreeing on religions and non-religious convictions as cultural facts is recognition of their value as contributions to social and individual life.[99]

The second example is from *paragraph 5* (Fig. 6.2), which claims that education should develop intercultural competence through:

> - nurturing a sensitivity to the diversity of religions and non-religious convictions as an element contributing to the richness of Europe
> - developing a tolerant attitude and respect for the right to hold a particular belief, attitudes based on the recognition of the inherent dignity and fundamental freedoms of each human being
> - providing opportunity to create spaces for intercultural dialogue in order to prevent religious or cultural divides

All of these sub-paragraphs point to a respect for religion, and the value and right of having a belief.

The issue that needs further attention is the focus on non-religious convictions. All beliefs have equal value and must be recognised, but in this Recommendation it was the previous *ignoring* of religion and the importance of recognising *religion as a cultural fact* in an intercultural educational approach that were promoted in preparatory documents. The former seems to have been lost in the textual introduction of 'non-religious convictions'.

Paragraph 6 (Figure 6.2), the third example, is a similar recognition of the values of religion:

> The following attitudes should be promoted (…):
> > - recognising the place of religions and non-religious convictions in the public sphere (…)
> > - valuing cultural and religious diversity as well as social cohesion
> > - recognising that different religions and humanist traditions have deeply influenced Europe and continue to do so.
> > - accepting that religions and non-religious convictions are often an important part of individual identity.

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[99] See for instance § 3.

These sub-paragraphs seem to be strong arguments by the Council for the value and relevance of religion in an intercultural education.[100]

The last example is from the Explanatory Memorandum (Figure 6.3). This document is thorough in explaining why religions and non-religious convictions are important in an intercultural education approach.

Paragraph 36 (EM) on teaching aspects says:

> A very important consideration is that of safe space in which pupil self-expression and dialogue can take place. This is linked with pedagogical techniques of simulation and distancing that help create such a space; and with the concept of an education about religion that consists of "learning about religion" and "learning from religion.

It seems fair to argue that the Council does not want any learning from religion unless there is some inherent value in religion. This paragraph was expanded from to the draft version, to include advice on techniques and concepts. Note too that this paragraph does not say anything about non-religious convictions.

There cannot be any doubt that the Council of Europe sees knowledge of convictions or worldviews as an important contribution to dialogue, 'living together' and core values. The exchange of 'religion' for 'religions and non-religious convictions' in many but not all places leaves an uncertainty regarding how the Council views religions in particular. I use the word 'religions' consciously here, because I cannot see that there has ever been much debate over the contribution of 'non-religious convictions' previously in the Council's existence.

6.7. Supplementary sources

In this section the exploration moves away from the Recommendation and to the supplementary material mentioned in chapter 5. This is done in order to gain more information on discourses and understanding of the production process based on the material available. I will search for more light on the intentions of the Council in making the Recommendation. Did the intentions 'survive' the production process? I want to explore how meanings in communicating religion were applied in the supplementary material. Examples

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[100] Cf. 6.3 and 6.6 for more on this paragraph

from the Recommendation will be used where relevant to help explain certain points of interest. I will follow the same structure as in 6.2 to 6.7.

6.7.1 From religion to religions and non-religious convictions

The change from 'religion' to 'religions and non-religious convictions' happened sometime in the period between June and October 2008. This means that the aspect of 'non-religious' was not present in the Oslo Conference from 2004 (Council of Europe, 2004a) when the theoretical premises were established. The request for a title change to include 'non-religious convictions' came too late for this aspect to be included in the *Reference book for schools* (Council of Europe 2007d), a practical guide for teachers.[101]

During the debate on the Recommendation, delegates mentioned the need to view it in relation to other developments in the Council such as the White Paper on intercultural dialogue in May 2008 (Council of Europe, 2008c) and the Exchange on the Religious Dimension of intercultural dialogue in April 2008 (Council of Europe 2008d) (cf. 6.1.). The White Paper has one mention of the phrase 'religions and non-religious convictions': 'An appreciation of our diverse cultural background should include knowledge and understanding of the major world religions and non-religious convictions and their role in society' (Council of Europe, 2008c p.44). The White Paper is concerned with the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue and, as the Recommendation suggests, intercultural dialogue is an important part of intercultural education. The paper raises inter-religious dialogue as necessary, including those with non-religious beliefs, and states that religions could elevate and enhance dialogue.[102]

The report from the Exchange conference of 2008 (Council of Europe, 2008d) uses expressions such as 'the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue', 'teaching religious and convictional facts' and 'religion and belief', and it seems that these are suitable for their purpose. Theirs is an exchange between the Council of Europe, religious communities and humanist organisations[103]. Given the inclusive definition of religion in the draft version,

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[101] Email correspondence with Robert Jackson 18 October 2013
[102] Cf. also the San Marino Declaration from 2007.
[103] Ilya Subbotin, Political Advisor, CoE, informed me in an email of 4 December 2012 that: 'In all CoE documents "Religious dimension" is understood as the one involving humanists and non-believers. Their organizations are always represented at the Annual exchanges, etc. etc. At the same time, the launch of this

referring to these other documents as a reason for introducing 'non-religious convictions' may be argued.

Gabriele Mazza, former Director of Education of the Council of Europe, explained in a conversation I had with him[104] that the climate for turning the attention to 'religion as a cultural phenomenon' in education, was favourable when the project was established. While the events of September 2001 were a major contributive factor, the impetus was driven more by earlier efforts to prevent racism and promote democratic citizenship through human rights and intercultural education. There was no overall intercultural strategy or normative text to deal specifically with religious diversity, and no existing activities covered the issues of religion in education (Council of Europe, 2002[105];Wimberley, 2003 p.205). Delegates made it very clear when discussing the draft in 2007 that non-religious values and beliefs had to be explicitly included in both the title and the text of the Recommendation, reflecting the different cultural and historical backgrounds of member states.

6.7.2. Religion and religious dimension: 'Beliefs', 'Faith' and 'Conviction'

In order to widen the exploration of how different actors in the production process of the Recommendation make meaning of religion, I have employed the *Reference Book* of 2007. It was developed by a group of professionals, drawn from the experts present at the Oslo Conference[106] (Jackson, 2007 p.14[107]). The book was meant to be of practical help to those who deal with religious diversity in European schools (Keast, 2007/ Council of Europe 2007d p.15). Some of the authors in this book were part of the expert group who wrote the proposal for the Recommendation, and it is reasonable to assume that the understanding of religion in the *Reference Book* would also be found in the Recommendation of 2008. It should be mentioned however that this book was written before the changes were made to the Recommendation. The book has a glossary at the back which makes interesting reading. The introduction to this glossary states:

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religious dimension also meant the creation of first ever format for dialogue between CoE and religions understood in traditional sense.'

[104] Telephone conversation with Gabriele Mazza, 3 April 2013

[105] Jackson (2007 p.37)

[106] The Oslo Conference in June 2004 was aimed at working out recommendations and models of good practice regarding the religious dimension of intercultural education. This document is an important one in the process of intercultural education and its religious dimension. The project description (Council of Europe 2004d) highlights the analysis of religion as a 'cultural phenomenon', but the proceedings report touches upon this only in a more indirect fashion.

[107] A revised version of this article also published in Engebretson et al 2010

Some of the language used in this book might be new to some readers and/or teachers and so the authors decided to include this short glossary of terms to help them better understand the wider context. They should not be taken to be the official definitions of the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 2007d p.199)[108]

In the glossary '**religion**' is defined as:

Generally an approach to life and the world based on a concept of the ultimate, transcendent, God or gods; specifically a system of beliefs, expression and practice, such as teaching, worship and lifestyle often associated with a revelation (Council of Europe, 2007d p.204).

This is a definition that shows a transcendent or a theistic belief system. I would also like to draw attention to the terms '**Beliefs**: propositions held as true by individuals and groups but not provable by evidence or reason beyond doubt; usually associated with a system of religious beliefs or philosophy' (Council of Europe, 2007d p.199), '**Conviction**: a strongly held opinion that may be religious or non-religious in character' (Council of Europe, 2007d p.199) and '**Faith**: an attitude of belief or trust, usually religious, and hence also used as an alternative for religion or religious tradition' (Council of Europe, 2007d p.201).

I want to look at these concepts, which in many ways are closely connected to religion, and study how they are used in the text. I will give an example from the Explanatory Memorandum (Figure 6.3) of an unclear position.

Paragraph 38 (EM), Final version 2008:

Another important point is empathy, which is not a state of mind but a dynamic mental and emotional stimulus. Empathy helps us to gain better knowledge of others, better understanding of ourselves and improve our relationship with others. It can therefore make a key contribution to resolving intercultural problems, particularly religious and faith-related ones.

In the Recommendation of 2008, religion is defined as a cultural phenomenon. The concept includes non-religious convictions. One the one hand this may mean that in this paragraph 'religious' also refers to 'non-religious' since 'faith-related' obviously refers to religious worldviews. On the other hand, in paragraphs where non-religious convictions are seen as vital, the term has often been changed to 'religious and non-religious convictions'. This has not happened here. In that case, maybe the phrase simply means that there are no intercultural problems with non-religious convictions, only with religious and religious tradition-related

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[108] This kind of reservation on official definitions/policies is seen in many CoE reports.

ones (cf. definition of Faith). Compared with the draft version below, the final version displays that a slight revision has taken place.

Paragraph 35 (EM), Draft version 2007:

> Another important point is empathy, which is not a state of mind but a dynamic mental and emotional stimulus. Empathy helps us to gain better knowledge of others, better understanding of ourselves and improve our relationships with others. It can therefore make a key contribution to resolving intercultural problems, particularly <u>religious ones</u>.

The draft version has a simpler way of stating the presumed issue; that empathy is a good grounding for contributing to resolving intercultural problems, and that 'religious' is a signifier of many such problems.

Is there a difference between 'religious' and 'religious and faith-related'? Is this just a fine-tuned revision or does the alteration have a deeper conceptual meaning? As seen in the glossary, 'faith' is usually religious, and is also used as an alternative for religion or religious tradition. Pieter Batelaan writes about empathy in his conceptual framework paper (2003). He says that 'the reason religion needs to be studied is that dialogue requires empathy and empathy requires knowledge' (2003 p.9). This suggests that there is no reason for the alteration in paragraph 38, or at least none relating to 'non-religious convictions'.

Another term that has been altered in the revision is 'belief'. Let us explore how this term is used in the Recommendation in the light of the supplementary material. 'Belief' seems to have been replaced with 'convictions' in most cases, but not all.[109] This seems reasonable and is probably a reflection on the intention to include secular worldviews in the Recommendation.[110] As seen above 'belief' *can* be associated with a system of philosophy, but 'convictions' are arguable a more common description of non-religious views. It must be said that both these concepts reflect opinions or non-provable propositions and not 'provable truth' (Council of Europe, 2007d p.199). The 'non-religious' understanding of 'belief' is used in the following example from the Explanatory Memorandum (cf. Figure 6.3).

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[109] Se for instance §18 (EM) where both are used
[110] See for instance §§ 22,24,25 (EM)

In 'Comments on key concepts', *Paragraph 17*, we see:

> …This concept also allows the scope of religion to <u>include humanist view points or other philosophical and moral convictions</u>. This is particularly important in Europe where there are many people (and children) <u>who do not have traditional religious, theistic beliefs, but yet have beliefs and values.</u>

As seen, 'belief' in this paragraph in the Recommendation is used to denote both 'theistic beliefs' and 'nontheistic beliefs'. The use of 'belief' in the Recommendation seems to be consistent with the glossary definition, but as I mentioned, it has been exchanged for 'conviction' a number of times.

Exploring differing definitions in the supplementary material, we see that in the glossary that is intended for practitioners (Council of Europe, 2007d p.199), 'religion' is 'based on the concept of the ultimate, transcendent God or gods'. 'Religion' in the Memorandum is defined as 'including humanist view points or other philosophical and moral convictions'.[111] 'Conviction', as seen in the beginning of this subsection, was defined as an opinion that might be religious or non-religious. This view is reflected in the Memorandum. 'Humanist' is also defined in the glossary: 'a view (or person holding that view) that meaning and purpose in life is the result of human rationality: <u>there is no supernatural dimension to life</u>' (Council of Europe, 2007d p.201). A 'humanist' view does not agree with a 'supernatural dimension' in life, but is in the Recommendation part of a concept description that includes 'an embodiment of revealed truth' (Paragraph 17 (EM)).

Read separately, these sources make sense but a problem may occur when a practitioner reading the Recommendation wants to check the meaning of a word in the glossary in the *Reference Book*. The change from 'religion' to 'religions and non-religious convictions' happened after the book was produced, but the inclusive definition of religion was present both in the draft version of 2007 and the final, published version of 2008. As shown above, this may cause uncertainty.

The understanding of the concept 'religious dimension' was discussed at the Conference in Oslo 2004 on 'The religious dimension of intercultural education'. Should it include or exclude the experiences of those who hold moral and philosophical convictions that are not based on religious belief'. The question was asked whether it was better to use the term

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[111] § 17 (EM)

dimension convictionelle that is used in Canada. This concept includes traditions rooted in religious and secular traditions (Eidsvåg, 2004 pp.7-8). The relation between the religious dimension and the moral/philosophical dimension was underlined. 'Some participants (especially those from France) focused on the need to keep these two dimensions separate while others underlined the interaction between them.' (Eidsvåg, 2004 p.7). Different historical experiences in the various European countries could be one of the explanations for the different approaches and attitudes to religious education and education about religion. At this Conference, the consensus, according to Inge Eidsvåg (general rapporteur), was 'that the term "religious dimension in intercultural education" is broad enough to make sense in very different contexts, and that it should be mediated according to specific needs' (Council of Europe, 2004a p.10).[112]

Micheline Rey von-Allmen, a participant at the Conference, writes about the religious dimension in her conference essay. She argues the distinction between 'the religious dimension of intercultural education', and 'the intercultural dimension of religious education'. Her point is that intercultural education provides knowledge of the several dimensions, including a religious one, which constitutes human culture (Rey-von Allmen, 2004 p.67). Her writing on the intercultural dimension mainly concerns inter-religious dialogue. In Rey-von Allmen's way of thinking, the religious dimension is a dimension of human culture and as such of interest to the dimension of intercultural education. Further she says that intercultural education ought to provide knowledge of these dimensions of a human culture that is 'plural and yet shared' (Rey von-Allmen 2004a: 67). Towards the end of the Conference, Rey-von Allmen asked the project group whether 'The Religious and Humanist Dimension of Intercultural Education' might be a better project title, steering the project towards a different approach (Rey von-Allmen, 2004 p.63n1).

Apart from this note, I cannot find any more specific mention of a possible name change at this stage. It is extremely interesting if, as this report by Eidsvåg claims, that the 'religious dimension in intercultural education' may be defined broadly enough as to be suitable for a number of different contexts. Robert Jackson expresses a similar view: 'It will be up to policy makers and practitioners and others in member states to interpret the language of the

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[112] See also 6.7.1.

recommendation for their own needs'.[113] He refers to the understanding of 'religious dimension' that may vary even within countries. This is based on the fact that 'different countries have different histories of religion and state, different ethnic compositions etc. and will need to tailor the Recommendation to their needs'.[114] May we conclude, then, that the Council of Europe cannot have one voice in defining 'religious dimension'? This question can be compared with the discussion on what kind of religious education should be available in Europe. The recommendation from the working group was that, regardless of the national systems, education about religious and philosophical diversity must be a part of intercultural education irrespective of how it is included in the curriculum (Council of Europe, 2008a).

6.7.3. Religion as a cultural fact

The phrase 'religion is considered a cultural fact' (*un fait culturel*) was originally coined by the French Ministry of Education (Batelaan, 2003). This was a 'pragmatic recognition that the fact of the presence of religions in society was the lowest common denominator with which all European states could work in an educational context' (Jackson, 2010 p.1133). Any rejection of this would have meant a cancellation of the project (Jackson, 2010 p.1133). The climate for introducing religion as a cultural phenomenon was favourable in a Europe that had seen the growth of racist acts and expressions of religious extremism and fundamentalism. This needed to be countered with a more balanced understanding of the nature of the phenomenon of religious and non-faith-based values and world views, seen from an intercultural perspective..[115]

Peter Batelaan presented a Conceptual Framework paper for discussion in a Bureau- meeting of the CDED in Strasbourg on 2 and 3 June 2003 (2003) in the initial phase of the religious diversity project. He brought up the issue of 'religion as a cultural fact'. His point was that Europe could not ignore the fundamental importance of the values that groups and individuals embrace. The 'other' person's spiritual and intellectual motives must be taken seriously if there is to be a 'learning to live together' strategy. (Batelaan, 2003 pp.1-2). The 'learning to live together' phrase originates in the UNESCO report by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century (Delors, 1996). The phrases 'embracing of values' and 'spiritual and intellectual motives' are core terms, relevant for the purpose of

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[113] Email correspondence with Robert Jackson 4 April 2013
[114] Email correspondence with Robert Jackson 15 April 2013
[115] Telephone conversation with Gabriele Mazza 3 April 2013

understanding 'religion as a cultural fact'. I cannot see anything here that prevents a generic understanding of religion that includes non-religious convictions.

Micheline Milot describes religion as a cultural phenomenon in the *Reference Book* of 2007 (Council of Europe, 2007d). She reflects on the traces left in society of a religious heritage and the failure of secularisation to remove this. Symbols and values are seen out as a part of a collective memory. She ponders on the many people claiming to belong to a religion without being practicing members. Religious revival and also new religious movements are underlined. Specifically she mentions that religious revival must be seen as 'an acculturation of the ways in which human experience is imbued with a sacred dimension'. Therefore, she claims, does a definition of religion go beyond a concept based on the great faiths (Milot, 2007 pp.19-20). I would posit that this is a different perspective on 'religion as a cultural fact' from the ones seen previously. She recognises traces left in culture of religions and on the new expressions of religiosity seen in contemporary society. There is no emphasis on non-religious or intellectual dimensions.

This view is in accordance with that of one of the experts present at the Oslo Conference, Heid Leganger-Krogstad. Her doctoral dissertation argues for deep cultural differences in societies grounded in religion and present in contemporary society.[116] Religion seen as a deep structure in minds and cultures is described in the introduction of the Oslo Conference proceedings report (Eidsvåg, 2004 p.8). *The Reference Book* was written with 'religion as a dimension of intercultural education' as a point of departure.[117] The above seems to indicate that there are different views on the relation between religion and culture in the explored supplementary sources (Cf. Council of Europe, 2007d).

During the preparation of 'the White Paper on Intercultural dialogue', that was published in 2008, a consultation document was sent out to stakeholders by the Committee of Ministers (Council of Europe 2007e). This document contains a number of definitions and clarifications on concepts used by the Council of Europe.

> In the international debate, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue are sometimes seen as two separate though interrelated issues: whereas others like the Council of Europe stress that religious beliefs and traditions – like agnostic, atheist or secularist convictions – are one dimension of culture.

[116] Conversation with Leganger-Krogstad, 4 April .2013
[117] Email correspondence with Robert Jackson 18 October 2012

This understanding is in line with the text in the Recommendation but not with preparatory documents, which use 'religion' as a cultural fact. Ideas enshrined in the White Paper were incorporated in the Recommendation draft prepared by a group of scholars in the fields of religious education and intercultural education. One the one hand, the passage quoted above may well have been one of these ideas. On the other hand there is, to my knowledge, no mention of this understanding in the actual published White Paper. It is therefore difficult to draw a conclusion about the Council's stance.

One of the scholars engaged in the process of making this Recommendation, Robert Jackson, has discussed 'religion as a cultural fact' in an essay about European institutions and the contributions of studies of religious diversity to education for democratic citizenship (2007).[118] He underlines that it is politicians and civil servants who are responsible for the generic view of religion in the Council of Europe. Seeing 'religion' as a cultural fact ensures the impartial position that is essential for a formal political institution (Jackson, 2007 p. 44). Jackson claims that dealing with religion at the level of culture is a procedural strategy. Religion has been seen as a difficult problem in European discussions and in schools (Jackson 2007 p. 44). It is important to note the difference between faith-based religious education (nurture of faith) and learning about and from religions (the religious study approach). Keeping the stance of the Council of Europe impartial reduces the risk of its policies being unduly influenced by religious organisations (Jackson 2007, p.44). This is not the same as remaining distant from these organisations. On the contrary, he says, the Volga Forum Declaration welcomes 'an open, transparent and regular dialogue with religious organisations' (Volga Forum Declaration, final Document, Paragraph 6, September 2006)[119] (Jackson, 2007 p.44). This stance equally reduces the risk of discussions being overly influenced by secular thinking. Jackson is concerned that policies are not reducing religion to *just* culture; that there is no other way religion can be interpreted. Consequently, he wants to underline the observations made in classroom practice that 'many religious people believe their convictions to be true' (Jackson, 2007 pp. 44 and 44n31).

I think it is fair to say that in the documents I have explored, the intention of the Council of Europe was to use the phrase 'religion as a cultural fact' to draw attention to a contemporary

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[118] A revised version of this article was also published in Engebretson et al Eds. (2010)
[119] The International Conference on Dialogue of Cultures and Inter-Faith Co-operation, Nizhniy Novgorod September 2006

phenomenon while keeping an impartial stance towards specific worldviews or life orientations. This phenomenon affects society both individually and socially, and is as such a legitimate concern for public policy. The Council has kept a very open and inclusive view on religion, and this is reflected in its view on religion as a cultural fact. Given this background I find it difficult to see the reason for the change from the generic view to the particular view in the Recommendation 2008.

6.7.4. Religion in the public sphere

The understanding of religion as a cultural fact is itself an indication of the Council of Europe's view on 'religion in the public sphere'. I will now specifically explore preparatory documents to identify more views on the role that the Council believes religion plays in the public domain.

In Batelaan's paper (2003), the dilemmas raised in 6.5 of the role of religion in the public sphere may find an explanation. He writes that religion belongs *de facto* to the private domain in Western democratic societies. Values and principles that rule people's behaviour in public might be grounded in religion, and he refers here specifically to people who 'subscribe to principles of political parties such as Christian Democratic parties' (Batelaan, 2003 p.10). These principles must, he claims, be subservient to 'the constitution and international legislation such as the ECHR'[120] (Batelaan, 2003 p.10). He goes on to say that when religious motivation 'lead to suspicion, exclusion or violence' they are part of the public sphere and must be addressed in school (Batelaan, 2003 p. 10). This could be a background for the argument in the Recommendation on compartmentalisation of behaviour.

The view that was argued in the draft version was that *information and knowledge* about religions and philosophies is part of the public sphere and should be taught.
Batelaan later in his paper argues for the view that 'religious, spiritual and philosophical knowledge' is part of the public domain in contrast to religious instruction, which belongs in the private. The former should be taught as a contribution to religious tolerance (Batelaan, 2003:10).

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[120] European Convention on Human Rights

It seems to me that paragraph 4 as discussed in 6.5 has amended the view on the role of religion in the public sphere by going from one of Batelaan's arguments to another. Chapter 1 in the *Reference Book for schools* (2007) describes how the religious dimension is visible in practice in the public sphere. There are mentions of identity-based claims, manifestations of the distinctive features of a religion in the public arena, stances taken, conflicts of standards and the wide variety of convictions, values and worldviews (Milot, 2007 p.20). The personal and social functions of religious beliefs continue to play a role in the public sphere (Milot, 2007 p.21). Milot stresses the importance of teaching students tolerance and understanding toward attitudes different from their own, if aims of social cohesion and living together are to be achieved. This is how the religious dimension of education is to be taken into account in intercultural education (Milot, 2007 p.22). This is consistent with how the Recommendation draft of 2007 explains religion in education and the public sphere. The barrier to the communicative consistency of the Recommendation 2008 is of course that this book does not contain anything about non-religious convictions in the public sphere.

'Citizens must "live together" despite their moral and religious differences' (Milot, 2007 p.24). This is the point of departure for the Council in its policy on intercultural education and democratic citizenship. What are the aims of the 'religious dimension' included in this intercultural education? The *Reference Book* cites the goals of tolerance, reciprocity and civic-mindedness. The last is something I discussed in 6.5. How is the religious dimension related to civic responsibility? Milot writes that the 'absolute nature of religious declarations can constitute an obstacle to respect for others and lead to unequal treatment of those who do not share those beliefs' (2007 p.27). She points to two issues here. The first is the capacity to stand back, with the aim of the developing a cognitive ability. The second is moderation in the public expression of identity (cf. 6.5). She claims that individuals must adopt an inner code of public life so that they can establish respectful and collaborative relationships with others (Milot, 2007 p.28). This might be interpreted as a limiting the expression of the religious in the public domain, but it could also be interpreted as a general appreciation of moderation by all groups.

As a final search into the Council of Europe's view on religion in the public sphere I will look at a recommendation from the Parliamentary Assembly on 'State, religion, secularity and human rights' (Council of Europe, 2007b). In paragraph 1 this recommendation states that:

> Organised religions [as such] are part and parcel of society and must therefore be considered as institutions set up by and involving citizens who have the right to freedom of religion, but also as organisations that are part of civil society, with all its potential for providing guidance on ethical and civic issues, which have a role to play in the national community, be it religious or secular.

Paragraph 24.1 in this political document:

> recommends that the Committee of Ministers encourage the member states to promote the initial and in-service training for teachers with a view to the objective, balanced teaching of religions as they are today and of religions in history, and to require human rights training for all religious leaders, in particular those with an educational role in contact with young people.

This confirms the Council of Europe's positive view on religion in the public civil sphere and in schools[121] and I note that again there is no reference to non-religious convictions in the public sphere.

6.7.5. Values and Aims

When starting the project on religious diversity and of making this Recommendation, member states felt the need to address issues of religious diversity. The focus was to be on education and the process of integration, and this included promotion of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. The goal of the religious diversity project was to provide policy guidelines, ideas and criteria as well as practical suggestions in order to contribute to the overall goal of intercultural education: learning to live together (Batelaan, 2003).

Religion is seen as a major dimension of cultural diversity but has been avoided because of 'traditions of not interfering' and the neutrality of the Council (Wimberley, 2003 p.200). James Wimberley[122] wrote an article on the new initiative by the Council of Europe in the journal *Prospects* in 2003. The events of September 2001 were seen as a wake-up call to deal with Europe's own problems of poor community relations: mutual distrust, intolerance, racist incidents and discrimination. The Council's response was to intensify the work on promoting intercultural understanding and in particular the specific issues that arose concerning religion (Wimberley, 2003 p.201). Wimberley raises issues to do with recognising religion, and how

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[121] See chapter 7 for a discussion of this distinction
[122] James Wimberley is former Head of Educational Policies and European Dimension Division in the Directorate of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education, Directorate General IV, Council of Europe

religion is bound up in education with other dimensions of culture and personality (Wimberley, 2003 p.206):

- the personal and emotional character of religious orientation (whether belief or unbelief) and its direct connection to the child's sense of self and self worth (…)
- the normative essence of religion that binds it up tightly with questions of right and wrong, considering values comprehensively and as an integral part of the self (…)
- the embedding of religion in the cultural heritage (…)
- the embedding of religious affiliation in the society in which the child, the child's family and the school must make their way. (…)

Wimberley opines that the above can be read in support of different positions. Some educators would cite them as opposing a specific curriculum. Wimberley thinks they 'illustrate the important ways in which religion in school is different from language, citizenship or history, and so constitutes a specific topic of inquiry, whether or not it is embodied in a distinct curriculum.' (Wimberley, 2003 p.207). He predicted that the relative weight of distinctive and generic approaches to interculturalism would be the main theoretical issue that the project would address and that practical issues would relate to identifying common issues and solutions in curriculum, teacher training and school management (Wimberley, 2003 p.207).

The Council appears to be aware of the inherent value of religion for individuals and for society. Again, there does not seem to be much concern with non-religious convictions, although there would be no difficulty extending Wimberley's opinions to other core beliefs and commitments (Maclure and Taylor, 2011). Peter Schreiner was concerned for the 'danger of a functionalized perception of religion and religious communities' (Schreiner, 2012 p.351). I believe that the Council of Europe would not have seen religion as a contribution to the aim of social cohesion, democracy and 'living together' if it did not see an intrinsic value in religion. It is those values that the Council wants to promote. Nonetheless there has been, as I view the Recommendation, a strengthening of the instrumental role of worldviews in promoting core values of Europe in the text. Whether that means a lessening of the recognition of the value of worldviews is difficult to judge in this study.

The CDED's[123] project description of the Conference on the Religious Dimension of Intercultural Education in Oslo in 2004 says in the introduction that the ability to interact

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[123] Steering Committee for Education

productively in a multicultural context is something that must be acquired. This means that the management of religious diversity within a democratic framework must be included in the context of intercultural dialogue and education for democratic citizenship (Council of Europe, 2004c). It also claims 'the religious dimension of intercultural education is linked to the political motivation of promoting intercultural dialogue as a means of strengthening democracy in Europe' (Council of Europe, 2004c). I would also like to mention the acknowledgement by the Ministers of Education (from the Athens standing conference in 2003) of the contribution the religious diversity project will make 'to the objective of seeking to build understanding of the European dimension of education in the context of globalisation, by introducing respect for human rights and diversity' (Council of Europe, 2004c p. 5; cf. also Schreiner, 2012 on this). As seen, the focus is on the significant role of religion, religious diversity and social challenges that may relate to religion. Non-religious convictions are not considered.

6.8. Intentions and revisions

Two main findings have understandings of 'religion' at their core. These are the view of religion as a generic or particular concept, and specifically the change from 'religion' to 'religions and non-religious convictions', and the implications of 'religion (or religions and non-religious convictions) as cultural fact(s). There is also, in my view, a strengthening of the instrumental aim of religion in education.

The academic or professional experts as one 'cultural group' have a generic view of religion and religious dimensions, and this is seen in their consistent view of what religion is and how to deal with this dimension of intercultural education in the draft version of the Recommendation in 2007. The path from the proposal to final version adoption in 2008 has been shown in Figure 6.1 and described in 6.1. The changes that have been made have been presented in 6.2 to 6.7 and informed additionally in 6.7. How and why the revisions happened will be discussed in the following.
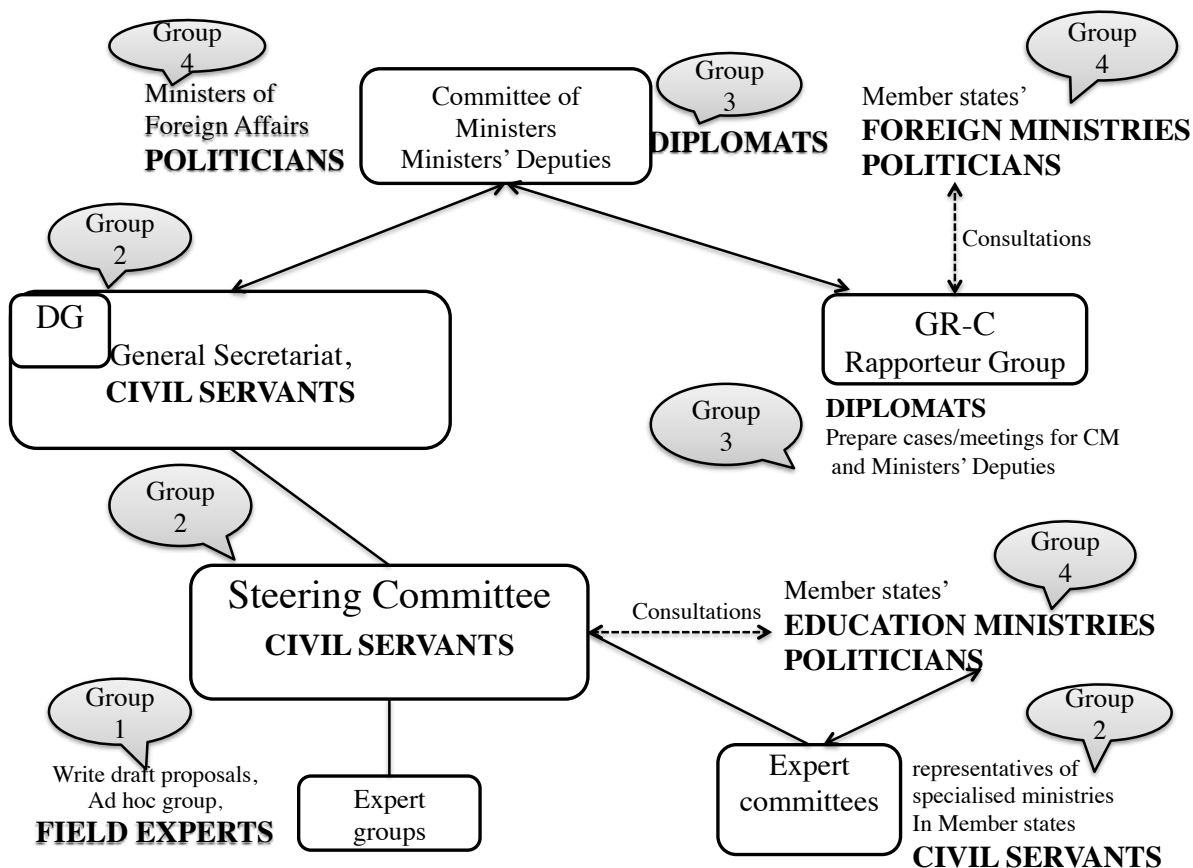
Figure 6.4. Actors in the Recommendation revision
Source: Author's model based on information from G. Mandt, I. Subbotin and K. Hefre (2012-13) The groups refer to description in 5.4: Actors in the material.

As seen in Figure 6.4 different actors or writers have been involved in the revision process. The *field experts or scholars* writing the proposal grounded the understanding of 'religion' generically. This is in part because of the Council of Europe's decision to view 'religion' as a cultural fact, a generic way of looking at religion (Jackson, 2007 p. 44; see also the discussion in the previous section, 6.4). The intention behind this standpoint is partly to maintain the Council's impartial position regarding religion and partly seen as a pragmatic way of reaching a lowest common denominator with which all member states could work (Jackson, 2007 p.37).

Politicians and civil servants favoured the generic perspective (Jackson, 2007 p.44) in the initial talks on 'the religious dimension of intercultural education', which takes a cultural view on religion. As mentioned under 6.2, 'religion' as a generic concept can be defined in many ways (Smith, 1998 p.281). The generic understanding used by politicians and civil

servants in this project led to their seeing religion as a cultural fact, 'to be dealt with at the level of culture – within intercultural education' (Jackson, 2007 p. 44). Later in the production process, during the debate over the draft version, some *diplomats/politicians* interestingly, wanted to replace the generic view with a particular view of religions and include non-religious convictions. Their possible intentions could include: satisfying member states with no tradition of education about religion in school, appeasing member states with an inclusive Religious Education subject, underscoring the teaching about religion and convictional facts, and avoiding being seen as partial in the question of religion. This information on intent is gleaned from many sources, including reports and synopses from GR-C, and conversations with individuals central to the process.

The generic understanding on the part of the academics who wrote the Recommendation proposal entailed a very inclusive definition of religion and religious dimension, as I have shown in 6.2 and 6.3. Religion, in this understanding, encompasses both theistic and secular worldviews, including philosophical views. Attention to non-religious convictions were in other words, already included in the religious dimension of intercultural education. This was not explicit enough for the politicians and diplomats involved in the revisions of the Recommendation, as a conversation with Mazza[124] indicates. The intention of including 'non-religious convictions' was very firm, notwithstanding the inclusive definition of religion used in the Recommendation.

At the political level, the Foreign Ministers, the Education Ministers and the politicians of the Parliamentary Assembly are involved directly through the annual Committee of Ministers' deliberations, the three-yearly ministerial conferences and the regular work done by elected politicians in the body of the Parliamentary Assembly. Indirectly, as seen in Figure.6.4 politicians were involved in the process of making the Recommendation through regular consultations between the Steering Committee for Education and the Ministry of Education in member states. Diplomats and politicians were indirectly involved through consultations between the GR-C Rapporteur group (members in this group are Permanent or Deputy permanent diplomatic representatives of member states) and foreign ministries of member states. I believe that this contact, mediated between individuals with a generally lay view (or folk view, to use Spradley's term (1979)), would not appreciate the boundary set for religion

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[124] Conversation with Gabriele Mazza, former Director of Education, CoE, 3 April2013

by the academics who wrote the proposal that was subsequently turned into official Council terms by the Secretariat (civil servants).

A large number of parties, or groups, were involved in this Recommendation and the time of the production phase was long (approximately a year and a half), but according to Gabriele Mazza[125] this is not exceptional for recommendations. Most of the amendments registered in this study happened in the autumn of 2008. Most of the objections, from information obtained in this study, occurred in the GR-C group consisting of diplomats from member states' delegations, who conferred with Ministries of Foreign Affairs in member states.

A different form of revision appears in relation to translation issues. The concepts of 'religion', 'religious dimension' and 'religious education' are contested both among different groups and in different languages. These kinds of amendments have not been possible for me to verify. The consequence of the alterations has in my view led to a Recommendation unclear in its communication. I would argue that some of these changes have led to conceptually new meanings, whereas others seem to be fine-tunings of text (cf. analysis in 6.2 to 6.7).

6.9. Concluding remarks

The Recommendation of 2008 and its Explanatory Memorandum ought, in my view, to be read as a single document. The documents are published as a single item (Council of Europe, 2009), and a reading of the two combined enables the reader to register all the nuances in the discussion about religion in state schools and society, and also to find rationale and defence for the same. A combined reading of the Recommendation and Explanatory Memorandum divulges textual tensions. The definition of religion is very wide, and the justification for this is presented clearly in the memorandum. Some, especially from a lay, or non-professional field, may even consider that the boundary for what may be called religion is overstepped. These terminological issues have to be balanced against two others. The first is the situation of Religious Education in Europe. As we have seen, this is varied, and the complexity of implementing the intentions of the Recommendation in such a landscape can be overwhelming. The second is the politicians and diplomats involved in the European policy

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[125] Telephone conversation with Gabriele Mazza 3 April 2013

field. They come from states with different views on religion in private and public spheres, and on the relationship between religion and Freedom of Religion and Belief, for instance.

It seems fair to suggest that the textual ambiguities in the Appendix are repeated in the Memorandum, or manifested in the Memorandum, with certain exceptions. In other words, the unclearness in paragraphs is repeated in the latter, or manifest as ambiguous because of existing text that has not been changed. The main tension in my view is caused by the definition of the concept of religion, mentioned earlier. The working group maintained that a definition of religion that also included humanist, philosophical and agnostic worldviews was the only viable solution to explain the usefulness of the dimension of religion in intercultural education. Politicians and civil servants also agreed on this (Jackson, 2007 p.44). The belief derives from the principle that 'religion is at least a cultural phenomenon' (Memorandum, paragraph 17), first posited by the French Ministry of Education (Batelaan, 2003). In paragraph 17:

> This concept also allows the scope of religion to include humanist viewpoints or other philosophical and moral convictions. This is particularly important in Europe where there are many people (and children) who do not have traditional religious, theistic beliefs, but yet have beliefs and values.

This was the view of religion maintained all the way through the draft version and the final version. Nonetheless, the opinion of many delegates was that 'non-religious convictions' should be included in the text and in the title of the recommendation.

This amendment led first to a linguistic change in how the dimension related to intercultural education. From being a part of intercultural education it adopted an embedded position. Second, when 'religion' was exchanged for 'religions and non-religious convictions' some unclear paragraphs resulted. This also happened with the inclusion of 'non-religious convictions' as cultural facts. This inclusion seemed to alter conceptually the expression 'religion as a cultural fact or phenomenon'. The recommendation suggests that religions and non-religious convictions contribute to social and individual life. Again, the premise is that religion is present in society. I posit that the expression 'religions and non-religious convictions' as cultural facts' makes the statement too particular. A similar statement for other cultural facts would be that 'all kinds of languages' contribute to social and individual life or 'history from all countries' contributes. The meaning of the term has to be a generic one, but it seems that 'religion' has met with opposition, despite the inclusive definition that it

enjoyed in the draft version. This could mean that the definition is not understood, or is not appreciated. If the latter is the case, it might possibly be better to use a different term, rather than to particularise people's moral convictions.

All of the above suggests how people's values contribute to social and individual life, and the Council of Europe deems this a positive. This is arguably not a new discovery. This statement on values would be equally correct for the contribution of human rights, democracy and solidarity. It suggests, in my opinion that the Council of Europe must have meant that 'religion' in the sense of 'core beliefs'[126] was important in maintaining social cohesion and that it had previously been ignored. In other words, 'religion' was a positive function in society.

On the other hand, Milot's definition is of a more passive, essential kind. She describes 'religion as a cultural fact', traces of different forms such as symbols and values in society, and also how 'religion' acculturates or adapts into new forms in contemporary society. These are important issues, but seem to go in a different direction from what I have described above. This is, however, the only view I find represented in the *Reference Book for schools* (Council of Europe, 2007d). Her view echoes the claims by Leganger-Krogstad (see 3.2) that 'religion' is part of a deeply embedded structure that still affects society (Leganger-Krogstad, 2011).

Reflecting on the implication of this discussion in relation to the applied analytical tools used in the analysis, I would say that the presence of more than one discourse in the Recommendation text seems to be manifested. This suggests diverse 'cultural groups' planting their 'discursive fingerprints' on the production. The overview of the production process indicates that these groups are academics, civil servants, politicians and diplomats (see Figure 6.4. This has produced a certain ambiguity in the communication that the Council of Europe wants to present to its member states. Whether the presence of plural discourses is a result of misunderstandings or compromises reached is difficult to evaluate in this study. If the understanding of 'religion' as a generic term including secular worldviews had been comprehended and/or accepted, the motivation for or the intent behind the changing from 'religion' to 'religions and non-religious convictions' seems unfounded. If the generic

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[126] I use this term in the sense espoused by Maclure and Taylor (2011 p.13) who describe core beliefs and commitments as both secular and religious, but on a deeper level than just preferences.

understanding was rejected, and therefore replaced with the particular 'religions and non-religious convictions', there have been too few replacements of terms, especially in the Explanatory Memorandum which still appears as an advertisement for an inclusive generic 'religion'.

7. Theoretical discussion

The Recommendation that is the focal point of this explorative study is set in a Europe many see as a secularised society. Some view religion as a thoroughly private affair and others see it as re-entering the public sphere. Yet others again say religion never left the public sphere. Learning about or from religion, on its own or in an intercultural approach, is a contested case. This is the scene in a Europe where the Council of Europe has its attention firmly set on the values of Human Rights, Democracy, Rule of Law and Social Cohesion. Since this is the stage where the Recommendation is trying to find its place, I will refer to some of the theoretical contribution on the arguments following the above on the concepts of 'religion', 'religion in the public sphere' and 'secularism'. What are the theoretical discourses on these concepts? One of the main puzzles in the Recommendation was the introduction of 'religions and non-religious convictions', and I will see if any theories anchor this expression. In addition to this, the understanding of religion in the field of education has developed certain understandings that may not be of general usage in other fields. The textual tensions described earlier may have its background in different usages. I will view some theory on this aspect.[127]

7.1. Religion

In any discussion how an organisation like the Council of Europe communicates on religion, and what meaning content this infers, it is necessary to point out that there are a number of ways of talking about religion. The divergence concerns both the features and functions of religion and the boundaries of religion, that is, what do we count as 'religion'. It is my contention that this variety is manifest not just in academic circles but also in folk or lay circles, and between academic and lay understandings of the term. Connected with this is the difference between 'religion' as a generic term and 'religion(s)' as a particular term denoting different religions.[128] The concepts of worldview, faith, belief and conviction, many of which are present in the Recommendation from the Council, are also relevant here. Jonathan Smith claims that:

> 'Religion' is not a native term; it is a term created by scholars for their intellectual purposes and therefore is theirs to define. It is a second-order generic concept that

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[127] To reflect the intercultural approach represented in this study, I want to draw attention to the distinction between theoretical approaches, theoretical ideas and theories. This distinction 'refers to different degrees of generalization and explication' (Stausberg ed., 2009 p.9). The intercultural approach can be seen as related to a body of shared theoretical assumptions or key problems in religious studies. They imply theoretical ideas about religion, but are not necessarily presented as complete theories by single theorists (Stausberg ed., 2009 p.9; see also Stausberg ed., 2009 p.17n22).

[128] See for instance Smith (1998 pp.281-282)

plays the same role in establishing a disciplinary horizon that a concept such as 'language' plays in linguistics or 'culture' plays in anthropology. There can be no disciplined study of religion without such a horizon (1998 pp.281-282).[129]

I have ventured to show in the analysis that Smith's way of looking at religion is one factor in the ambiguity of the Recommendation. The key question is what do individuals in different fields associate with the term religion.

7.1.1. Lay theories

Lay people, not only academics, have theories on 'religion'. They vary across communities and cultures[130] and these lay theories 'are also part of various religious and anti-religious discourses' (Stausberg ed., 2009 p.7). Stausberg underlines however that, even though the basic theorems of lay and academic theories might be the same, there are different requirements for qualifying a theory as academic (2009 p.8).[131] It must be underlined that this is a kind of thinking about theories that does not always penetrate 'everyday life'. In other words, the fact that the differences are on a meta-theoretical level is not a hindrance, but might in fact be an explanation of why misunderstandings develop in 'everyday life'.

Scholars underscore that theories are as much social facts as their objects or subject matter. This means that they are coercive by being 'responsible for the way we think' (Jensen, 2003 p.301). Stausberg draws attention to Tweed (2006) in his introduction to the edited volume *Contemporary theories of religion* (Stausberg ed. 2009). Tweed's discussion on boundaries expands on the rhetorical styles of theories, and the contextual situatedness that (1) gives theories a specific twist, and (2) means they cannot assume a universal position (Tweed, as cited by Stausberg ed., 2009 p.3).

In relation to lay theories I want to concentrate on Thomas A. Tweed's arguments on the definition of religion (2006). He talks of constitutive terms that mark the boundaries of a field of study. As he observes, practitioners do not necessarily define these terms because they know 'how to do' (Tweed, 2006 p.30). In other words, this knowledge can be tacit, as Spradley (1979) would say. Yet, scholars have an obligation to define terms, he says, they have 'a professional duty to be self-conscious in their use of central categories' (Tweed, 2006

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[129] See Stausberg ed. (2009 p.17n36) for a clarification on whether this is purely an academically created term.
[130] See also Stausberg ed. (2009 p17n16).
[131] See also Stausberg ed. (2009 p.17n17).

p.31). Religion, like music, art, and literature, is often thought of as a contested concept and the following quote on music from the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* could in fact just as easily have been applied to 'religion': 'The fact that definers inevitably speak with the language and from the cultural viewpoint of their own societies is a major obstacle' (cited in Tweed, 2006 p.32).

I have used Tweed's argument because it shows how the use of terms seen from a scholar's perspective can collide with a lay perspective of the same term, as discussed in chapter 6. I am in fact forwarding a glimpse into his ideas because of the alterations in the Recommendation; changes that I believe can partly be explained by these observations of theory. It can be argued, for instance, that politicians and diplomats have different conceptions of what 'religion' is and what its boundary is, and therefore read the Recommendation in a very differently from a scholar. This room for misunderstanding is in my view enlarged by unclear and inconsistent passages in the document.

It may be assumed that when lay people think of the term 'religion', four elements are frequently present: belief, rites, morals and institutions. These can be termed the belief dimension, religious practice, the consequential dimension and the institutional mode (Furseth and Repstad, 2003 pp.38-39, my translation). The first three belong in Stark and Glock's presentation of individuals' religiosity (1968), and the last in Sharpe (1983). I contend that none of these modes or dimensions sits well with 'non-religious convictions'. It is important that we recognise that this view arguably is quite common among lay people as among politicians, diplomats and civil servants. I suggest that for these groups the boundary of religion may lie within four elements described above. In other words, these 'cultural groups', to use the terminology from the analysis, will find it hard to include anything secular in the concept of religion. This may be why they wanted to bring in the term 'non-religious convictions'. Generic and particular are not relevant distinctions for these groups; they want in school to include both religious and secular worldviews.

7.1.2. Academic theories

The *particular* use of 'religion(s)' to denote a certain religion or all religions is as discussed in the previous section, quite common in the lay field. The origin of the term springs from the academic field, though. Scholars introduced the concept of 'religion', and used it as a means

of separating what belonged from what did not belong in the realm of 'religion' and 'religions'.[132] Today the term is often used in a *generic* fashion as I have discussed previously in this thesis. The inclusion of secular worldviews in the concept of 'religion' is not commonly found in academic theories, but in the field of 'religion in education' there is a tendency to view religion in this manner. The term 'religious dimension' used by scholars in the educational field implies an inclusive view, meaning that the term encompasses non-religious convictions as well. This is seen at least in the English language sphere (Leganger-Krogstad, 2011). Robert Jackson is a central scholar in the field of religion in education and seems to support an inclusive understanding (Jackson 2007).

One scholar who describes the 'study of religion' in a very informative manner is Ninian Smart. He introduced a definition of 'religion' that does not rely merely on transcendence. In addition, Smart writes about religious and secular worldviews and the need to 'pay attention to all the major forces of belief and feeling that animate our world' (Smart, 1995 p.xi). Smart argues that the English language does not have a term covering both traditional religions and ideologies and suggests using the term 'worldviews'. He uses 'worldviews' to refer to both religion and ideologies and to refer specifically to secular ideologies (Smart, 1995 p.2), and states that the modern study of religion must include secular worldviews. Religion is understood as a worldview too, whereby 'worldview' is defined as 'a system of belief which, through symbols and actions, mobilize the feelings and wills of human beings'.[133] All people have 'a worldview that forms a background to the lives we lead' (Smart, 1995 p.3).

Does Smart really include secular worldviews in 'religion', here? I understand him to say that secular views are included in worldviews *together* with religion. What he *does* claim is that 'the modern study of religion must include secular worldviews (1995 p.2). He raised the question of terminology in *The Phenomenon of Religion* (1978). In English the equivalent of the German word *Wissenschaft* (Science) is not often used and it is therefore easy to use the

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[132] Religion changed along two axes from the fifteenth century to the beginning of the eighteenth century. The shifts in meaning were seen between religion and non-religion, and between one religion and another (Harrison, 1990). The difference between the generic concept of religion and plural religions is significant in this study. See more on this in Beyer (2006 pp. 70-75).

[133] This is the Smart (1983) as cited by Smith: 'Religion, Religions, Religious' (1998 p.281). In addition to this I want to draw attention to what he says in Smart (1995 p.1): 'Human beings do things for the most part because it pays them to do so, or because they fear to do otherwise, or because they believe in doing them. The modern study of religion is about the last of these motives - the system of belief that, through symbols and actions, mobilizes the feelings and wills of human beings. In addition to examining traditional faiths, the modern study of religion also looks at secular symbols and ideologies - at nationalism, Marxism, democracy - which often rival religion and yet in an important sense are themselves religious'.

expression 'the study of religion' or 'religious studies' instead. The pedagogical field uses the term 'Religious Education'. In American universities the term used is [Department of] Religion, with no demands as to the affiliations of its teachers/scholars (1978 pp.11-12). Smart alleges that 'the study of religion' ought to have 'and Atheism etc.' as an appendage. He uses the American word Religion, written with a capital 'R' when he means 'the study of religions' (Smart 1978 pp.11-12). Other scholars may have resorted to the same use of words, creating confusion between the concept of 'religion' and the concept of 'the study of religion'. Smart indicates that 'study of religion' must include secular worldviews, 'and atheism', but because of English terminology, the discrete subject is often simply called 'religion'. To conclude, the scholarly discourse on 'religion in education' or 'study of religions' indicates an inclusion of secular worldviews although sometimes scholars use just 'religion' *in this understanding*.

7.1.3. Reflections on the Recommendation

The above describes the theoretical context of some of the issues in the Recommendation, and I want to reflect on how the discourses in the Recommendation can be seen to harmonise with these theories. The understanding of religion has been central to the thesis. We have seen that Ninian Smart defines worldviews as inclusive of both secular and religious convictions, and that the 'study of religion' includes both. He also states that he uses Religion with a capital R when he means religious studies to separate it from 'religion'. This is how academics in the field of 'the study of religion' view the discrete subject. The 'first and second readers', to use Bryant's terminology (2002) regarding the proposal-writers, were scholars. Hence it is no coincidence that this discourse on 'religion in education' is reflected in the Recommendation.

In the Explanatory Memorandum, 'religion' (not 'religion in education' or 'study of religion') is defined as inclusive of secular worldviews. It may well be that the proposal-writers intended a 'study of religion' understanding in the Recommendation. Possibly, we see here a tacit boundary (Spradley, 1979). 'Education' is then the boundary for the definition of religion as used in the Recommendation by the academic 'cultural group'. The question is whether this understanding was communicated adequately to a lay audience. Discussion of 'religion' *per se,* with no explaining of meaning, ought to be done carefully in policy documents whose assumed readership is lay. It can be argued that this readership (which is also part of the revision process) of civil servants, politicians and diplomats will generally

understand religion to include only religious worldviews. Secular worldviews would be outside the boundary of a lay discourse on 'religion'. This can be a situation ripe for misunderstanding. Some groups might be familiar with Ninian Smart's theory, and recognise this in the text; for others, 'religion' will be read as 'learning religion' or at best 'learning about religions'. The discourses criss-cross each other's territory, using the same terms but conveying different meanings. This is shown by a discourse on 'religions and non-religious convictions' (a particular perspective) interspaced with the generic view throughout the Recommendation, but especially in the Explanatory Memorandum. Examples of this are shown in the analysis in Chapter 6. This is why it is important to view policy documents in the context of where and by whom they are written and particularly the intended readership (Hitching, Nilsen and Veum, 2011; Silverman, 2011). The different environments of the Religious Education subject in Europe (cf. 1.2) must be remembered in a reflection on the use of language. The inclusion of secular worldviews in a 'learning about religion' approach might be recognisable by some member states, but unfamiliar or unwelcome to other states.

Another policy document on religion and education written in the same period as the Recommendation is the Toledo Guiding Principles.[134] This document may have affected the readers' understanding of the concepts in the Recommendation text. The Toledo Guiding Principles 'address not only teaching about religions but also teaching about beliefs, that is, non-religious conceptions of life and world' (OSCE, 2007 p.20). Their working definition of belief is grounded in the *Guidelines for Review of Legislation Pertaining to Religion or Belief* (ODIHR, 2004 p.8):

> 3. Religion or belief: International standards do not speak of religion in an isolated sense, but of "religion or belief." The "belief" aspect typically pertains to deeply held conscientious beliefs that are fundamental about the human condition and the world. Thus, atheism and agnosticism, for example, are generally held to be entitled to the same protection as religious beliefs. It is very common for legislation not to protect adequately (or to not refer at all to) rights of non-believers. Although not all beliefs are entitled to equal protection, legislation should be reviewed for discrimination against non-believers.

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[134] *Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools*, prepared by the ODIHR advisory council of Experts on Freedom of Religion and Belief. The Guiding Principles offer practical guidance for preparing curricula for teaching about religions and beliefs, preferred procedures for ensuring fairness in the development of curricula and standards for how they could be implemented (2007).
OSCE: Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
ODIHR: Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

In other words, the Toledo Guiding Principles use 'religion and/or belief' in an understanding that 'belief' denotes the non-religious conceptions of life and world, whereas their use in the draft version of the Recommendation was linked to a 'system of religious beliefs or philosophy' (Council of Europe, 2007d p.199). In the revision, this was in most instances changed to 'convictions', which denotes 'strongly held convictions that may be religious or non-religious in character' (Council of Europe, 2007d p.199). There is a subsequent tendency in the 'religion in education' field to use the term 'convictions' instead of 'belief'.[135]
The interesting point about the Toledo Guiding Principles is that they are grounded in a legal understanding of 'religion or belief', meaning that these conceptions have the same right to legal protection. It does not follow that 'religions and non-religious convictions' have to appear together in all instances like 'a pair of twins'.

All of the above may be the reason for the introduction of 'non-religious convictions' that happened during revision. Some readers understood religion to mean particular religions, and wanted to include secular worldviews in intercultural education. This has led to the replacement of an inclusive, generic 'religion in education' discourse with an inclusive, particular 'worldview education' discourse, but not consistently so, causing discursive tensions more than merely a discursive change.

7.2. Religion in the public sphere

'The public sphere' is a frequent expression in the Recommendation and its Explanatory Memorandum. I believe it is worthwhile exploring theories on the 'public sphere' and secularisation in order to evaluate the use of the concept. The place of religion in the public sphere is part of a larger theoretical discourse on secularism and secularisation in society. This is a vast field, wherein perceptions on the place and role of religion vary both diachronically and synchronically.

7.2.1. Place and role of religion

The '*sui generis* model'[136] view religion as a separate sector, a unique type of object. This is an essentialist way of viewing religion and a way that sometimes have unintended consequences. Religion in society on the other hand, is often mixed with politics, art and other fields. In research the viewing of religion is sometimes distinct from other cultural

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[135] Conversation with Heid Leganger-Krogstad, 4 April 2013
[136] Cf. for instance McCutcheon (1997) for more on this.

phenomena and sometimes integrated. Its treatment depends on the questions asked. In 'real life' a *sui generis* principle adds to the mystification of religion and puts it squarely on the outside of social structure and of culture in general (Gilhus and Mikaelson, 2007 p.134, my translation). In Gilhus and Mikaelson's view,

> 'the most fruitful way of viewing religion is as a dynamic and changeable field, and the category of religion as open. This makes the definitions of religion a pragmatic tool, something to be used in methodological work with specific issues and questions' (2007 p.140, my translation).

This leads to a debate on religion giving the phenomenon a place in society.

The public sphere emerged in the eighteenth century as a social space where individuals could talk as private citizens, deliberating about the common good (Habermas, 1989). In his definition, this was 'a space of reason-giving, a realm in which reasons were forwarded and debated, accepted or rejected' (Mendieta and Vanantwerpen, 2011 pp.2-3). This space was separate from the state, the economy and the family.

Maclure and Taylor (2011) make a distinction between different public spheres.[137] One distinction is the division between the state and the institutions that embody it, like state schools, and the private sphere of homes. Another distinction is the public sphere in the meaning of the street, businesses, parks, or what is open and transparent, as opposed to what is hidden and private. Maclure and Taylor also mention a third area: civil society, placed between the state and private life.

Religion's place or role in the public sphere, and especially the second dimension in Maclure and Taylor, is important because of the understanding of democratic citizenship. This is a notion central to citizens' participation in society. When a state focuses more on core values, citizenship will be more expansive and religion will have a wider impact, according to James Arthur in his essay on 'participatory citizenship' (Arthur, 2008). Viewing religion as having no place in public space is placing a limit on the freedom to participate in public debate by a large proportion of Europe's citizens.[138]

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[137] For other views on religion in the different public spheres, see Casanova (1994) and Demerath (2001).

[138] For a view on religion in liberal democratic decision-making, see Weithman (2002).

Habermas made the place of religion in the public sphere a central issue in his revised view on religion and public debate.[139] This changed perception, 'the late Habermas' as it is sometimes called, defends individuals' right to debate with 'religious arguments' in the public sphere (Habermas, 2005). Individuals cannot shed part of their identity when debating in public. He points to the difference between the institutional separation of religion and state and citizens' right to participate in public discussion. Habermas strongly argues against the 'proviso of secular justification' argued by John Rawls (1997). The argument is that 'religion plays an integral role in the life of a person of faith' and that one cannot change the cognitive basis (Habermas, 2005 p.15). Habermas turns Rawls's proviso into a 'proviso of translation'. He says that religious arguments have to be translated into generally accessible terms that can be understood and evaluated by a secular audience (Habermas, 1989 p.25). Many scholars have discussed his views, and the importance of Habermas's position in relation to democratic citizenship has been strongly argued (Calhoun, Jürgensmeyer and Van Antwerpen, 2011).

7.2.2. Secularism and secularisation

An appreciation of the concept secularism is relevant to understanding the role of 'religion' in the public sphere and particularly as a dimension of intercultural education is. As for 'religion', there is more than one discourse on 'secularism'.

Jocelyn Maclure and Charles Taylor (2011) argue how to manage moral and religious diversity in a free society. Included in this are the relationship between religious beliefs[140] and secular convictions, the scope of the free exercise of religion and the place of religion in the public sphere Maclure and Taylor (2011). I value their argument that secularism is made up of two major principles: 'equality of respect' and 'freedom of conscience', and two operative modes: 'separation of church and state', and 'neutrality of the state' (Maclure and Taylor, 2011 p.3). In other words, secularism is both about a set of moral aims and about institutional arrangements. I believe this clarification explains some of the misconceptions about what secularism is and is not. A state has to be 'neutral in relation to the different worldviews and "conceptions of the good"[141] – secular, spiritual and religious – with which citizens identify' (Maclure and Taylor, 2011 p.10).

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[139] See for instance his paper given at the Holberg Prize Seminar in 2005, Butler et al (2011), and Habermas and Ratzinger (2005).

[140] Beliefs and convictions are terms used in various ways by various theorists and in public debate. When I write about specific theorists I will employ the terms as they use them.

[141] John Rawls originally coined 'conceptions of the good' in "*A theory of Justice*" (1999, rev. ed.).

In Maclure and Taylor's view, a liberal and democratic state has to support certain core principles such as human dignity, basic human rights and popular sovereignty (2011). Maclure and Taylor see them as 'the *constitutive* values of liberal and democratic political systems'. The values are not neutral, but they are legitimate, because the values allow citizens with different conceptions of the good to live together in peace (Maclure and Taylor 2011 p.11).

Having presented some thoughts on secularism, I turn to secularisation. This is often understood as how a society grows less religious. It can be argued that there are two sides to secularisation, a political and a social. Political secularisation is concerned with the state's independence from religion and is seen in positive law and public policies (cf. also Habermas, 2005). Social secularisation is a social phenomenon and is about people's conception of the world and modes of life. Social secularisation is something that a state, being neutral, should not be involved in (Maclure and Taylor, 2011 p.16). To sum up, it is important to have 'an overlapping consensus'[142] on political values, and also acceptance of different concepts of what makes a good life. Social secularisation is something a state should not be involved in, as long as its citizens adhere to the core values. The core or meaning-giving beliefs of citizens, whether religious or secular, are the basis of individuals' moral identity and not something the state can adopt (Maclure and Taylor 2011 p.13).

7.2.3. Reflections on the Recommendation

A main concern in the Recommendation is legitimising the place of religion in the public sphere, and in this case in state schools. How is a discourse on religion in the public sphere reflected in the Recommendation?

As I stated earlier, the findings in Chapter 6 suggest the existence of more than one discourse in the text. Gilhus and Mikaelson's comment on how the definition of 'religion' can be used as a pragmatic tool is reflected in the Explanatory Memorandum where 'religion' is seen as 'a cultural fact', and this legitimizes the use of religion as a tool: the knowledge of 'religion' is seen as important for its contribution to intercultural competence and promoting the core values of the Council. I posit that this is a reflection of a scholarly discourse: seen at its best in the draft version. This is the generic discourse on how 'religion in education' can be used for a purpose. This discourse is joined by another discourse, seeing 'religions and non-religious

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[142] John Rawls: *Political liberalism* (1993)

convictions' as particular variables, in the final version. One might conclude that the collision of these discourses points towards an ambiguous communication on religion.

A paragraph in the Recommendation[143] claims '…information on and knowledge of religions and non-religious convictions which influence the behaviour of individuals in public life should be taught in order to develop tolerance as well as mutual understanding and trust'. This reasoning contrasts with Jürgen Habermas's defence of individuals' right to debate with 'religious arguments' in the public sphere. As he says, religion is part of identity and it is impossible to shed parts of it before entering the public sphere. This would mean 'a switch of cognitive basis' (Habermas, 2005 p.15). The Habermas discourse does not seem to be reflected in this paragraph in the Recommendation. I noted previously (cf. 6.7.4) that the arguments in the draft vs. final paragraph were drawn from two different parts of Batelaan's conceptual framework (2003). It is difficult to judge from this what kind of discourse the Council wants to promote.

There remains the discourse in the Recommendation on the place of non-religious convictions in the public sphere. Apart from the discourse on 'free exercise of religion and belief' I cannot see any traces in the scholarly discourses I have looked at here. There are secular humanists (or Humanists with a capital H)[144] that promote the role and place of for instance non-religious rites in the public sphere (see 6.5) as a case of equality with religious public rites.[145] This is sometimes the case in Norway, but whether it is relevant in other European countries, is beyond the scope of this study. If it is, however, a second discourse is reflected in the Recommendation.

The Council of Europe has a clear position on religion's place in civil society: the third dimension of Maclure and Taylor's division of the public sphere. It has a policy of non-interference with religious communities but writes in a Parliamentary Recommendation that 'they [the Parliamentary Assembly] consider religious organisations as part of civil society and call on them to play an active role in the pursuit of peace, co-operation, tolerance, solidarity, intercultural dialogue and the dissemination of the Council of Europe's values'

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[143] § 4 in the Appendix
[144] Available from: http://www.secularhumanism.org [Accessed 2 May 2013]
[145] Conversation with Ingvill Thorson Plesner 29 April 2013

(Council of Europe, 2007b).[146] This Recommendation is noted in the Preamble to the Recommendation of 2008 explored in this study.

A division of political and social secularisation (Maclure and Taylor, 2011) is reflected in the Preamble to the Recommendation. The Council of Europe reaffirms in a Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation (Council of Europe, 2007b) the principle of the independence of politics and law from religion. This is in agreement with Maclure and Taylor's definition of political secularisation. When it comes to social secularisation the Council states that:

> Religion and democracy are not incompatible, however, and sometimes religions play a highly beneficial social role. By addressing the problems facing society, the civil authorities can, with the support of religions, eliminate much of what breeds religious extremism, but not everything (Council of Europe, 2007b §10).

I suggest that this shows a consistent line in secular thinking by the Council of Europe, in agreement with thinking represented by the discourse of Maclure and Taylor. There is recognition of religion's role in a secularised society. The Recommendation of 2008 arguably breaks this line by the introduction of non-religious convictions, in the manner it is done. This implies, as I stated earlier, the entering of a colliding discourse.

7.3. Concluding remarks

I have tried in this chapter to reflect upon the arguments and the discourses in a wider theoretical context in light of the findings on the Recommendation of 2008 to show the potential variety of discourses. Discourses on 'religion' and 'religion in education' have been given much space, as have some observations on lay theories of 'religion'. These are clearly reflected in the Recommendation and its Explanatory Memorandum as I view the text. The inclusion of 'non-religious convictions' seems to be relevant in a discourse on 'Religious Education', or education about religion, but bringing 'non-religious' into the concept of 'religion' itself may be argued.

Religion in the public sphere was discussed. This is a theoretical field with many views on the division between private/public, and on the various ways of structuring the public sphere. I chose to focus on the contributions of Jürgen Habermas, Jocelyn Maclure and Charles Taylor, as I consider these discourses relevant to the findings in the analysis.

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[146] Recommendation 1804 (2007)

Finally, there was some reflection on secularism and secularisation. This is a discourse reflected in the Recommendation, and appears as a backdrop for the whole discussion on religion and non-religious convictions in education. Again, I referred to the contribution of Maclure and Taylor. Respect for the moral equity of individuals and the protection of conscience and of religion are in their opinion the major aims of secularism today (2011 p.4).

8. Conclusion

The Recommendation that has been studied in this thesis is a response from the Council of Europe to two issues; conflicts related to the increasingly diverse cultural and religious societies in Europe and the need to build a Europe committed to the core values of human rights, democracy and rule of law. These challenges need a population with intercultural competence convinced of the benefits of social cohesion. The religious dimension in intercultural education was deemed important in reaching these goals. The diversity of Europe required a common ground for promoting this knowledge, and the state school system was the answer.

The history and development of integration in Europe, the increasing globalisation of culture, and different backgrounds in political and social secularisation were factors that persuaded The Council of Europe to devise a recommendation on intercultural education. The end of the twentieth century saw the establishment of the project entitled 'Education for democratic citizenship' in 1997. This project is still ongoing. Events escalating at the beginning of the twenty-first century assured the Council of the need to pay special attention to the challenges of religious diversity and the project entitled 'The new challenge of intercultural education: religious diversity and dialogue in Europe' was established in 2002. Education is a nationally governed sphere, but it was underlined that the challenges in the field of religious diversity were similar and that sharing experiences would be to the benefit of all member states. The project was endorsed at the Athens' Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education in 2003, where the mandate for the project was set out in the Athens Declaration (Council of Europe, 2003a §11a): 'Request the Council of Europe…to resume conceptual research on intercultural education with a view to adapting terminology and clearly defining the content and context of intercultural education'. In the introduction to the Recommendation's Explanatory Memorandum we read:

> Their [the Ministers of Education] wish was to reinforce the work carried out in the area of the contents and learning methods in order to provide the member states with examples of tools which take into consideration respect for human rights and cultural and religious diversity (Council of Europe 2008b §3).

The preparatory phase of the Recommendation benefited from a receptive attitude to religion. Religion was seen as a cultural fact: a social phenomenon that was part of many people's identity and which could not be ignored. Knowledge of this phenomenon and how it affects and is affected by society was seen as a legitimate concern of public policy. The landscape of

religious education in Europe is varied, and a need was recognised for common guidelines and practical tools that could be used in both teaching and teacher training. The Council of Europe emphasised the intention of intercultural education as an approach, not a subject, and indicated that this approach should involve the school as a whole. A group of scholars in the fields of intercultural education and religious education was invited by the Steering Committee for Education (CDED) to write a tentative draft of the Recommendation. This proposal '*on the religious dimension of intercultural education*' was dealt with in various sections in the Council before being prepared for submitting to a Committee of Ministers meeting in September 2007. At this point, the draft Recommendation met with some resistance. After a period of deferrals and revisions, the Recommendation was adopted under its new title '*on the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education*' in December 2008.

I have explored this Recommendation with a view to discover why the policy document seemed to lack clarity. Through comparison with a draft version I have found several amendments. The findings have been analysed using tools from domain analysis (Spradley, 1979) and principles from a text revision theory (Bryant, 2002). This was underpinned with discursive thinking (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009). The intention of the analysis was to find out if divergent discourses were present in the text and how changes had been made. Some amendments were just fine-tunings of text (Bryant, 2002). I found that the main alterations had taken place within a few major areas.

First, the generic term 'religion' had been exchanged for the particular expression 'religions and non-religious convictions' a number of times, but not everywhere. This left an impression of confusion and uncertainty about what the Council of Europe's definitions, principles and objectives were.

An example from paragraph 1 in the Explanatory Memorandum[147] illustrates the point:

> [...] Issues related to religions and non-religious convictions have been raised but to a lesser extent. However, in the context of growing pluralism, the large-scale migration of populations of various origins and in order to promote a harmonious culture of co-existence between citizens belonging to different religions and cultural traditions, the Council of Europe wanted to draw particular attention to the religious dimension of intercultural education.

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[147] The Explanatory Memorandum is the addition to the Recommendation that expands and explains in detail the elements in the Recommendation.

The first sentence describes the decreased attention paid to 'issues relating to religion and non-religious conviction' compared with other areas. It concludes that because of developments in Europe and to better the relationship between citizens of different 'religions and cultural traditions', the Council 'now wants to pay particular attention to the religious dimension of intercultural education'. This is a partial amendment that arguably obscures the clarity of the message.

The change from a generic to a particular discourse on religion resulted in a change from 'religious diversity' to 'diversity of religions and non-religious convictions'. We must bear in mind that the aim of the project was to find a solution to the challenge of the 'religious diversity and dialogue in Europe', not 'diversity of religions and non-religious convictions'. This exchange in the text seems to be consistent, but means that instead of giving attention to the variety within and among religions, the knowledge aspect is centred on the different religions and non-religious convictions in Europe.[148]

Second, 'religion' was seen in the preparatory phase as 'a cultural fact'. Indeed it was a prerequisite for introducing 'religion' in intercultural education. In the adopted Recommendation text 'religion' is not seen as 'a cultural fact'. It is 'religions and non-religious convictions' that are seen as 'cultural facts' 'for the purpose of this recommendation'.[149] Alas, this does not last. In the Explanatory Memorandum 'religion as a cultural fact' returns, argued in an extraordinary way:

> It was also underlined that taking into account the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education requires that, despite different views on religion at the personal and societal levels, all can agree that religion is at least a 'cultural fact'. Knowledge and understanding of religion at this basic level is highly relevant to good community and personal relations and is therefore a legitimate concern of public policy[150].

The argument seems to be that the condition for bringing in 'the dimension of religions and non-religious convictions' in intercultural education is that 'all agree that religion is a cultural fact'. The same argument was used in the draft version, when it was 'the religious dimension' that was to be brought into an intercultural education. The argument appears as such quite indistinct and prompts one to ask whether this was an intended change of meaning or an

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[148] § 5 Appendix
[149] § 2 Appendix
[150] § 7 Explanatory Memorandum

unintended one. The draft version had a 'tacit boundary' (Spradley, 1979) for 'religion as a cultural fact'. It stated that for many, religion is much more [than a cultural fact], such as an expression of ultimate meaning and truth or source of ethics.[151] The reason for the removal of this statement in the final version is unclear; it might be that the expression 'despite different views on religion at the personal and social levels' was meant to replace the parenthesis related to the boundary.

Third, this Recommendation has a very inclusive concept of 'religion'. It observes that religions and non-religious convictions are diverse and complex and that individuals have different reasons for having these convictions and holds them in different degrees.[152] Non-religious convictions are defined as philosophical, humanist and agnostic convictions.[153] Further, the use of 'religion as a cultural fact' is used as an argument for how 'religion' and not 'religions and non-religious convictions' can contribute to intercultural education.[154] The explanation of why 'non-religious convictions' is not included comes in the next sentence in paragraph 17 (EM):

> This concept also allows the scope of religion to include <u>humanist viewpoints or other philosophical and moral convictions</u>. This is particularly important in Europe where there are many people (and children) who do not have traditional religious, theistic beliefs, but yet have beliefs and values.

In addition to this, the paragraph also claims 'religion may be a way of life, an embodiment of revealed truth and/or linked with important ethical convictions'. This means that the Council of Europe includes secular worldviews in the generic concept of 'religion'. It says that 'religion' can include humanist, philosophical and moral convictions that may be an embodiment of revealed truth or linked with important ethical convictions. This is a definition not often seen, as the discussion in Chapter 7 showed. It is also a definition that may be well outside the boundary of what lay people, the main readership of this Recommendation define as religion. The discourses of 'religion in education' or 'the study of religions' often include secular worldviews (cf. Chapter 7), but in this paragraph the term used is 'religion'. To add to the confusion, the previous paragraph (16 EM) as above, defined non-religious convictions as 'philosophic, humanist and agnostic convictions'. In other words, 'religion' includes secular

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[151] § 8 Explanatory Memorandum, draft version 2007, see 6.4.
[152] § 3 Appendix
[153] § 16 Explanatory Memorandum
[154] § 17 Explanatory Memorandum

worldviews, and has in some but not all places been exchanged for 'religions and non-religious worldviews'.

Fourth, the alteration from 'religion' to 'religion and non-religious convictions' seems to have had unintended consequences. One example of this is in paragraph 26 (EM):

> From the point of view of teaching and learning about the <u>diversity of religions and non-religious convictions</u>, we need pedagogical models that resist stereotyping and allow for differences within <u>religious and non-religious traditions</u> to be expressed and understood. It is also very important that manuals and other teaching materials do not contain any stereotypes regarding <u>religions and non-religious convictions</u>, women or minorities.

My understanding of this paragraph is that the Council is arguing for good pedagogical models that resist stereotyping against religions, non-religious convictions, women or minorities. Paragraph 6 in the Appendix argues for the same when it says:

> […] overcoming prejudices and stereotypes concerning religions and non-religious convictions, especially the practices of minority groups and immigrants, in order to contribute to the development of societies based on solidarity.

The concern seems to be directed at prejudices and stereotypes against non-religious convictions from minority groups and immigrants. This line of argument is not referred to elsewhere in the Recommendation and the preparatory documents' concern is with stereotyping and discrimination of religious minorities. Research is being done in the field of stereotyping of non-religious groups by religious groups, but it is hard to see if this alteration was a change intended by the Council of Europe.

Fifth, the role of religion in the public sphere is presented in the Recommendation. The role is related to how religions and non-religious convictions must be taken into account in a framework of intercultural education. According to the Appendix individuals apply part of their religion and their non-religious convictions as a mode of behaviour in public life. These 'parts' must be learned about in school in order to develop tolerance, mutual understanding and trust. I am reminded here of Jürgen Habermas who warns against the impossibility of switching a cognitive basis (cf. Chapter 7) from the private to the public sphere. This paragraph was altered and demonstrates a different meaning than the draft version. In the draft version, the principle was that 'Information on and knowledge of religions and philosophies fall within the public sphere and should be taught in order to develop tolerance

as well as mutual understanding and trust'. As seen in the version of 2007, it is the information that belongs in the public sphere and not the mode of behaviour.

The Recommendation suggests that there ought to be a limit on the expression of identity in the public sphere. Paragraph 5 recommends: 'Education should develop intercultural competence through […] promoting civic-mindedness and moderation in expressing one's identity'. It is hard to evaluate whether this is relevant for both religious and non-religious individuals, but if it is, it points to a normative wish for a conception of behaviour in the public sphere for all individuals in society. Paragraph 6 removes the doubt. Here it is clear that this recommendation for behaviour is related only to religious individuals:

> The following attitudes should be promoted in order to remove obstacles that prevent a proper treatment of the diversity of religions and non-religious convictions in an educational context:
> - […]
> - recognising that the expressions of religious allegiance at school, without ostentation or proselytising exercised with due respect for others, public order and human rights, is compatible with a secular society and the respective autonomy of state and religions.

Arguably, this is not an issue purely for 'religion in education' but for society as a whole.

Sixth, this exploration concerned the issue of 'the dimensions of religions and non-religious convictions within intercultural education'. The findings show that the Council wants an education about religions and non-religious convictions, and not a confessional religious education. The education should be a part of the intercultural approach, and the way it is introduced into curricula is left open to member states.

Finally, I have looked at the communication of values and aims in the Recommendation. There cannot be any doubt that the Council of Europe sees 'religion' as a contribution to its aims of promoting intercultural competence. This promotion is important for strengthening the values of human rights, plural democracy and rule of law: core values of Europe. It suggests that the Council believes 'religion' is a valuable building block of European society, and there are paragraphs in this Recommendation that support this argument.[155] It must be said however, that the final adopted version of 2008 shows an increased focus on promoting the core values, as a motivation for introducing 'religions and non-religious convictions'. This

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[155] See for instance the Preamble and § 5 and 6 in the Appendix.

could mean valuing 'religion' more as a means than a value in itself, but I believe the Recommendation balances this rather well. The introduction of 'non-religious convictions' confuses the issue however, for two reasons. One, it is not consistently implemented in the various paragraphs and, two, these convictions have arguably been a prominent part of so-called 'rational', 'secular' thinking in European educational systems. Religion was to be the 'new' focus.

The Athens declaration (Council of Europe 2003) gave the mandate for the project entitled 'The challenges of religious diversity and intercultural dialogue in Europe' and thereby for the Recommendation. The intention was to give special attention to 'religious diversity' both as a factor in education for democratic citizenship and because of its inherent role in European society. At a certain point, the climate for introducing 'the religious dimension' changed. Seeing that it was in the GR-C meetings attended by diplomats who also consulted with their domestic politicians that the resistance appeared[156], I assume that the bone of contention was in the field of domestic politics, understandings of secularisation and/or of the possibility that it was not the same politicians/diplomats/politics who endorsed the project as those who voted on the Recommendation six years later.

The communication in the Recommendation has passages, which lack clarity in my view. There is a discourse of 'religion' that includes secular views, and in the same text a discourse of particular religious and secular worldviews. My understanding is that one or more of three things has happened; (1) the use of a generic inclusive concept of 'religion' was either not understood or not accepted; (2) the term 'religion' was read from a lay perspective of particular religions, and some 'cultural groups' wanted this term replaced by the particular 'religions and non-religious convictions'; (3) the Explanatory Memorandum which was 'taken note of', not 'adopted' (and where most of the rationale for an inclusive definition of 'religion' is written down) was not read.

My contribution has been to study how the Council of Europe Recommendation of 2008 communicates on religion, with what kind of language and for what purpose. I have endeavoured to show the importance of consistency and clarity in any communication, and analyse what happens when these attributes are not present. I suggest that there is a lack of

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[156] Cf. 6.1 where a narrative of changes is presented.

clarity in the communication on religion in this document, and that different meaning of religion in various cultural groups, is an explanatory factor. I believe that communicating religion, the reason why it is valuable as a life orientation to some, and the valuable role it can have in building a cohesive society is necessary in a secular society. This task must be performed with the addressees in mind.

Knowledge of citizens' life orientations or core beliefs is vital if members of a society are going to 'live together'. It ought not to be confused with the dismissal of 'religion' as unwanted or unnecessary in society, which may be a reason why education about religion in school is sometimes challenged. Consequently, the importance of learning about different convictions, and not reducing the value that religious worldviews have in the life of many individuals, is a communication issue. The recognition of the role of religion as a cultural factor in society is also a communication issue. Research into how to encourage this in a constructive manner may be fruitful in an increasingly diverse and plural Europe, where the negative effects of religion and the abuse of religious dogmas often attract greater attention.

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