[32] Religious Diversity and Education in Europe

Philipp Klutz

Religious Education Faces the Challenge of Religious Plurality

A Qualitative-Empirical Study in Vienna

WAXMANN

Religious Diversity and Education in Europe

edited by

Cok Bakker, Jenny Berglund, Gerdien Bertram-Troost, Hans-Günter Heimbrock, Julia Ipgrave, Robert Jackson, Geir Skeie, Wolfram Weisse

Volume 32

Globalisation and plurality are influencing all areas of education, including religious education. The inter-cultural and multi-religious situation in Europe demands a re-evaluation of the existing educational systems in particular countries as well as new thinking at the broader European level. This well-established peer reviewed book series is committed to the investigation and reflection on the changing role of religion and education in Europe, including the interface between European research, policy and practice and that of countries or regions outside Europe. Contributions will evaluate the situation, reflect on fundamental issues and develop perspectives for better policy making and pedagogy, especially in relation to practice in the classroom. The publishing policy of the series is to focus on strengthening literacy in the broad field of religions and related world views, while recognising the importance of strengthening pluralist democracies through stimulating the development of active citizenship and fostering greater mutual understanding through intercultural education. It pays special attention to the educational challenges of religious diversity and conflicting value systems in schools and in society in general.

Religious Diversity and Education in Europe was originally produced by two European research groups:

ENRECA: The European Network for Religious Education in Europe through Contextual Approaches

REDCo: Religion in Education. A contribution to Dialogue or a factor of Conflict in transforming societies of European Countries

Although books will continue to be published by these two research groups, manuscripts can be submitted by scholars engaged in empirical and theoretical research on aspects of religion, and related world views, and education, especially in relation to intercultural issues. Book proposals relating to research on individual European countries or on wider European themes or European research projects are welcome. Books dealing with the interface of research, especially related to policy and practice, in European countries and contexts beyond Europe are also welcome for consideration. All manuscripts submitted are peer reviewed by two specialist reviewers.

The series is aimed at teachers, teacher educators, researchers and policy makers. The series is committed to involving practitioners in the research process and includes books by teachers and teacher educators who are engaged in research as well as academics from various relevant fields, professional researchers and PhD students (the series includes several ground-breaking PhD dissertations). It is open to authors committed to these issues, and it includes English and German speaking monographs as well as edited collections of papers.

Outline book proposals should be directed to one of the editors or to the publisher.

Philipp Klutz

Religious Education Faces the Challenge of Religious Plurality

A Qualitative-Empirical Study in Vienna

translated by Noëmi Lakmaier

Waxmann 2016
Münster • New York

Der Wissenschaftsfonds.

Veröffentlichung mit Unterstützung des
Austrian Science Fund (FWF): PUB 232-V15

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the
Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data
are available in the Internet at http://dnb.dnb.de

Religious Diversity and Education in Europe, volume 32

ISSN 1862-9547
Print-ISBN 978-3-8309-3495-0
E-Book-ISBN 978-3-8309-8495-5

© Waxmann Verlag GmbH, 2016
Münster, Germany

www.waxmann.com
info@waxmann.com

Cover Design: Plessmann Design, Ascheberg
Typesetting: Sven Solterbeck, Münster

Printed in Germany

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored
in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic,
electrostatic, magnetic tape, mechanical, photocopying, recording or
otherwise without permission in writing from the copyright holder.

Foreword

Religious Education (RE) in large, religiously diverse cities, such as Vienna, offers pupils an exceptional opportunity to learn with and from each other in a religiously pluralistic landscape. My own experience as a part-time RE teacher at a secondary academic school in Vienna has, however, also shown me the specific challenges RE faces in such a context. Some schools face difficult administrative tasks due to the way RE is currently organised, such as the necessity to fit RE classes for a variety of different religious communities and faith groups into schools' timetables.

My work, both as an RE teacher and an academic in the field of religious education studies at the University of Vienna and since September 2014 at the Catholic Private University in Linz, has been strongly influenced by this context of religious plurality. The opportunities it offers and the challenges it poses, as well as the question of how we can ensure that ideally all pupils are able to benefit from a religious education, are at the heart of my academic research. This study draws together most of my research in the field of religious education studies to date. It is a revised and translated version of my PhD dissertation, which I submitted to the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna in September 2013, defended in December 2013 and published in German.[1] I would like to thank Bert Roebben (Dortmund) and Wolfgang Weirer (Graz) who kindly provided the expert reports for my dissertation.

A great number of people have been instrumental in the success of my work, and I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all of them. First and foremost I want to thank everybody who was kind enough to participate in this study by attending discussion groups; without them it would not exist in its current form. I further want to express my heartfelt thanks to the members of the Viennese 'Society for Religious Education', led by Martin Rothgangel and Robert Schelander, who accompanied me on the journey of this research project from the outset and who offered feedback, constructive criticism and useful suggestions along the way.

As part of this study, a group was established at the Department of Practical Theology at the Faculty of Catholic Theology in Vienna, where I was able to put my interpretations and empirical findings up for discussion. Elisabeth Fónyard-Kropf, Martin Jäggle, Andrea Lehner-Hartmann, Teresa Schweighofer and Helena Stockinger were members of this group. I would like to thank them all for their commitment!

I further want to warmly thank my proof-readers, Lucia Schöffl and Barbara Vitovec, and my copy-editor Usch Schmitz for their prudent work. Many thanks also to Monika Mannsbarth and Christina Wachelhofer, who supported me in designing graphs and tables and gave me useful tips on formatting my work. Thank you also to Frank Sauer for his advice.

I want to thank the editors for accepting my study into their series 'Religious Diversity and Education in Europe'. Thank you to Beate Plugge from Waxman Publishing Co. for her professional work on this publication and to Noëmi Lakmaier for her excellent translation of this book.

1 Cf. Klutz 2015.

Above all I owe a very special thank you to Martin Jäggle, who supervised my dissertation – thank you for all the knowledgeable conversations, appreciative and motivating feedback on my study and for the wonderful work we did together in the field of religious education!

Vienna/Linz, May 2016
Philipp Klutz

Contents

Introduction 11

1. Introductory Problem Analysis 12
1.1 "If Denominational RE is Stretched to its Limits in some Places" – on ÖRF's 2009 Position Paper 12
1.2 RE in Austria Seen in the Context of an Ideologically and Religiously Pluralistic Society 14
1.2.1 Religious Diversity and 'RE in the Plural' as a Growing Challenge for Schools 14
1.2.2 RE in Context of the Ethics Education Debate 17
1.3 Religious Education and RE in the European Context 24
1.3.1 Approaches to Religious Diversity 24
1.3.2 Religious Education's Aims and Objectives 25
1.3.3 Religious Education – a Task for Schools 26
1.3.4 Europe's many Different Approaches to RE 28
1.4 RE in Publicly Run Schools – A Subject for Public Debate 31
1.4.1 Religion as a Subject in Schools Needs to Justify its Existence 31
1.4.2 The Principle of Denominationalism Gets Increasingly Put into Question 37
1.5 The State of Research in 'New' Empirical Studies 42
1.5.1 Research Studies on the Religious Dimension in Schools and on Dealing with Religious Diversity 43
1.5.2 Research Studies on the Acceptance of RE and the Way it is Taught in Schools from the Perspective of RE Teachers 44
1.5.3 Research Studies on the Acceptance of RE and the Way it is Taught in Schools from the Perspective of Pupils 47

2. The Qualitative-Empirical Approach: Methodological and Methodical Considerations 50
2.1 Epistemological Interest and the Ascertainment of Research Questions 50
2.2 The Documentary Method – Meta-theoretical and Methodological Considerations on the Reconstruction of Collective Attitudes 50
2.3 Research Design 53
2.3.1 Sample Selection 55
2.3.2 To Summarise 61
2.3.3 Data-Triangulation for the Ascertainment of Educational Context and for the Reconstruction of Collective Attitudes in Schools 62
2.3.4 Using Group Discussions with Real Social Groups to Learn about Collective Attitudes in Schools 63
2.3.5 Following a Line of Enquiry 67
2.3.6 Recording Data during Group Discussions 69

2.4 Evaluation Design – Interpretative Steps in the Documentary Method and their Applications in Research Practice 70
2.4.1 Selection of Sections for Inclusion in this Paper 70
2.4.2 Formulating Interpretation 71
2.4.3 Reflecting Interpretation 73
2.4.4 Discourse Description 77
2.4.5 Typification/Case Collation 77
2.5 Reflections on the Research Process 78
2.5.1 Reflections on the Investigation Period 79
2.5.2 Reflections on the Evaluation Period 80

3. Case Study School A 82
3.1 Religious Affiliation during the Academic Year of 2011/12 82
3.2 Attendance of RE and Ethics Education 82
3.3 Group – RE Teachers (RET/ORG) 84
3.3.1 Making Contact 84
3.3.2 The Setup of the Group Discussion 84
3.3.3 Additional Information about Discussion Participants 85
3.3.4 A Description of the Discourse 85
3.4 Group – School Comunity Commitee (SCC/ORG) 112
3.4.1 Making Contact 112
3.4.2 The Setup of the Group Discussion 112
3.4.3 Additional Information about Discussion Participants 113
3.4.4 A Description of the Discourse 113
3.5 Case Collation School A 136
3.5.1 On the Perception and Assessment of Religion and Religious Diversity in this School 136
3.5.2 On the Perception in and Asessment of RE in this School 138
3.5.3 On the Acceptance of RE for all Jointly Organised by the Churches and Religious Communities in this School 139

4. Case Study School B 141
4.1 Religious Affiliation during the Academic Year of 2011/12 141
4.2 Attendance of RE 142
4.3 Group – RE Teachers (RET/HASCH/HAK) 143
4.3.1 Making Contact 143
4.3.2 The Setup of the Group Discussion 143
4.3.3 Additional Information about Discussion Participants 144
4.3.4 A Description of the Discourse 144
4.4 Group – School Comunity Commitee (SCC/HASCH/HAK) 165
4.4.1 Making Contact 165
4.4.2 The Setup of the Group Discussion 165
4.4.3 Additional Information about Discussion Participants 166
4.4.4 A Description of the Discourse 166

4.5 Case Collation School B 196
4.5.1 On the Perception and Assessment of Religion and Religious Diversity in this School 196
4.5.2 On the Perception and Assessment of RE in this School 197
4.5.3 On the Acceptance of RE for all Jointly Organised by the Churches and Religious Communities in this School 198

5. Discussion of Empirical Findings and Perspectives 200
5.1 Perception and Assessment of Religion and Religious Diversity in Schools 201
5.1.1 Empirical Finding I: A Tendency towards the Harmonisation of Religion and towards Shifting it away from the Public Sphere of the School 201
5.1.2 Empirical Finding II: An Overall Concept of how to Deal with Religious Diversity is Lacking 202
5.1.3 Discussion Including other Empirical Studies 202
5.1.4 Perspective I: Religion and Religious Diversity as Task and Challenge for Schools 205
5.1.5 Overview of Empirical Finding I + II and Perspective I 214
5.2 Perception and Assessment of RE Lessons in Schools 214
5.2.1 Empirical Finding III: School Structures and Expectations towards the Subject Promote its Marginalisation 214
5.2.2 Discussion Including other Empirical Studies 215
5.2.3 Perspective II: Think RE in the Context of School 220
5.2.4 Overview of Empirical Finding III and Perspective II 224
5.3 Acceptance of RE for all Jointly Organisied by the Churches and Religious Communities 225
5.3.1 Empirical Finding IV: What is Expected of RE is a Key Determinant of the Acceptance of this Kind of RE 225
5.3.2 Empirical Finding V: Difficulties with the Introduction of this Kind of RE are Primarily Expected to Come from Outside the School's Area of Responsibility 225
5.3.3 Discussion Including other Empirical Studies 226
5.3.4 Perspective III: The Development of Context-Sensitive Models is a Common Task for Schools, Churches and Religious Communities 231
5.3.5 Overview of Empirical Finding IV + V and Perspective III 236

6. References 237

7. List of Tables and Figures 260

8. Abbreviations 261

9. Appendix 262
Position Paper of the ÖRF 2009 on Denominational RE 262
Transcription Guidelines according to TiQ (‘Talk in Qualitative Social Research’) 263
Letter of Information 265
Declaration of Consent 267
A Checklist of Key Issues and Questions for Self-Reflection and for Action 268

Introduction

This research has its roots in the fact that religious plurality is on the increase, and that this in turn leads to consequences in RE. Especially within schools located in the most religiously diverse cities and regions denominationally organised RE can at times be stretched to its limits, for instance if pupil attendance is very low. Which alternative approach to RE would best meet the challenges of religious plurality is, however, the subject of controversial discussions in academic field of religious education studies. My study is guided by the Austrian Forum for Religious Education's (ÖRF) position paper, which advocates the development of a context sensitive model for RE in certain circumstances. Yet, is any different approach to RE even thinkable to those responsible for delivering it in schools?

This study looks at two Viennese secondary schools (one academic, one vocational), where RE is organisationally stretched to its limits. It investigates these schools' internal discourse around RE, using group discussions and the documentary method. Studying such schools' internal discourse with its many implicit attitudes towards religion and RE is extremely important in the development of new, future oriented approaches to RE.

The study is comprised of five chapters: the first part offers an introductory problem analysis and demonstrates the unique circumstances of RE in Austria and the (controversial) disputes around it. This chapter also addresses RE in the wider European context, where increasing emphasis is placed on religious education. The question at the heart of this controversial debate is how RE ought to be structured, not whether it should be on the curriculum at all. Looking at the wider European context shows us how diverse RE can be, and demonstrates the many different ways, which have been found to deal with specific given circumstances (Chapter 1). The second chapter goes into detail about the methodological and methodical considerations that underlie this qualitative-empirical study (Chapter 2). Chapter three and four use case studies to illustrate the different organisational frameworks of the two sample schools in this study and case collations to concisely demonstrate those differences (Chapter 3 and Chapter 4). A comprehensive case collation spanning both schools leads to five empirical findings that are discussed in chapter five alongside other empirical studies. This discussion is followed by a look at future possibilities from the perspective of religious education studies, which then crystallise into a number of pleas that are of particular interest to the theory and practice of religious education (Chapter 5).

1. Introductory Problem Analysis

1.1 "If Denominational RE is Stretched to its Limits in some Places"[1] – on ÖRF's 2009 Position Paper

In 2009 the Austrian Forum for Religious Education (ÖRF)[2] produced a position paper on denominational RE.[3] This paper invites all educational institutions to deal with religion in a constructive way. It points out that schools "as a venue of general education" have a particular responsibility in this area. Denominational RE accounted for by legally recognised churches and religious communities,[4] can contribute and help schools live up to their educational responsibility. ÖRF emphasises the importance of denominational RE and rejects any form of religious education that "'merely' informs about religion and religions". ÖRF claims that "teachers and pupils with their convictions, attitudes and beliefs are brought into play, so that existential orientation as well as critical reflections on religion and churches are possible in a wide variety worldviews." It thus addresses RE's ability to contribute to the education of young people's identities. ÖRF is, however, also aware of the current situation schools are in. It broaches the issue of religious plurality in schools and states that addressing this issue in a constructive manner is absolutely essential. "Therefore, RE keeps an eye on the development of children's and young people's identities as well as on an appropriate handling of the diversity of religions and beliefs." ÖRF's position on the denominational approach to

1 ÖRF 2010, 62; cf. position paper in the appendix of this study.

2 ÖRF was established in 1991. Its main aims, as outlined in its constitution, are to foster discourse around religious education, to support its members in both research and teaching and to jointly develop common positions. Its members are religious educators and academics who work in post-secondary or tertiary educational institutions in Austria and in the Southern Tyrol. In this respect ÖRF is an ecumenical, interfaith association. In addition, ÖRF organises a bi-annual conference, issues an annual publication and publishes religious education commentary on current events. Cf. Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 2013.

3 Cf. ÖRF 2010. ÖRF already commented on the future of RE in a working paper in 1993. Consideration was given to 'Religion as a Subject in Schools', 'Deaconship in Schools and in RE', 'The Question of Denominational RE', 'Pastoral Care in Schools and RE'. This working paper reported on ways RE teachers could adequately structure their lessons in the face of societal changes and cites concrete possibilities for cooperation between RE groups from different denominations. These possibilities range from regular conversations between RE teachers from different denominational backgrounds to occasional joint RE lessons, to occasional cross-denominational worship services in schools. Cf. ÖRF 1994. The Interdiocesan Professional Association for Roman Catholic RE teachers has since given a statement that some aspects of ÖRF's position paper need to be revised. Cf. Interdiözesane Berufsgemeinschaft der ReligionslehrerInnen Österreichs (ingrlö) 1994. The many different papers written on the subject, and the 'Vorau Declaration' ("Vorauer Erklärung')), which took place during a pan-Austrian training seminar for teachers, show just how intensely discussed the future of RE was in Austria during the 1990's. Cf. Zur Zukunft des Katholischen Religionsunterrichts in Österreich 1996.

4 Cf. chapter 1.2 Religious Education in Austria within the Context of an Ideologically and Religiously Pluralistic Society.

RE under certain circumstances is particularly noteworthy: "If denominational RE is stretched to its limits in some places – e. g. because of insufficient participation – context-sensitive models, differentiated according to school type and location, have to be developed in the framework of RE that churches and religious communities are responsible for, so that schools are able to fulfil their obligation to offer religious education."[5] The wording of this statement suggests that RE in Austria, in its denominational form, is indeed facing considerable problems in some types of schools and in some locations. The above statement is also reminiscent of Bucher's plea from the 1990's to give greater consideration to regional solutions when it comes to RE.[6] Bucher draws attention to the socio-economic differences between urban and rural areas and proceeds from the assumption that RE will in practice differ considerably from region to region. For this reason, Bucher argues, it is sensible to produce differentiated analyses of RE, according to region. He further reasons that "conceptual solutions for RE that best fit the particular socio-religious context need to be identified."[7] Thus, depending on regional circumstances, various different approaches, from denominational to inter-denominational or even inter-religious RE, should be put into practice. Bucher's plea was, however, still primarily focused on didactic conceptions of RE (internal organisation);[8] by now, under the "principle of regionalisation"[9], religious education is also concerned with the future of its very organisational structure (external organisation). It is expected[10] that "as more and more different types of RE get put into practice in various regions […], including mixed models that contain elements of RE, learning about religion and ethics education, approaches will begin to merge and interlink, be that in a cooperative way or otherwise."[11] While giving differentiated consideration to the socio-religious context was a matter of concern to both ÖRF's position paper and Bucher's plea for regional solutions and while the resulting basic orientations are common to both, the position paper goes a step further in its demands. Bucher's special attention to region gets updated in ÖRF's position paper in so far as it also pays attention to the type of school in question and its specific location. ÖRF's focus on particular schools is rigorous. On the one hand it speaks to schools about their responsibility towards religious education, on the other hand the position paper expresses concern that in some areas schools may be unable to live up to this task. However, religious education is viewed as a genuine part of schools' educational responsibility.[12]

ÖRF's position paper has provided the impetus for this study, which investigates denominational RE in Austria, which, for a variety of reasons, is close to reaching breaking point in some areas.

5 ÖRF 2010, 62.
6 Bucher 1994.
7 Bucher 1994, 766.
8 Bucher substantiates his ideas on the regionalisation of RE also with regard to textbooks, teaching materials, and curriculum content. Cf. Bucher 1994, 766.
9 Bucher 1994, 766.
10 Cf. Mette 2007, 220 f.; Weirer 2011, 117.
11 Cf. Schweitzer 2006, 95 f.; cf. also Mette 2007, 220 f.; Weirer 2011, 117.
12 Cf. ÖRF 2010, 62.

1.2 RE in Austria Seen in the Context of an Ideologically and Religiously Pluralistic Society

1.2.1 Religious Diversity and 'RE in the Plural' as a Growing Challenge for Schools

In Austria[13] RE is denominationally bound. Responsibility for RE falls to the legally recognised churches and religious communities on the one hand and the state on the other, who each look after different aspects. The provision of RE is one the churches' and religious communities' core duties: they create the curricula and are responsible for all teaching materials[14]; they allocate RE teachers and are in charge of delivering RE classes. The state is responsible for funding RE: it pays RE teachers' salaries and funds teaching materials such as textbooks and school-bibles. The state is both authorised and obligated to "oversee RE with respect to organisational and disciplinary issues within schools." (§ 2 Art. 1 RelUG). All curricula for RE are created exclusively by the churches and religious communities; the only task for the relevant government ministry is to publicise them. Due to this division of tasks the Austrian state is able to remain true to its ideological neutrality.[15] For pupils who belong to one of the legally recognised churches or religious communities attending RE classes specific to their creed, is compulsory. These pupils can, however, opt out if they wish to (due to freedom of religion and belief), but they cannot attend RE classes of any other church or religious community. All other pupils can choose to attend RE classes on a voluntary basis.[16] Pupils who participate in RE will have their performance assessed and their grade will be marked on their school report papers. Pupils can also choose RE as a subject for their school-leaving exam. Depending on the number of pupils in a class or learning group RE is offered for either one or two one-hour-long lessons per week. Usually only Roman Catholic RE offers two one-hour-long lessons per week.

There are a number of parallel strands to RE in Austria. Currently there are 16 legally recognised churches and religious communities that have the right to offer RE classes, whereas at the time of the last survey in spring 2012 there were only 14; 15 of them are

13 Cf. Jäggle/Klutz 2016 for introductory notes, 42–45; cf. Weirer 2012, 32–38; Weirer 2013; Rinnerthaler 2004. For more information on the legal framework refer to the RE Act (RelUG).

14 As far as the content of teaching materials is concerned the state only prescribes the following in RE Act: "Only textbooks and other teaching materials must be used for RE that do not contradict civic education." § Abs. 3 RelUG.

15 Because of Austria's legal framework, the legally recognised churches and religious communities effectively have sole responsibility for religious education in schools (internal matter). They do, however, understand RE as a contribution to schools meeting their educational mandate in the area of religion. Cf. e. g. the curriculum for Roman Catholic RE: "By delivering RE as a separate teaching subject, schools act on their responsibility to contribute to religious education (§ 2 SchOG). RE on the other hand sees itself as a service to pupils and schools alike." Interdiözesanes Amt für Unterricht und Erziehung n.d., 2.

16 In vocational trade and business colleges as well as in agriculture and forestry colleges, with the exception of in the Tyrol and in Vorarlberg, students have to actively enrol in RE classes in writing.

presently making use of their right.[17] The legally recognised churches and communities comprise:

- The Catholic Church
- The Protestant Church A.C.[18] and H.C.[19]
- The Greek Orthodox (= orthodox) Church
- The Jewish Religious Association
- The Islamic Religious Community in Austria
- The Coptic Orthodox Church in Austria
- The Old Catholic Church of Austria
- The Evangelical Methodist Church in Austria
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) in Austria
- The Armenian Apostolic Church in Austria
- The New Apostolic Church in Austria
- The Austrian Buddhist Religious Society
- The Syrian Orthodox Church in Austria
- Jehovah's Witnesses in Austria
- The Islamic Alevitic Religious Community in Austria
- The Free Churches of Austria[20]

Austria's legal framework is unique within Europe. It reflects the fact that religious diversity is not seen as a private matter and that religious difference is visible in schools. E.g. Islamic and Orthodox RE already have a fairly long tradition in Austria. Islamic RE has been offered since 1982/83 and Orthodox RE since 1991/92. Both these religious comunities have an established, degree level RE teacher-training programme, as well as their own curricula and textbooks in Austrian schools.[21] Pupils of different nation-

17 Only 'Jehovah's Witnesses in Austria' are currently (academic year 2015/2016) not offering RE in schools. Regarding specific legal positions cf. Bundeskanzleramt Österreich 2014a. Registered religious communities are excluded from this right, as they do not hold the status of a corporation under public law. Thus Schinkele summarises referencing the 'equality set' ("ius respicit aequitatem' = law regards equity), that the "exclusion of churches and religious communities, which do not enjoy statutory recognition, from RE is both constitutionally questionable and highly unsatisfactory in terms of legal policy." Schinkele 2004, 207; cf. also Hammer 2005. Registered religious communities comprise: Old Alevitic Religious Community in Austria, Bahá'í Religious Community of Austria, the Christian Community – Movement of Religious Renewal – in Austria, Hindu Religious Community in Austria, Islamic-Shiite Religious Community in Austria, Church of Seventh-Day Adventists, Pentecostal Church of God in Austria, Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity in Austria; regarding specific legal positions cf. Bundeskanzleramt Österreich 2014b.

18 Augsburg Confession = Lutheran

19 Helvetic Confession = Reformed

20 'The Free Churches of Austria' is an alliance of five Free Churches and their communities.

21 "Islamic RE, which has been offered in Austria since 1982/83, is still being expanded. In the 2010/11 school year, 430 teachers of Islamic RE were working in around 2,000 schools, where they taught around 57,000 pupils. Orthodox Christian RE began in 1991/92, its expansion gaining a new vitality with the establishment of the Orthodox Education Office in 2005. In 2014/15 84 teachers in 825 locations, half of which are in Vienna, teach the subject

alities and with different mother tongues take part in RE together. They attend classes according to their creed; classes are held in German. Pupils belonging to these religious communities are largely not originally from Austria[22] and learning together in this way helps them to better integrate.

The statutory position endows all legally recognised religious communities with rights, regardless of how many members they have or when they first became legally recognised. This makes it possible for everybody to interact as equals. The given legal situation proves particularly beneficial when it comes to ecumenical and interreligious cooperation.[23] At the same time religious diversity poses particular challenges for a number of schools, not least in terms of organising the timetable, when several churches and religious communities have the right to offer RE lessons to their pupils. "The more pluralistic a school is in terms of religion, the more difficult it will be to organise RE for the different churches and religious societies. If, in addition, there is an increased tendency within the school for pupils to opt out of RE, it moves entirely to the outer perimeters of school awareness and to the edge of the school day and in some cases may even be provided outside of the school building itself. The school administration can accelerate or slow down this process."[24] When RE gets primarily timetabled for the first or the last lesson of the teaching day the consequences for the subject are enormous. Pupils' inclination to opt out increases when this is the case,[25] and consequently because of low participant numbers, learning groups need to be brought together from different forms, different year-groups, different schools and school types.[26] "A school's timetable can be seen as its calling card, that gives a good indication of what importance is given to RE by a particular school and its Head, or how much importance it is able to give to it, as a religiously pluralistic society is having a significant impact on schools."[27] Therefore, there are clearly two sides to the coin of the legal framework for RE: on the one hand religious diversity is made structurally visible and receives recognition, on the other hand it presents a number of schools with the challenge of how to appropriately deal with religious diversity. This can in turn increase schools' tendencies to "privatise difference and religious difference in particular, to supress it or hide it".[28]

---

to over 11,200 pupils." Jäggle/Klutz 2016, 50 f. For an overview of Islamic RE cf. Heine/Lohlker/Potz 2012, 103–113. Cf. especially Schulamt der islamischen Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich; Orthodoxes Schulamt für Österreich.

22 Cf. Shakir 2011, 58 f.; cf. chapter 2.3.1.1 Religious Plurality in Vienna.

23 Cf. Jäggle/Klutz 2016, 53–55.

24 Jäggle/Klutz 2016, 79.

25 Cf. Ritzer 2003, 100–103.

26 The need to merge pupils from different year groups, schools etc. into learning groups, particularly effects pupils belonging to smaller churches and religious communities. Cf. Potz/Schinkele 2005; Schinkele 2007.

27 Jäggle 2011, 10.

28 Jäggle 2009, 54.

1.2.2 RE in Context of the Ethics Education Debate

The discussion around RE is also reflected in the debate on ethics education as a subject in schools (Ethics education is not offered across the board in Austria).[29] Ethics education was initially met with suspicion and resistance by the Roman Catholic Church, as its position within the general school curriculum and its relation to RE in particular had been contentious.[30] By now, however, even the Austrian Conference of Bishops believes that "it would be appropriate for ethics education to be made into a compulsory subject for all pupils, who for whatever reason, do not attend denominational RE."[31] Ethics education has also been picked up by the political debate, most recently in the parliamentary enquiry of May 2011.[32]

There is still no compulsory subject across all schools, which caters for pupils who do not attend RE. This is despite the fact that ethics education has a 18-year trial history – it started in the academic year 1997/98 – and has received positive feedback.[33] Initially ethics education was trialled in three of nine counties and in eight schools in total. It was introduced into the secondary school level of secondary schools (9th form to 12th/13th form). By now it is offered in all counties and during the academic year of 2014/15[34] at one in four schools that run a second year of secondary education (216 schools; 24.9%) or 29.6% of non-faith schools[35] that run a second year of secondary education. There are notable differences in how widespread ethics education is depending on the type of school, as can be seen in the table below.

The number of AHS[36] schools offering ethics education is more than twice as high than that of BMHS[37] schools: 42.9% of AHSs (121 of 282 non-faith schools) and 21.2% of BMHSs (95 of 448 non-faith schools) offer ethics education. Furthermore, there are regional differences. In some counties ethics education is offered almost across the board in non-faith AHSs; for instance: Salzburg (81.0%) and Vorarlberg (83.3%). Carinthia is at the very end of the list with 10%. This observation, once broken down into region and school type shows that in some areas there is great inequality when it comes to educa-

29 On ethics education in Austria cf. Jäggle/Klutz 2016, 52 f. for an introduction.

30 Cf. in particular the debate between Hemel and Mann during the 1990's. Hemel 1991a; Mann 1991; Hemel 1991b; Hemel 1992. Cf. for an introductory discussion on ethics education in Austria: Bucher 2001, 37–47; Forschungsstelle für Ethik und Wissenschaft im Dialog; cf .also Jäggle/Anzengruber 1999; Auer 2002.

31 Österreichische Bischofskonferenz 2009; cf. Mann 2011. The Protestant Church A.C. is in favour of introducing ethics education across the board from the second year of secondary school onwards. The reasons it gives for this are: "progressive secularisation", "deference for the fundamental right of freedom of religion, which is the reason pupils can opt out of RE" as well as "a clear mandate from the Austrian constitution and the target definitions of schools in Austria." Bünker 2011, 44 f.; Evangelische Kirche in Österreich 2011.

32 Cf. Parlamentarische Enquete 2011.

33 Bucher 2001.

34 By the academic year 2015/16 it will be 214 schools. Because of not yet published data by Statisic Austria no further figures can be given for 2015/16.

35 In faith schools RE is compulsory for all and pupils cannot opt out.

36 AHS = Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule; academic secondary school (9th to 12th form)

37 BMHS = Berufsbildende mittlere/höhere Schule; medium- and high-level vocational school (9th to 11th/13th form)

tional opportunities for young people. One reason for this could be that ethics education is still in its trial phase. This means that whether a school chooses to offer it or not very much depends on the individual school's internal politics; as it is a trial, schools need to pay for ethics education out of their available value units intended for autonomous spending. Another factor is the regional education authority.[38] Both Bucher's scientific evaluation report and many representatives from various institutions[39] are in favour of rolling out ethics education across the board in all non-faith schools in Austria. Due to budget restraints this is, however, unlikely to happen. "There are areas of education that a single subject can only address in a limited way, such as ethics, aesthetics, religion and philosophy." Because "schools are obligated to teach these in a holistic way, they must be addressed at all times and touched on in all subjects. They are in a way inherent in the teaching principles themselves."[40] On the other hand, there are good reasons in favour of introducing ethics as a teaching subject in itself, as it would ensure that this area of education is covered in a structured and mandatory way.[41] Although ethics education is intended to support RE,[42] the main reasons schools give when they apply to trial ethics education at their institution are educational.[43] It has been argued that ethics education should be introduced as a compulsory subject for all pupils who do not attend denominational RE. This would emphasise the autonomy of the subject. Nonetheless, ethics education does reference RE. This is inevitable, simply because of the way the subject has developed. It has also largely been RE teachers' initiative to introduce ethics education into schools.[44] While each of the two teaching subjects has its own individual characteristics[45], they both enable schools to fulfil their obligation to provide a religious-ethical education and to help young people develop "moral, religious and social values" (§ 2 Abs. 1 SchOG)[46]. In his longitudinal study on selected areas of competence ('meaning making', 'dealing with diversity' and 'knowledge') Ritzer was able to impressively demonstrate the actual impact the two subjects are having. In his study, focussed on the county of Salzburg, he surveyed pupils who attended either RE,

38 For the legal framework of legal trials cf. § 7 SchOG.

39 Cf. Parlamentarische Enquete 2011.

40 Jäggle 1999, 7.

41 Cf. Scharer 1997, 380 f.; Bucher 2001, 32; Jäggle/Krobath 2009, 52–54. Mette sums this issue up particularly poignantly: "It is indeed sensible to provide separate subjects which specifically deal with religious and ethical questions and issues; not least for the sobering reason that we can assume in the long run only educational content that is represented by a subject of its own will be taken seriously in schools' curricula." Mette 2007, 213.

42 Cf. Ritzer 2010, 424.

43 "The reasoning behind ethics educations is primarily born out of educational diligence and less to deter pupils from opting out of RE." Bucher 2001, 22.

44 Cf. Bucher 2001, 35–56, 261–263.

45 Cf. e. g. Göller 2002; Fichter-Alber 2004; Langer 1994; Scharer 1997, 380 f.; Mette 2010; Bünker 2011, 45.

46 "Schools in Austria have a responsibility to help young people develop moral, religious and social values as well as values of goodness, truth and beauty, by providing age and context appropriate instruction and teaching. Schools must provide young people with the necessary knowledge and abilities for life and career and teach them the necessary skills to continue acquiring knowledge independently." § 2 Abs. 1 SchOG; cf. also Adam 2000, 135–137.

or ethics education and those attending neither of the two subjects. The study's aim was to establish what impact participating in RE or ethics education had on particular areas of competence.[47] The results are sobering: "RE is able to convey knowledge and can help to facilitate critical discussions on a number of topics. It can, however, not be expected to bring about long-term habitual change. RE can merely make a (modest) contribution to this."[48] One partial finding of the study is especially remarkable: pupils who participate in ethics education are less xenophobic than those who attend either RE or neither of the two subjects. Catholic pupils are more xenophobic than Protestant pupils and those with no religious affiliation. Xenophobia is also more prominent in urban areas.[49] This partial finding already gives cause for concern. After all schools have a central responsibility to address plurality and diversity.[50] If RE were expected to help foster peaceful coexistence, it would need to change its conceptual direction. While it would be nice to think that RE, which for example places great emphasis on interreligious learning could actually reduce xenophobic feelings, this possibility has not yet been empirically tested.

Bucher has recently been advocating the introduction of "a new teaching subject 'Ethics and Religion' that would be compulsory for all"[51]. To do this he suggests that "representatives of the churches/religions and of belief groups (including non-religious groups) would get together with representatives of the state to collaboratively clarify the following question: *What kind of ethical and religious education do* all *young Austrians really need*?"[52] While in 2001 he still recommended that there should be a "compulsory subject for pupils who do not take part in any RE",[53] he now advocates the introduction of the new subject 'Ethics and Religion', which would be compulsory for all pupils. Responsibility for this subject would ultimately rest with the state. It could thematically orient itself on Hans Küng's project 'World Ethos' and should be taught by specially trained teachers.[54] Consequently thought needs to be given to the "legislative framework, which currently governs RE", and, according to Bucher to "whether it is still suitable for the socio-religious circumstances and religious-educational reality at the beginning of the 21st century."[55] Bucher's argument is primarily based on his

47 According to Ritzer, his data gathered in Salzburg, can be seen as valid across Austria. Cf. Ritzer 2010, 100, 111–115. This seems only partially accurate. The capital Vienna differs significantly from all other Austrian counties, for instance in its socio-religious composition.

48 Ritzer 2010, 425

49 Cf. Ritzer 2010, 338–346. Due to low case numbers no changes could be observed after one academic year in the area of 'dealing with diversity'. The scale on 'xenophobia' is the exception in this. There are no denominational differences.

50 Cf. also chapter 1.3 Religious Education in the European Context.

51 Bucher 2014, 15.

52 Bucher 2014, 95 [italicised as in the original] cf. also Bucher 2011, 36. Bucher's proposed solution is similar to Oser's suggestion, which advocates teaching about religion rather than denominational religious education for all 13–17 year olds. Cf. Oser 1996, 157.

53 Bucher 2001, 33. [bold in the original] cf. Bucher's recommendations in: Bucher 2001, 32–34, 288–312.

54 Cf. Bucher 2014, 96–101.

55 Bucher 2011, 35.

*Table 1: Ethics education in Austria**

	BMHS						AHS					
Academic year	**09/10**	**10/11**	**11/12**	**12/13**	**13/14**	**14/15**	**09/10**	**10/11**	**11/12**	**12/13**	**13/14**	**14/15**
Burgenland												
Non-faith schools	20	21	20	22	22	20	8	8	8	8	8	8
Schools offering ethics education	12	11	12	13	12	12	3	3	4	4	4	4
Percentage %	60.0	52.4	60.0	59.1	54.5	60.0	37.5	37.5	40.0	50.0	50.0	50.0
Carinthia												
Non-faith schools	37	36	36	37	35	36	20	20	20	20	20	20
Schools offering ethics education	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Percentage %	5.4	5.6	8.3	8.1	8.6	5.6	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Lower Austria												
Non-faith schools	96	94	93	93	93	91	46	46	46	48	49	49
Schools offering ethics education	11	11	15	16	15	15	7	7	13	15	15	14
Percentage %	5.4	11.7	16.1	17.2	16.1	16.5	15.2	15.2	28.3	31.3	30.6	28.6
Upper Austria												
Non-faith schools	90	87	86	86	86	84	35	35	35	35	35	36
Schools offering ethics education	20	20	19	19	19	19	28	28	28	28	28	28
Percentage %	22.2	23.0	22.1	22.1	22.1	22.6	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	80.0	77.8
Salzburg												
Non-faith schools	32	32	32	33	34	34	21	21	21	21	21	21
Schools offering ethics education	9	9	9	9	9	9	15	15	17	17	17	17
Percentage %	28.1	28.1	28.1	27.3	26.5	26.5	68.2	71.4	81.0	81.0	81.0	81.0

	BMHS						AHS					
Academic year	**09/10**	**10/11**	**11/12**	**12/13**	**13/14**	**14/15**	**09/10**	**10/11**	**11/12**	**12/13**	**13/14**	**14/15**
Styria												
Non-faith schools	85	84	86	79	75	75	42	42	42	42	42	42
Schools offering ethics education	12	11	11	12	12	10	12	12	13	13	13	13
Percentage %	14.1	13.1	12.8	15.2	16.0	13.3	28.6	28.6	31.0	31.0	31.0	31.0
Tyrol												
Non-faith schools	45	45	44	45	47	46	18	18	18	18	18	18
Schools offering ethics education	16	17	17	20	20	20	13	13	13	13	13	13
Percentage %	35.6	37.8	38.6	44.4	42.6	43.5	72.2	72.2	72.2	72.2	72.2	72.2
Vorarlberg												
Non-faith schools	16	16	16	14	14	14	11	12	12	12	12	12
Schools offering ethics education	3	3	3	3	3	3	9	10	10	10	10	10
Percentage %	18.8	18.8	18.8	21.4	21.4	21.4	81.8	83.3	83.3	83.3	83.8	83.3
Vienna												
Non-faith schools	51	50	50	49	50	48	73	74	75	75	76	76
Schools offering ethics education	4	4	4	5	5	5	16	17	21	21	21	20
Percentage %	7.8	8.0	8.0	10.2	10.0	10.4	21.9	23.0	28.0	28.0	27.6	26.3
Austria												
Non-faith schools	472	465	463	458	456	448	275	276	277	279	281	282
Schools offering ethics education	89	88	93	100	98	95	105	107	121	123	123	121
Percentage %	18.9	18.9	20.1	21.8	21.5	21.2	38.2	38.8	43.7	44.1	43.8	42.9

** Author's own representation; the data has been taken from non-published material by Austrian Central Statistical Office and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture or the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs (since 2014).*

own positive scientific evaluation of ethics education, which he conducted in 2001,[56] a repeat of this study ten years later at the University of Vienna[57] and another repeat in Spring 2013,[58] the increasing numbers of people without any religious affiliation, and the claim that in reality RE "has not been as denominational or ecclesiastical as many representatives of the churches think or would like, for a long time".[59] In this context he references his study on RE teachers, which revealed greater support for informative-scientific RE than for catechistic RE. What exactly RE teachers associate with catechistic or informative-scientific RE and what they understand to be their respective objectives cannot fully be established in an empirical-quantitative study.[60] It is important to note that in his argument Bucher often does not distinguish between catechistic and denominational RE or between rigid denominationalism and a general denominational orientation of the subject. Such confusion does not do any justice to the many very different religious-didactic objectives that there are. Denominational RE cannot *a priori* be equated to catechistic religious education.[61] How important these differentiations are becomes apparent in Grimmitt's division of objectives within RE into three ideal-typical areas: 'learning in religion', 'learning from religion' and 'learning about religion'.[62] Roebens expands further on this with his concept of 'learning in/through religion'.[63] There are some voices within the church that express a desire to reintroduce catechistic RE in schools. At least "since the Würzburg Synod […] it has, however, been officially documented within the church that the purpose of RE in schools is not to recruit young people to the church in order to secure its future, but to largely altruistically serve pupils and schools as a whole."[64]

The original evaluation study and both its later replicas show remarkable results regarding pupils' reasons for choosing to attend ethics education. The largest differences in pupils' religious affiliation can be observed when it comes to the point "because

56 Cf. Bucher 2001.

57 Cf. Clark-Wilson 2011.

58 Cf. Bucher 2014, 72–90.

59 Bucher 2011, 34.

60 Strictly speaking Bucher's study investigates RE teachers' objectives rather than RE as such. Studies based on classroom research would be required in order to investigate RE itself. Such research has been conducted by the 'religious-educational research group Essen'/'religionspädagogische Forschungsgruppe Essen' (rpfg) among others, who videotaped and analysed RE classes. Cf. Englert/Hennecke/Kämmerling 2014. The research project TRES looked into which religious-didactic objectives RE teachers from 16 different European countries prefer. Cf. Ziebertz/Riegel 2009; Jakobs 2009; Popp 2013.

61 Cf. e. g. Hilger/Kropač/Leimgruber ^{6}2010.

62 Cf. Grimmitt 2000.

63 Cf. Roebben ^{3}2012, 133–156.

64 Scharer 1997, 379; cf. Bertsch et al. 1976. Along a similar vein Englert very poignantly talks about RE in Germany: "RE is no longer denominational in the sense that it wants to bring children and young people in to a particular faith (objective). It is denominational insofar as it believes that critical engagement with the traditions of a particular religious community is still the most fertile ground for RE and for helping children and young people to develop skills and competencies (starting point or frame of reference)." Englert 2014a 155 f.; cf. Schröder 2014b. With reference to current curricula in Austria cf. Jäggle 2011, 7 f.; cf. chapter 1.4.1 Religion as a Subject in Schools Needs to Justify Its Existence.

there are no RE classes for people from my religious community."[65] For Orthodox and Muslim pupils and pupils belonging to one of the smaller religious communities this is "*the* reason per se"[66] to attend ethics education. In 2001 Bucher still rightly wonders if these pupils would not "feel more 'at home' in a separate type of RE specifically for them." In this context he too argues that ethics education, by now 'Ethics and Religion', should be introduced into all Austrian schools as a regular and compulsory subject for all pupils. He believes that the resulting heterogenic learning groups would offer "an opportunity for real interreligious dialogue"[67], "where not only the question about the good life (the original question of ethics) could be asked, but also questions about Where From, Why and Where To."[68] This plea goes hand in hand with a radical change to or even the dissolution of denominational RE[69] and its didactic ideas. Churches and religious communities would no longer hold any responsibility for RE in schools, as this would become purely a matter for the state.[70] "Even if this model of RE is really simpler to organise, it comes with a number of great dangers; namely: total nationalisation of schools, monopolisation of governmental ethics, and ideologisation and fundamentalisation of religion/s."[71] Finally, one has to ask in this context if general 'Ethics and Religion' education for all, is in fact the appropriate model to facilitate "real interreligious dialogue".[72] Can a teaching subject constructed in such a way really offer such opportunities for learning, when it no longer has any denominational orientation?

Increasing numbers of heterogenic learning groups in some schools offer a starting point for thinking about how religious education in state schools should be organised. Work done by the Council of Europe and the OSCE, the organisation for security and

65 Bucher 2001, 186.

66 Bucher 2001, 187. [italicised as in the original] The replica studies show similar differences at this point regarding religious affiliation. Pupils belonging to numerically small religious communities agree with this statement considerably more often than others. There are also some noteworthy differences between Bucher's 2001 evaluation study and both its later replicas. In 2001 53% of Muslim pupils and 60% of Orthodox pupils stated that the reason why they participated in ethics education was that no RE for their own religion were available to them. In both replica studies agreement with this point was in part significantly lower. In 2010 30.4% of Muslim and 68.6% of Orthodox pupils gave this as their reason. In 2013 it was 25% and 30% respectively. Cf. Bucher 2001, 186; Clark-Wilson 2011, 60–62; Bucher 2014, 75 f. These differences could possibly be explained by the fact that both Islamic and Orthodox religious education has been increasingly available in Austrian schools over the last few years.

67 Bucher 2001, 188.

68 Bucher 2011, 36.

69 There is some experience of ethics and RE that is exclusively organised and answered for by the state within Europe, e. g.: 'Lifestyle-Ethics-Religious Studies' (Brandenburg), 'Ethics and Religions' (Canton of Lucerne), 'Religion and Culture' (Canton of Zurich). Cf. i. a. Kenngott 2014; Kramer 2013; Raters 2013; Borck/Schluß 2009, 104–106; Edelstein 2001; Kilchsperger 2014; Schlag 2013a; 131–134; Schlag 2013b; Helbling et al. 2013; Leimgruber 2013; Kunz i. a. 2005; Dienststelle Volksschulbildung des Kantons Luzern 2011.

70 Cf. Bucher 2014, 98; critical about giving sole responsibility to the state cf. Schlag 2009, 165–168; and Körtner 2010, 146–148.

71 Filipović 2011,243.

72 Bucher 2001, 188.

cooperation in Europe, proves most impressively how constructively this question is being addressed within the European context.

1.3 Religious Education and RE in the European Context[73]

1.3.1 Approaches to Religious Diversity

An understanding that religion is part of society and needs to be addressed within the general education system seems to find increasing political consensus in Europe. The increase in belief-based and religious plurality (i. e. due to migration) and the events surrounding 9/11 have reinforced this awareness. The latter acted as the initial impulse to address religious diversity in some depth and on a European level. The Council of Europe has produced numerous documents[74] emphasising the important role religious communities have to play in facilitating intercultural dialogue about the safeguarding and promotion "human rights, democracy and the rule of law."[75] In addition, it organises meetings with religious communities and enters into a dialogue in order to exchange ideas on common concerns such as peace, education and human rights. In its 'White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue' the Council of Europe "responds to an increasing demand to clarify how intercultural dialogue may help appreciate diversity while sustaining social cohesion."[76] Dialogue is a key word. "The risks of non-dialogue need to be fully appreciated. Not to engage in dialogue makes it easy to develop a stereotypical perception of the other, build up a climate of mutual suspicion, tension and anxiety, use minorities as scapegoats, and generally foster intolerance and discrimination."[77] As part of intercultural dialogue, the Council of Europe argues, religious education, especially in primary and secondary schools, has an important role to play in order to foster "understand religions and beliefs and avoid prejudice." It passionately advocates "the teaching of religious and convictional facts" as well as "knowledge about *all* the world religions and beliefs and their history". [78] Contrary to the idea of a school free from religion "the European Ministers of Education underlined the importance of measures to improve understanding between cultural and/or religious communities through school

73 Cf. research project by the Protestant and Catholic department for Religious Education at the University of Vienna, which compares the various ways religious education is organised in all European countries. "The primary purpose of this research project is to facilitate an international comparison of the various forms of religious education in Europe. This presents a basic concept for the assessment of on-going educational incentives regarding inter-religious competence and integration." Religious Education at Schools in Europe (REL-EDU). The result of this research will be published in six volumes. So far the volumes on Central, Western and Northern Europe have been completed. Cf. Jäggle/Rothgangel/Schlag 2013; Rothgangel/Jackson/Jäggle 2014; Rothgangel/Skeie/Jäggle 2014; Rothgangel/Jäggle/Schlag 2016.

74 Cf. in detail Schreiner 2012. For an initial overview cf. Schreiner 2011a.

75 Council of Europe 2008, 8.

76 Council of Europe 2008, 3.

77 Council of Europe 2008, 16.

78 Council of Europe 2008, 30. [italicised as in the original]

education, on the basis of shared principles of ethics and democratic citizenship; regardless of the religious education system that prevails, tuition should take account of religious and convictional diversity."[79] The Council of Europe regards religion as a part of school culture and an important area for intercultural learning. The council believes that religious diversity needs to be spoken about as a whole-school issue. Schools need to embrace their role as key players and constructively address religious diversity. Whether a school itself is religiously diverse or not it needs to take its responsibility seriously, "because their pupils live and will work in increasingly diverse societies".[80] The Council of Europe is supporting schools in their task by providing them with a handbook on religious diversity and intercultural education[81] as well as a "checklist of key issues and questions for self-reflection, to help different partners to identify their role in creating the right environment for teaching and learning."[82]

1.3.2 Religious Education's Aims and Objectives

Another pan-European organisation dealing with religious education is the OSCE. In 2007 the OSCE turned its attention to religious education in schools and produced the "Toledo Guiding Principles, on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools."[83] As a pan-European organisation that wishes to support its member states in the implementation of human rights and the promotion of democracy, the OSCE contextualises religious education within the framework of human rights education. Its guiding principles are aimed at making a contribution towards a better understanding of religious diversity worldwide and greater visibility for religion in the public realm. On this point the OSCE advocates speaking about religion in objective terms: 'teaching about religions and beliefs is not devotionally or denominationally oriented. It strives for student awareness of religions and beliefs, but does not press for student acceptance of any of them; it sponsors study about religions and beliefs not their practice; it may expose students to a diversity of religious and non-religious views, but does not impose any particular view; it educates about religions and beliefs without promoting or denigrating any of them; it informs students about various religions and beliefs, it does not seek to conform or convert students to any particular religion or belief.'[84] A letter written by the Vatican's representative at OSCE has, however, criticised the 'Toledo Guiding Principles'' view of religion and religious education: 'The document a reductive view of religion and a conception of the secular nature of States and their neutrality that obfuscates the positive role of religion, its specific nature and contribution to society. In doing so, the document contradicts what has always marked the OSCE's understanding of reli-

79 Council of Europe 2008, 31.
80 Keast [3]2008a, 15.
81 Cf. Keast [3]2008b.
82 Keast/Leganger-Krogstad [3]2008, 119.
83 OSCE 2007, 1.
84 OSCE 2007, 21.

gion.'[85] Six month after the publication of the 'Toledo Guiding Principles' the Vatican's congregation for education sent an open letter to all the heads of conferences of bishops, in which it stresses the importance of religious education in schools and strongly advocates for denominational RE.The Vatican bases its argument on the Human Rights Act, making specific reference to the right to religious freedom and to parental rights and believes the 'Toledo Guiding Principles' are attempting to undermine them.[86]

The Council of Europe's and the OSCE's undertakings illustrate the growing attention that is being given to religious education and the amount of support it is receiving on a European level. Both organisations believe that the main responsibility for religious education lies with publicly run schools. Churches and religious communities do not even receive a mention. While the Council of Europe's primary interest lies with the religious dimension within schools, religion and intercultural education and how religious diversity should be addressed, the OSCE focuses on how religious education should be structured within the context of the 'Toledo Guiding Principles'. The OSCE believes that religious education needs to represent religion objectively, thus giving 'learning about religion' preference over denominational RE. This preference does, however, not do complete justice to the phenomenon of religion. In addition it lags behind the point of discussion that had already been reached by countries that have already introduced 'learning about religion' as their model for religious education.[87] When the OSCE's approach is looked at in isolation, it can only serve to inflame opposing opinions – as the conflict between the Vatican and the OSCE has clearly demonstrated – and thus make critical appraisal of the 'Toledo Guiding Principles' impossible. Any such evaluation does, however, deserve the fundamental understanding that schools must not be places for indoctrination – this principle also applies to denominational RE.

1.3.3 Religious Education – a Task for Schools

In this context and at this point of the discussion, developments in the secular nation of France need to be mentioned. It is one of the few countries in Europe that does not offer any RE in publicly run schools (except in the county of Elsass-Lothringen). This laïcité is deeply rooted in French history, particularly the French Revolution, and was written into law at the beginning of the 20th century. In view of increasing cultural and religious diversity in French society, discussions about laïcité and its significance for public edu-

85 Banach 2007; cf. also the consequent open letter by Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education to the heads of conferences of Bishops about religious education in schools, cf. also Congregation for Catholic Education 2009.

86 "The nature and role of religious education in schools has become the object of debate. In some cases, it is now the object of new civil regulations, which tend to replace religious education with teaching about the religious phenomenon in a multi-denominational sense, or about religious ethics and culture – even in a way that contrasts with the choices and educational aims that parents and the Church intend for the formation of young people." Congregation for Catholic Education 2009.

87 In the framework curriculum for 'Religious Education' in England the subject's objectives are clearly identified. They comprise objectives such as 'learning about religion' and 'learning from religion'. Cf. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) 2004.

cation and religion have been getting louder ever since the 1980's. One of the arguments is that "even if publicly run schools themselves do not know if God exists, surely they should know that people and collectives of people exist, who believe He exists, and that this is bound to impact on the lives of individuals and on societyin multiple ways."[88] After the events of 9/11, Education Minister Lang instructed Debrey to write a report on 'L'enseignement du fait religieux dans l'École laïque' ('teaching of religious knowledge in secular schools').[89] Debray emphasises the important role religion has to play in schools, and believes it necessary to gradually move "from a laïcité of incompetence (that simply sees religious ideas as none of its business) to a laïcité of understanding (that sees intellectual understanding of these subject areas as its duty)."[90] Even though religion had some presence in school education throughout the 20th century, its presence was neither systematic nor structured and did not have a dedicated subject of its own. "The Debray-report proposes a number of measures that would effect the curriculum, teacher training and continuing professional development courses for teachers. Above all it proposes the introduction of a course on religious questions and *laïcité* at universities for students training to become secondary school teachers."[91] Religion is still not taught as a subject in its own right, but is dealt with across the spectrum of other subjects (e. g.: as part of history, art and language classes). How religious education must be faring under such circumstances does not require any further exploration – a situation were religion is simply equated to culture can fundamentally not do justice to the phenomenon of religion.[92] Willaime makes reference to the French term 'faits religieux' (religious facts) and its multiple meanings when he argues for a "spiritual dimension" to be introduced alongside the purely descriptive awareness and treatment of religion. Only this he pleads will make deeper understanding possible. "A purely historical and sociological approach, which disregards the experiences of believers, can contribute little to the understanding of religion. At this point an approach is needed that shows sensitive intelligence and combines objective information with empathetic understanding."[93] Such an understanding of religious education is particularly remarkable for secular France, as it rejects an approach that strictly informs about religion and nothing else. Willaime's suggested approach comes with distinct challenges for teachers, who have to respect the principles of the secular school in their lessons and thus need to keep a cer-

88 Willaime 2006, 234.

89 Translated into English from the German translation by Weber in: Willaime 2006, 231, 244. Debray 2002.

90 Translated into English from the German in: Willaime 2009, 435. "Le temps paraît maintenant venu du passage s'une *laïcité d'incompétence* (le religieux, par construction, ne nous regards pas) à une *laïcité d'intelligence* (il est de notre devoir de le prenfre)." Debrey 2002, 22. [italicised as in the original]

91 Willaime 2009, 436. [italicised as in the original] Some of the measures that were introduced following the Debray-report include: the establishment of the 'Institut Européen en Sciences des Religions' (I.E.S.R.) ("Institute for Religious Studies), theological findings concerning the training of teachers have been implemented. Cf. Kerchove 2011, 60–62; Willaime 2006, 231–236.

92 Cf. Schröder 2010, 157 f.

93 Willaime 2009, 437.

tain distance from the 'faits religieux'.[94] Yet even secular France believes that religion needs to be addressed in publicly run schools in order to facilitate an understanding of cultural heritage and the current societal situation.

From the perspective of religious education studies, trends within France and the Council of Europe's and the OSCE's developments mentioned above are of great interest. They need to continue to be closely followed or influenced and critically observed by all member states.[95] All three examples given above (Council of Europe, OSCE and France) regard religious education as an important part of school education, because they are aware of the existing plurality of religion and belief and are asking the key question of how this reality can be addressed constructively. The OSCE supports a model structured around learning about religion and was criticised for this by the Vatican. France sees religion as a matter to be dealt with across the spectrum of all teaching subjects. The question of what approach religious education should adopt has neither been answered within academic religious-educational circles nor on a European level. The reason for this is not least that each approach has already got "a history or a 'biography'"[96] in some European countries.

1.3.4 Europe's many Different Approaches to RE

In Germany in the 1960's and 1970's, RE was seen as a privilege of the churches and contested within society to the point where it was disputed whether it should be taught on school premises at all.[97] Now, on the other hand, there is broad recognition within both political and (religious-) educational discourse that "there is a need for a religious-ethical dimension as part of the education system."[98] According to Mette this recognition can be explained by the following developments: 1. The transition to a multicultural society requires us to practice new ways of interacting with each other harmoniously. 2. Pluralistic societies require respect and understanding, which in turn requires us to know about both our own and other religious traditions. 3. Religion holds potential for conflict. It is necessary to also understand this aspect of religion. 4. Religion – in all its guises – is part of society. 5. The sheer multitude of fundamental and specific ethical problems makes appropriate education necessary.[99] The current debate is no longer so much concerned with whether religion has a right to exist as a subject

94 Cf. Kerchove 2011, 62 f.; Massignon 2009, 56–66. Cf. also recent developments in France, which further illustrate this balancing act. Going forward the French government wants all public schools to display a 'Carte de la laïcité à l'École', a notice with article 15 on it, which stresses that religion is purely a private matter. Cf. Ministère de l'éducation national – Tous droits réservés.

95 For a perspective on German religious education studies against a European backdrop cf. Heimbrock 2004.

96 Schreiner n.d., 1.

97 Religious education studies reacts to such challenges by continuing to develop RE on a conceptual level and by creating pupil-focused RE, thus achieving 'real-life change'. Cf. Englert 2007, 235–237.

98 Mette 2007, 211.

99 Cf. Mette 2007, 211.

in schools at all, but with the question of how it should be structured.[100] An initial look at the various approaches to RE inEurope shows a colourful picture,[101] which is most likely here to stay.[102] This picture is comprised of many different ways of organising RE on the one hand and its varied didactic conceptions on the other. The spectrum of approaches stretches all the way from denominational RE with catechistic objectives accounted for by the church (an elective subject for pupils) to compulsory RE for all pupils, answered for by the state, which strives to inform about religions, but does not align itself to any of them. "When it comes to RE in Europe there is largely a bit of a 'North-South divide'".[103] Non-denominational approaches to RE are particularly prominent in the Northern European countries. Norway for instance replaced denominational RE 'Kristendomskunnskap' ('Christian studies') with the alternative subject 'Livssynskunnskap' ('the study of approaches to life') in 1997 and made it compulsory for all pupils. Following a number of complaints brought before the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) – Christianity still plays an important part in the curricula – the subject's name was changed to 'Religion- livssyn-, og etikkfag' ('subject for religion, approaches to life and ethics').[104] Most European countries offer denominational RE; some as a compulsory subject with the possibility for pupils to opt out, such as Austria, and some as a voluntary subject as in Italy. Nations that implement different approaches in different parts of the country are relatively rare (e. g.: the Netherlands, Switzerland). Aside from the wide range of approaches to RE in Europe, there are some countries that, due to their strict separation of state and religion, do not offer it in publicly run schools at all (Albania, Belarus, Slovenia, as well as France with the exception of the counties Elsass and Lothringen). The fact that RE presents such a colourful picture across Europe can largely be ascribed to the tight connection between the subject and its context. How RE is organised and which educational tasks are assigned to it depends on a number of factors: the relationship between church and state, demographic trends, especially the population's religious affiliation, and the country's education system. All "existing models and approaches have developed through history and are the results of complex developments. Each model of 'RE' has its own history and its own 'biography'".[105]

Attempting to split RE into 'confessional' and 'non-confessional' is not enough, as "confessional in one country can differ significantly from the mainstream understanding of the same term in another country."[106]Schreiner offers a schematic overview of the various models of RE. He categorises them according to the body holding responsibility

100 Cf. Verhülsdonk 2012a; Verhülsdonk 2012b; Verhülsdonk 2013; Kauth 2012a; Knauth 2012b; Schröder 2014a; Kenngott/Englert/Knauth 2015.

101 Cf. also the map of Europe by Lähnemann/Schreiner 2008.

102 Cf. Schweitzer 2006, 95 f.; in reference to Schweitzer cf. Weirer 2011, 117. Schelander sums up as follows: "Looking at the discussion across Europe […], shows that practicable solutions have been found in some areas. Things that always cause arguments in some places and in some situations can bring about pragmatic solutions in others." Schelander 2009, 9.

103 Stettberger ^{6}2010, 70.

104 Cf. Skeie 2008; Skeie 2009; Jackson et al. 2007; Krupka 2010; Schreiner 2011b, 25 f.

105 Schreiner n.d., 1; cf. also Schreiner 2014.

106 Schreiner 2011b, 23; cf. also detailed overview of denominational models of RE in Europe: Filipović 2011, 240.

for RE,[107] then correlates this with the subject's fundamental religious-didactic orientation and whether it is compulsory or voluntary.

Responsibility: religious communities	In cooperation between religious communities and the state	Responsibility: schools (state agencies)
denominational		religious studies
Voluntary subject	voluntary/compulsory subject	compulsory subject

Figure 1: RE in Europe[108]

On the one side, where religious communities hold sole responsibility for RE its didactic orientation will be denominational, thus pupils need to opt into the subject or have the possibility to opt out of it. On the other side, where the state holds sole responsibility for RE, the subject is compulsory for all pupils. In these cases it takes the form of religious studies with the objective to inform about religion. Between these two poles there is RE for which the state and the religious communities share responsibility. When this is the case its orientation can either be denominational or take the form of religious studies and it can be either compulsory or voluntary.

In some European countries and cities there has been a notable trend to ensure that all pupils in publicly run schools receive religious education as a matter of principle. All these regions are consequently bidding farewell to denominationally segregated RE classes, although didactic orientations can still vary considerably. RE that is aimed at all pupils in a classroom, such as in the Scandinavian countries and in the Swiss Cantons of Zurich ('Religion and Culture') and Lucerne ('Ethics and Religions"), does usually take the character of religious studies. However, schools in the Free Hanseatic City of Hamburg have been offering 'RE for all within a protestant authority'[109] for decades. This subject is understood as a special form of denominational RE, not least because all responsibility for it lies with the Protestant Church and not with the state. As an example for RE aimed at all pupils, it is unique, even within Germany.[110] Opinions on the above mentioned trends vary. Some feel that denominational RE is in danger ('on a slippery slope')[111] and believe that denominationally segregated RE (with occasional collaborations) offers the best environment for religious learning,[112] while others think that RE for all pupils in a classroom taught together is the most appropriate way to deal

107 Cf. Schreiner 2007, 12; cf. also Skeie, 242 f.

108 Schreiner 2007, 12.

109 Cf. Doedens/Weiße 1997; Weiße 2002; Doedens/Weiße 2007; Weiße 2008; Doedens/Weiße 2009; Doedens n.d.; Haese 2013; Keßler 2014.

110 Cf. Rothgangel/Schröder 2009.

111 Scharer believes that the sustainability of denominational RE is in danger, if it "keeps moving towards a subject that simply offers information about beliefs, religions and ethics." According to him RE, "the aim of which only is to make it easier to 'handle' different denominations and religions in the public education system" and "that does not see taking an interest in religious and cultural dialogue through education as central to finding solutions for tensions within society" is not sustainable in schools. Scharer 2010b, 57.

112 Cf. i. a. Verhülsdonk 2012a; Verhülsdonk 2013; cf. also Feld/Nordhofen 2010. For a more moderate position cf. Englert 2011a; Englert 2013b.

with religious plurality in schools and to incorporate this issue into lessons.[113] Whatever approach to RE individual European countries/regions decide on in the face of religious plurality, the question of providing each and every pupil with a religious education, remains a challenge. This is the acid test for every approach.[114]

1.4 RE in Publicly Run Schools – A Subject for Public Debate

1.4.1 Religion as a Subject in Schools Needs to Justify its Existence

RE in Austrian schools is a legally well-protected subject and in Germany it is the only teaching subject anchored in constitutional law (Art. 7 Abs. 3 GG). Nonetheless, and not least because of its legal status, RE occupies a special position within schools. The fact that the churches and religious communities hold responsibility for it, that it is split into separate denominational groups and that it is a voluntary subject for some pupils and a compulsory one, that they can, however, opt out of for others, illustrates this special position. Yet, neither its legal standing, nor the fact that it enjoys a high level of acceptance in Austria (although this has been decreasing noticeably over the past few years),[115] nor the fact that secular institutions such as the Council of Europe are increasingly showing their appreciation that it needs to be a firm fixture within the education system,[116] exempt RE from having to justify its existence in publicly run schools. Above all it must not be exempt from justifying itself, because its existence and particularly the way it is currently organised are controversial and are being put into question.[117] As a decline in the general population's acceptance of RE would effect the wider environment it operates in, references to its legal position are legitimate and understandable, but they are not enough. There are two separate laws, which state that RE is part of the educational mandate for schools in Austria – the so-called target article ('Zielparagraph') of the Schools Organisation Act ('Schulorganisationsgesetz') and the national constitution. According to the law "Austrian schools are mandated to contribute to the

113 Cf. i. a. Otto 1992; cf. also Knauth 2012b.

114 Cf. Jakobs 2007, 48–52; Jäggle 2009, 56.

115 Cf. Zulehner 2001, 192 f. Acceptance has been decreasing considerably over the past 30 years (responses for 'very important' and 'important' have dropped from 91% to 69%). Zulehner has an interesting hypothesis when it comes to trends in support for RE: "There are reasons to believe that its significance will increase in the near future, not for ecclesiastical, but for identity-political reasons. In view of interest shown by the so-called 'Culture Christians' this hypothesis is tempting. 'Culture Christians' are those people who want to claim Christianity as Europe's cultural identity, and therefore want it to be more visible. […] Religion becomes stylised and gets (mis)used to construct a continental identity. […] It is supposed to shore up 'Christian' values that form the core of this 'guiding culture', which they command immigrants to follow." Zulehner 2011, 192 f. For a summary on 'Culture Christians' cf. Zulehner 2011, 318.

116 Cf. also chapter 1.3 Religious Education in the European Context.

117 Cf. Initiative Religion ist Privatsache 2013a; on the discussion in Berlin cf. Gräb/Thieme 2011.

formation of young people's moral, religious and social values"[118], so that they "may competently assume responsibility […] guided by moral values" and "be open towards political, religious and ideological ideas other than their own."[119] Consequently "Austrian schools […] are legally bound to provide religious education. Therefore nobody should ever leave school without having received a religious education. This does of course not mean that attending denominational RE should be compulsory."[120]

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights further justifies Austrian schools' responsibility to provide religious education: education "shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups".[121] If understanding among all religious groups is to be an objective of education, religious education must play a central role in it, because understanding only becomes possible once something has been understood,[122] and because it can contribute to achieving school's educational aim to increase pupils' 'ability to plurality'.[123] Both Austrian law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly understand religious education as a task for schools. RE classes, as a subject in itself, make a structural contribution, helping schools live up to the task. Nonetheless, RE needs to be able to justify itself beyond legal reasoning. Discussions in the academic field of religious education studies have come up with numerous lines of argument, including theological, historic-cultural and educational points,[124] to do just that. They vary in their degree of plausibility. Legitimising RE through purely theological arguments is insufficient and according to Kropač[125] even problematic, especially today when strong emphasis on RE's catechistic dimension is being called for.[126] To primarily see RE as a space for church business means to ignore schools' general educational mandate.[127] At least since the Würzburg synod in 1974 the Catholic Church too has understood RE as part of schools' educational mandate. RE must ask itself, and "be able to demonstrate how it participates within the remit of publicly run schools, how it gets involved in co-authoring their objectives, how it can foster them, substantiate them, complement them and if necessary criticise them." Because "responsibility for RE is shared between publicly run schools and the churches"[128] the synod gives both educational and theological reasons when it argues for convergence. The synod justifies RE in publicly run schools with cultural-historical, anthropological and societal arguments. If school aims "to familiarise young people with spiritual traditions [and] […] wants to help them on their way to self-actualisation,

118 § 2 Abs. 1 SchOG.
119 § 14 Abs. 5a B-VG.
120 Jäggle 2011, 7.
121 Art. 26 Abs. 2; cf. also UNO 1948.
122 Cf. Jäggle 2001, 5.
123 Cf. Schweitzer 2008, 297–306.
124 Cf. i. a. Englert 207, 287–301; Adam/Lachmann 2014; Mette 2007, 223–233; Schulte 2008; Kropač/Langenhorst 2012; Ziebertz ^{6}2010a; Ziebertz ^{6}2010b.
125 Cf. Kropač 2007, 107 f.
126 Cf. Jakobs 2007, 41–48; Könemann 2011.
127 Nonetheless, Englert believes that RE is a space for the Christian faith to demonstrate in how far it is able to inculturate itself. Cf. Englert 2012a, 103 f.
128 Bertsch et al. 1976, 131.

it must not settle for simply adapting pupils to the administered world."[129] Consequently RE has a legitimate role to play in publicly run schools, both theologically and educationally. The synod lays out its interests in RE comprehensively. It explains that the purpose of RE is not "to recruit new young people to church to secure its future", but to "adjust the church's commitment to the objectives of publicly run schools" and to always keep in mind that RE must be "a service to young people".[130] By making this educational and theological choice the synod progressed the move to focussing on the character of religious learning considerably.[131]

In general educational theory, religion, religious education and the teaching of RE, are largely unresearched subjects.[132] Recently these areas have, however, been attracting more and more attention.[133] Benner thinks that RE can be justified by employing educational theory. He believes that neither a purely legal nor a purely theological line of argument is sufficient. According to Benner, arguments in support of RE must rather be based on "its indispensable necessity within the education system."[134] He names three reasons why addressing religion in schools is in the public interest: 1. Because some forms of religion are potentially violent, religion needs to be civilised. 2. In order to counteract extremism, religion needs to be addressed and explained as a human condition in publicly run schools. 3. The religious worldview, and actions resulting from it, hold potential for innovation in society more widely.[135] If Benner takes "the inherent logic in religious thinking and doing" as the starting point of his third argument, he thus names "a way of reflection and a space for practice"[136] of a particular quality. Religion therefore offers a genuine possibility to encounter and explore the world. Baumert believes this particular way of looking at and exploring the world is a very productive one in general education. To him school is "the only institution in modern society that gives the upcoming generation an opportunity to engage with different ways of looking at the world through universal ways of communicating."[137] Therefore introducing pupils to different modes of engaging with the world is part of schools' duty to provide a general education. In total, Baumert lists four distinct modes of engaging with the

129 Bertsch et al. 1976, 135. For more information on the educational and theological arguments for convergence cf. Bertsch et al. 1976, 132–138.

130 Bertsch et al. 1976, 141. The diaconal dimension of RE is justified christologically. "God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ and shown how He wants to be there for mankind. Man is called to the faith by Christ and is at the same time tasked and liberated to 'be there for others'. This 'being there for others' is a very essential task for a church that acts on the authority of Christ. Regardless if they are followers or not it must be prepared to serve all people with all that it is, according to its calling. RE is one such way to serve young people. In this regard it must be seen as diaconal." Bertsch et al. 1976, 141.

131 Despite their focus on pupils and their experiences, Englert believes the ideas of the Würzburg synod aim at "greater congruence with Christian belief: with objective religion." Englert 2007, 237; cf. Englert 2007, 235–237.

132 Cf. Oelkers et al. 2003. Cf. also Schweitzer 2014a, 82–85.

133 Cf. e. g. Groß 2004; Ziebertz/Schmidt 2006; Benner 2014.

134 Benner 2004, 9.

135 Cf. Benner 2004, 10–12.

136 Benner 2004, 12.

137 Baumert 2002, 106.

world: 1. Cognitive-instrumental, primarily encountered in maths and the sciences; 2. aesthetic-expressive, representing e. g. languages, music, art; 3. normative-evaluative, can be seen in e. g. history, economy, politics and law; 4. one that entails engaging with problems of constitutive rationality, such as in religion and philosophy.[138] Since none of these modes of looking at the world can substitute any of the others, RE is a constitutive part of general education. While Baumert offers a theory based in educational science, which justifies why religious education needs to be a part of general education, he does not yet answer the question of how it should be implemented in schools, or whether it should be a separate subject or covered across other existing subjects. He also does not further define what exactly engaging with problems of constitutive rationality means.[139]

Especially as it is governed by policy focused on 'output', RE, like many other subjects, is faced with the challenge of having to prove why it is relevant to society. Such policy can surely only improve teaching quality, as it understands and fosters pupils as subject to their religious learning processes. It also helps to keep excessive and unrealistic expectations at bay.[140] Furthermore, it is important to bring arguments of a functional nature, as they in particular are met with a high degree of acceptance by society.[141] However, neither education in general, nor religious education in particular, can be reduced to its functional content, because (religious) "education works, if it is more than *just* functional."[142] Scharer vehemently disagrees with the functionalisation of Christian education and argues against "aligning the concept of religious education to current educational policy":[143] Christian truth, according to Scharer, must not be limited in either a sectorial or functional way; faith does not serve a purpose.[144] Altmeyer emphasises that the more religious education, and the way it is taught in publicly run schools, is being questioned "the more those who defend it rely on functional arguments: they outline why education needs religion and visa versa why religion cannot manage without education. The functional argument alone seems to still hold any promise of success." Altmeyer critically questions the lines of argument used by the "defenders of religious education". So long as the functionality of education is emphasised in these arguments "[it] falls under suspicion of in fact being a lack of education: its ideal is not itself, but the purpose that it serves."[145] Mette in particular warns us not to be taken in by

138 Cf. Baumert 2002, 106–113; cf. also Tenorth's 2004 critical comments, 655 f.

139 In his examination of Baumert's educational theory Kropač systematised how the multi-layered word rationality can be understood, and in view of religious education, substantiates it as religious rationality. He further unfolds religious rationality into cognitive, aesthetic and practical dimensions, lists educational opportunities for each of them and takes a critical look at his own concept. Cf. Kropač 2012, 70–81; cf. also Schambeck 2012, 87–95.

140 Cf. Paechter 2012.

141 Cf. Scharer 2010b for a critical view; cf. also Altmeyer 2011, 145–147.

142 Peukert 2002, 56. [italicised as in the original]

143 Scharer 2003, 42.

144 Cf. Scharer 2003, 40.

145 Altmeyer 2011, 146. Altmeyer suggests two constitutive principles as a theory of religious education; the basic human experience of asking questions beyond oneself and to striving for education on the one hand, and the lasting experience of the other's otherness and the potential to develop ones identify through encounters with her/him, on the other. Cf. Altmeyer 2011, 148–152.

an abridged understanding of (religious) education. To him RE in publicly run schools is only sustainable, if it is able to prove what kind of a contribution it is making to schools' educational mandate. RE does, however, not face this task from a perspective of functionality. "Religion or faith is relevant to educational processes precisely because it does not simply succumb to dominant opinion and because it is not compatible with all possible interests."[146] Even though Mette, referring to Johann Baptist Metz's thesis on the God-crisis, an evaporation of God, predicts an increasing indifference towards the biblical question of God, with consequences for religious education, teaching RE will remain relevant. Now consumerism, naturalism and socio-Darwinism are taking the place of biblical religion and its image of God. In view of this diagnosis RE, according to Mette, is tasked with "maintaining the question of God […], because the concept of God prevents a normalisation of that, which one cannot resign oneself to; it preserves a sensibility towards the non-identical and the unconsoled and keeps expectations alive." It is tasked with having the strength to "fight for the possibility for a humane life."[147] By addressing the question of God and keeping it alive, RE familiarises pupils with religious rationality[148] and motivates them to see the world through 'world-distantiation' (Weltabstand[149]). It thus releases its educational powers in schools and is therefore a relevant subject amongst subjects.

Having said that, there are at least two distinct trends that question the legitimacy of RE in publicly run schools as it currently stands. On the one side, secular groups hold the opinion that RE in its present format has no place in publicly run schools. On the other side, voices that want RE to be conceptualised along more catechistic lines can be heard. While the former consider religious education to be a private matter, and believe that religious education of young people is primarily the parent's responsibility, the latter perceive the proposition for secularisation[150] and modernity, as well as cultural and religious diversity, as a threat. They believe that the task of RE in schools is to help young people catch up on their otherwise largely non-existent religious socialisation.

---

146 Mette 2007, 226, cf. also Mette 2010, 311–313.

147 Mette 2009, 22; cf. also Reese-Schnitker 2009, 215–219. Englert addresses the power of the Judeo-Christian tradition in a similar way, which he defines into three dimensions: the truth (God) freedom and responsibility; through a connection to a binding truth (God) man is able to achieve greater freedom, which gives her/him responsibility for himself and others. Cf. Englert 2007, 167–172.

148 Cf. Kropač 2012.

149 Cf, Luther 1992, 24–29. Luther differentiates between non-religious and religious questions. While the former focus on something in the world, the latter refer to the world itself and the capacity for being-in-the-world. Religious questions promote distance from the world. "Making claims about another world means questioning this world, and seeing this world differently. Consequently, religious questions neither refer to something in this world nor to another world, but to world-distantiation." Luther 1992, 25. Collmar aptly described fundamental principles of religious education: "It is thus not simply about *reflecting on the Christian faith, its utterances and objectifications*, but also about *interpreting the world and oneself through the Christian faith*. Religious education comprises the ability to independently interpret the world and oneself because of elementary theological insights and experiences." Collmar 2004, 210. [italicised as in the original]; cf. Mette 2007, 228 f.

150 Cf. Ziebertz 2002, for a critical view.

In spring 2013 Austria held an unsuccessful popular petition against 'the privileges of the church',[151] which above all propagandised against the Roman Catholic Church and demanded the complete separation of church and state. RE as it is taught in publicly run schools at the moment was also heavily criticised. The Austrian campaign group 'Religion ist Privatsache' ('Religion is a Private Matter') has been attacking current RE in a similar way. This group refers to churches and religious communities, above all the Roman Catholic Church, as "anti-educational organisation[s]", that practice "child-indoctrination at the taxpayer's expense." The group further believes that the present way RE is organised is proof in itself that "it is the least suitable method to learn *about* religions."[152] It also claims that under the guise of religious freedom, the current legal situation contravenes the clear separation of church/religious communities and state. The group goes on to say that the societal situation in Austria puts pressure on young people not to opt out of RE. It believes that the current legal framework for ethics education is unsatisfactory, as it is primarily used as "a means of extending pressure to make opting out of RE either more difficult or less attractive".[153] For this reason the campaign group also demands a reformulation of both RE and ethics education into the new subject "Ethics and Religion*s* Education".[154]

The second fundamental demand on RE in its current form, Jokobs explains, is for it to move in a more catechistic direction,[155] which would cause it to become re-catechised and turn into a church-like institution.[156] Jokobs believes that if such tendencies were to be pushed through there would be one clear consequence: "Re-catechisation cuts off the branch on which RE is sitting."[157] RE of this kind has only very limited, if any, legitimacy in publicly run schools. "Because of its faith-based property denominational RE can", in Jakobs' view, "in part fulfil a catechistic function". Therefore there are four "gateways into denominational RE having a catechistic renaissance" inherent within the lines of argument about denominational RE:[158] 1. Fostering the finding of ones' roots and identity through engagement with a lived denomination/religion in denominational RE; 2. believing that it alone offers the chance to confront pupils with existential life questions; 3. demanding of RE teachers to bear authentic testimony to their own faith, and 4. using RE to compensate for pupils' lack of knowledge about faith.[159] As Jokobs sees RE as part of publicly run schools' educational mandate, he leaves open the question of how, given the current denominational framework, religious education can be made available to all pupils. He appeals to the churches and religious communities to

151 Cf. Initiative gegen Kirchenprivilegien 2013. As it only attracted 56,673 signatures (0.89% of all those eligible to vote) it did not achieve the necessary numbers to be discussed in parliament. Cf. Bundesministerium für Inneres 2013.

152 Initiative Religion ist Privatsache 2013b. [italicised as in the original]

153 Initiative Religion ist Privatsache 2013a 2. With reference to Bucher 2001, 50.

154 Initiative Religion ist Privatsache 2013a, 1.

155 Cf. Jakobs 2007; Weirer 2012, 44; Porzelt 2012.

156 Cf. Könemann 2011.

157 Jakobs 2007, 51.

158 Jakobs 2007, 42 f.

159 Cf. Jakobs 2007, 43–48; on different ways of engaging with religion in schools and communities cf. Porzelt 2007, 53–60; cf. also Mette 2007, 229–232.

"look beyond the status quo and reflect without bias on non-denominational RE and all the many different forms teaching religion can take."[160]

1.4.2 The Principle of Denominationalism Gets Increasingly Put into Question

If RE conceptually no longer sees itself as catechesis in schools, aiming to promote life within the faith, but in line with the Würzburg synod, as a service to schools and pupils,[161] the question inevitably arises, and not only recently,[162] why it is still taught in denominationally segregated groups. There are at least two factors responsible for this challenge to the denominational principle: 1. Increasing cultural and religious diversity in society (e. g. migration or the reunification of Germany) and 2. a change in the pupil population (e. g. largely no religious or church-affiliated socialisation).[163] Despite the fact that the denominational principle has started to unravel, as its strict interpretation has been put into question, Englert believes denominational RE still to be the most appropriate form of religious education in schools.[164] In his argument, Englert distinguishes between two concepts of denominational RE – that of passing on the faith and that of interpreting the lived world. The former has by now been replaced with the latter. The concept of passing on faith centres around introducing pupils into a specific faith and the rehearsal of religious practices. Englert thinks that in schools this concept is condemned to failure, as "it is up against the enormous tendency toward an individualisation of religion."[165] The concept of interpreting the lived world, on the other hand, addresses young people's subjective notion of religion and puts them at the centre of the teaching and learning process. However, if it wants to meet the requirements of denominational RE, this concept too "must talk about formational aspects and milestones of a religion, 'tradition', 'denomination' and 'institution'". These three areas – Englert calls them categories – "provide a remedy against subjective religion's lack of history [,] […] impending thoughtlessness and social inconsequentiality." They do this as follows: 1. They provide a language and offer "every individual the chance to see her/his religious understanding in context of a wider tradition." 2. They bring into play the question of truth, which opens up "numerous possibilities for productive debates on final self-actualisation." 3. They illustrate the meaning of religious conviction, by looking at the "communion of those who have allowed this conviction to guide their lives."[166] Denominational RE interpreted in this way goes far beyond any approach that simply teaching

160 Jakobs 2007, 51; cf. also Mette 2007, 232 f.

161 Cf. Bertsch et al. 1976, 141–143; Scharer 1994; Mette 1998, 143–156; Mette 2007, 223–255.

162 The concept of denominationalism was already the subject of academic religious-educational debate in the 1970's. For an overview with extensive bibliographical references cf. Schlüter 2000, 4–6.

163 Cf. e. g. Langer 1993, 27–30; Mette 2007, 208 f.; Mette 2010, 303 f.; Englert 2007, 233; Doedens 2010, 20–22.

164 Cf. Englert 2011b, 298. On the distinctions between different forms, concepts, approaches and ways of learning in RE; cf. Englert 2011b.

165 Englert 2007, 238

166 Englert 2007, 240–242.

about religion, masks out[167] the question of truth and seeks a neutral view of religion.[168] To Englert "neither a strictly positional approach to transmitting the faith, nor a strictly neutral approach to informing about religion seem the appropriate way to best support young people to develop the ability to find their way in religious matters. Anybody who wants to grow their abilities to position themselves independently within a religiously diverse context does not only need the freedom to experiment with their own position (argument against the denominational concept) but also the opportunity to have productive arguments with those who hold different positions (argument against the neutral concept)."[169] Englert's line of argument is convincing. It emphasises the strength of denominational RE, without insisting on maintaining the denominational triad (pupils, teachers and the content of what is being taught, can be assigned to a common denomination). This triad cannot be maintained, and has in fact not existed for quite some time, among other reasons, because the body of pupils attending RE has changed. According to Englert jointly organised ecumenical RE is conceivable, because "it would still be denominational in the sense that it would be faith-oriented (on the common creed of all Christian churches). In a similar vein there could be joined-up Islamic RE organised by the various different branches of Islam."[170]

Ecumenical RE as well as RE organised by the various different branches of Islam, first and foremost, presents churches and religious communities with the task to cooperate. The Protestant Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Germany[171]

---

167 Cf. Pfeiffer 2005, 43; Doedens 2005, 198–204.

168 Weirer follows a similar line of argument. In his reasoning he focuses on a church's or religious community's actual social structure. "Denominationalism is constituted through the RE teacher as a person, who holds a clear denominational position. Despite all personal nuances, she/he represents the actual institution of the church and its social structure in lessons." Weirer 2012, 44. In this line of argument the denominationalism of RE classes is primarily dependent on the RE teacher. Cf. also Mette 2007, 213.

169 Englert 2011b, 298. Schröder takes a similar stance 2014b: Schröder/Tammeus 2014.

170 Englert 2011a, 42. Englert also supports this argument based on the results of his recently published classroom study on Roman Catholic RE in the Ruhr district and adds a conceptual point. "If denominational RE is to be preserved at least for the foreseeable future, I believe it needs further development in two areas in particular: 1. On an organizational level – denominational-cooperative RE that is wanted and defended by both of the large churches needs to be rolled out across the board as unbureaucratically as possible. 2. On a conceptual level – a concerted effort needs to be made to clearly address areas of denominational RE that are currently problematic and to work on realistic, future-oriented solutions." Englert 2014b, 375. On the classroom study for Essen cf. Englert/Hennecke/Kämmerling 2014, especially 227–229.

171 Religious education discourse on RE in Austria is strongly influenced by the German discourse. "There have been no original discussions on RE within the Austrian church [more accurately within the Roman Catholic Church in Austria P.K.]. An initiative by the former Bishop for Schools Dr. Helmut Krätzl is the only exception." Scharer 2010b, 57. In reference to Krätzl, Scharer is referring to a 1995 symposium in Salzburg titled 'Sustainable RE' ("Religionsunterricht mit Zukunft"). Cf. also Religionsunterricht mit Zukunft 1995. An educational synod for the Protestant churches in Austria was held in Graz in 1996. It worked on a statement on RE, which was later published. Cf. Bildungssynode 1996 der Evangelischen Kirchen in Österreich 1997.

have commented on this in respective publications on the issue.[172] The memorandum 'Identity and Dialogue' (1994; 'Identität und Verständigung') by the Protestant Church in Germany comes out in favour of denominational-cooperative RE and inprinciple sees no issue with opening up its RE classes to non-Protestant pupils.[173] Catholic bishops on the other hand are clear in their publication 'The Educational Power of RE' ('Die bildende Kraft des Religionsunterrichts') that they insist on maintaining the denominational triad, but also state that "this does not necessarily prevent religious education from opening up to the ecumenical approach and welcoming pupils who are not, or not yet, denominationally tied to the faith."[174] These pupils, according to the Catholic bishops in Germany should, however, not form the majority in any RE class. They are also decidedly against any concept of RE that would be jointly organised and answered for by the churches.[175] In the jointly authored paper 'On the Cooperation of Protestant and Catholic RE' both churches name areas where they feel cooperation would be possible. These stretch from practices in schools to school administration and even to teacher training. The paper names the following possibilities for cooperation when it comes to RE classes: reciprocal use of teaching materials, inviting RE teachers or denominational representatives from the other denomination to speak on particular issues and questions, occasional team-teaching-lessons as well as joint teaching projects and project days. Regional circumstances, particular features about certain types of schools, and challenges imposed by educational reforms offer further possibilities for denominational cooperation. These are, however, not specifically listed in the document. The two churches' differing opinions on who should be allowed to participate in their RE classes remain unchanged in this paper.[176] This document forms the foundation for denominational-cooperative RE in Baden-Würtenberg.[177] Austria too offers denominational-cooperative RE in a few schools in Vienna (Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox)[178] and in the other counties (Roman Catholic and Protestant). Such efforts are of great interest to religious education studies, as they fulfil the churches' common obligation "to promote ecumenical openness and co-operation in Christian education, and in theological training, continuing education and research"[179], as outlined in the 2001 Charta Oecumenica. 20 years after the publication of 'Identity and Dialogue' the Protestant Church in Germany published a further document on Protestant RE – 'Finding Religious Orientation' (2014). This paper talks about RE "as a teaching subject that addresses [religious and ideological P.K.] plurality as a central issue, is focussed on the fundamental tasks of schools and education, and can make a

172 Cf. Kirchenamt der EKD ²1995; Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz 1996; Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz 2005; Die Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und die Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD) 1998; Kirchenamt der EKD 2014.

173 Cf. Kirchenamt der EKD ²1995, 66–68, 88.

174 Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz 1996, 50.

175 Cf. Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz 1996, 79 f.

176 Cf. Die Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und die Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD)1998.

177 Cf. Kuld et al. 2009; Schweitzer/Biesinger 2002; Biesinger et al. 2006; Schweitzer 2013a.

178 Cf. Bastel et al. 2006; Danner 2015.

179 Conference of European Churches (CEC)/Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE) 2001, 5.

substantial contribution to fulfilling them."[180] It further states that Protestant RE will remain open to non-Protestant pupils. It is worth noting that in addition to the plea for denominational-cooperative RE, as already expressed in 'Identity and Dialogue' the recent paper also "expressly" states that Protestant RE strives towards "cooperation with other religious communities' RE provisions."[181] In doing so, the Protestant Church in Germany once again declares cooperation to be one of its most central concerns.

Given the fact that ideological and religious plurality is continuously on the rise and that the number of different denominational RE options is increasing at the same time, organising denominationally segregated RE lessons in schools is becoming difficult. In practice it happens more and more often that children from different classes are brought together for RE,[182] "maybe simply out of local necessity, because it would otherwise not be possible to offer RE at all."[183] Developments like this are putting the denominational principle under pressure. In view of the difficulties denominational RE's organisational structure poses, it is worth thinking about how RE could principally be provided for all pupils.[184] A look at Europe and at discussions on religious education within the German speaking regions reveal a number of developments and pleas that support changes to the denominational principle. They support alternative forms of RE, that are well thought through both theologically and in terms of religious education studies. These pleas recognise the limits of both the denominational principle and non-denominational approaches and point towards alternatives that can be called denominational. Suggestions for alternatives are very varied: for the Swiss denominational-cooperative RE, the scope of accountability for which should be widened to further religious communities,[185] "is the sustainable way forward for schools in Europe".[186] Similarly Mette supports an approach to RE that "is not only based on ecumenical and inter-religious openness, but on ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, where all religious communities represented in any given regional context agree on common basic principles for RE."[187] According to Jäggle, the future of religious education in schools in the form of designated RE lessons, can only be secured if "it gives categorically everybody the chance to a religious education and is thus a compulsory subject – whatever form this may take."

---

180 Kirchenamt der EKD 2014, 11.

181 Kirchenamt der EKD 2014, 13.

182 Cf. Hütte/Mette 2003.

183 Mette 2002, 402.

184 Cf. Jakobs 2007, 48–52.

185 Cf. Schweitzer 2000. According to Schweitzer cooperation in RE is inseparably linked to ecumenical and inter-religious processes of communication. "For the moment it needs to be said though that RE partially accounted for by the churches and religious communities, cannot simply practice a religious unity in schools that does not exist anywhere else. RE has its part to play in fostering inter-religious communications, yet at the same time it is itself tied into these ecumenical and interreligious processes of communication as a whole." Schweitzer 2000. On denominational-cooperative RE cf. e. g. Schlüter 1997; Lachmann 1997; Schmid/Verburg 2010; Kuld et al. 2009; Bastel et al. 2006; Schweitzer/Biesinger 2002; Biesinger et al. 2006; Schweitzer 2013a. Kahrs argues for an independent subject group that is compulsory for all. Cf. Kahrs 2009.

186 Schweitzer 2000; cf. also Schweitzer 2013b.

187 Mette 2007, 221.

Jäggle argues that denominational-cooperative RE needs to be developed further into RE for all, which should be accounted for by the churches and religious communities. He points towards the various reasons why this approach to RE should be implemented and suggests that "primarily practical motivations can also be a respectable reason", but continues, that in light of religious plurality "denominational-cooperative religious education does not only appear to be a practical solution, but also an appropriate and necessary one." Besides some mostly organisational reasons, Jäggle also mentions the necessity for religious learning to address the "issue of plurality" constructively and understand its responsibility "towards a fundamentally dialogical approach". As this form of RE would be accounted for by churches and religious communities it would "not reduce religion to ethics."[188] It would constitute a very special quality of learning directly with, and in the wider context of, actual religions. RE structured like this, can justifiably be called denominational: it provides access to religion in an authentic way and does not shy away from addressing questions of truth and God. Nonetheless, there are doubts about any concept that moves away from denominational RE in its present form. Englert for instance wonders if RE that is accounted for by the churches and religious communities could ever find common ground in the curriculum.[189] What is seen as a highly unlikely scenario in Germany has already been made a reality in Austria: nine legally recognised churches and religious communities have agreed on a common skills-model for a skills-focused school leaving exam at AHS schools and have made a jointly devised recommendation for possible subject areas and exam questions.[190] In some schools in Austria, RE by everybody and for everybody would be a possible way forward. It is therefore worth investigating if such an approach to RE would find acceptance among RE teachers and partners[191] in schools where denominational RE is stretched to its limits. Jäggle's suggestion is a design concept for how RE in schools could be organised "so that schools are able to fulfil their obligation to offer religious education"[192] on the one hand, but "without taking responsibility away from the legally recognised churches and religious communities" on the other.[193]

188 Jäggle 2009, 56; cf. Jäggle 2011,10–12.

189 Englert asks the following legitimate questions: "What kind of religious competencies does this kind of RE aim to develop? Can we really be so optimistic to think that even only Jews, Christians and Muslims will be able to agree on a common idea *of* what constitutes 'the ability to align oneself religiously', 'mature religiousness' or 'grown-up belief'? Can we really hope that there can ever be a blueprint for all the issues, texts, religious beliefs, festivals, rituals etc. that need to be worked on in RE that is approved by all the major religions? One that the religions themselves don't only see as an unavoidable, impoverished version of religious education, but that they genuinely value and support out of conviction?" Englert 2011a, 39.

190 Cf. Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur 2012.

191 Comprised of pupils, teachers, parents and school administration.

192 ÖRF 2010, 62.

193 Jäggle 2009, 56. What this form of RE will actually look like in practice, requires further clarification.

1.5 The State of Research in 'New' Empirical Studies[194]

Empirical research in the field of religious education makes an essential contribution to the realistic perception and analysis of theory and practice. It also contributes to the "timeliness"[195] of theology as a whole.[196] The thematic focus in recent specialist journals shows just how important empirical research in the field of religious education studies has become.[197] This also becomes very apparent in the many studies[198] acting on Wegenast's call for an empirical turnaround[199] in order to "make thinking about new perspectives and ways forward for religious education, that have a sound grasp on contemporary developments, possible."[200]

The next section offers a brief overview[201] on the state of research of empirical studies that 1. address the religious dimension in schools and religious plurality in schools in particular, 2. that provide information about the value placed on RE in schools and about and 3. how well the various ways RE is organised are accepted. The problem analysis at the beginning of this study explains why reviewing this, after all, rather broad area of research is necessary: this present study has arisen out of the reality that religious diversity is on the increase and that this fact has consequences for RE in schools. As religious education can be seen as part of general school education and as RE is an educational task for schools, they are required to handle this changed, increasingly religiously pluralistic situation constructively. Put another way – religious plurality is the context schools operate within. This can be a challenge for schools. If

194 'New' studies is comprised of all empirical research since 1990.

195 Cf. Englert 1988. Altmeyer/Bitter/Theis aptly expressed the time sensitive nature of religious education studies in their chameleon analogy: "Religious education studies is like a chameleon, as it is sensitive to specific times, changing learning partners and varied living contexts, it is inevitably time sensitive; with changing urgency and thus also an ability to adapt how it understands itself. Looked at from a critical, external perspective this constantly changing play of colours when it comes to declarations of priorities in religious education seems like a weakness. Looked at from within this perceived weakness is, however, a strength: it is an attentiveness towards new learning partners, new conditions for religious socialisation and the culturality of all religious practices and theories." Altmeyer/Bitter/Theis 2013, 255 f.

196 Porzelt warns about the dangers of empiricism and other 'pitfalls' of empirical research in the field of religious education. "If the study of religious education wants to preserve its identity as a constructively critical science, it is and will remain dependent on sources beyond the empirical." Porzelt 2011, 72.

197 Cf. i. a. Themenheft "Im Blickpunkt": Empirische Religionspädagogik 2010; Themenheft Religionspädagogik und Empirie 2011.

198 Cf. Literature reports or anthologies that illustrate the wide range of religious education research. Cf. Porzelt/Güth 2000; Artzt/Porzelt/Ritzer 2010; Schelander 2011; Ziebertz 2011; Höger/Arzt 2016.

199 Cf. Wegenast 1968.

200 Porzelt 2011, 77.

201 This overview is very brief and does not go into detail about individual studies, because they are being addressed in great detail at a later point. Cf. also chapter 5 Discussion of Results and a Look into the Future of Religious Education.

schools want to fulfil their religious educational mandate, key questions[202] such as how to handle religious plurality constructively and what type of RE is most appropriate, need to be asked.

'Older' empirical studies on RE often investigated the question of how accepted or liked the subject was by pupils. These numerous studies produced disparate[203] results and RE was in part awarded poor marks. 'Newer' studies conducted in the German speaking[204] areas of Europe also increasingly show empirical findings on the religious dimension and the importance of RE in schools as well as on the various ways RE is organised. Academic research papers on schools' religious dimension, which consider religious plurality as part of their research, are rare. RE lessons and RE teachers on the other hand are among the most thoroughly empirically researched subjects in the field of religious education studies. Due to an appreciably changed religious mix among pupils, the reunification of Germany, the question whether or not religious education and RE should have a place in the new German counties and other reasons, work in the above areas of research has been pushed and accelerated over the last few years.

1.5.1 Research Studies on the Religious Dimension in Schools and on Dealing with Religious Diversity

Studies on the religious dimension in schools and dealing with religious plurality are easy to review, as there are not very many of them. They point out that while religion and religious diversity are issues for schools as a whole, they rarely address religious diversity in a constructive way. In the mid 1990's Fischer et al.[205] conducted a rather qualitative-explorative study on how religious diversity is being dealt with, at four schools in Germany, England and the Netherlands. Using an interdisciplinary comparison process, they uncovered patterns of behaviours when it comes to teachers dealing with cultural and religious diversity as part of intercultural learning (1. super-elevation and appropriation, 2. postponing and delegating, 3. ignoring, 4. acceptance and 5. contextual and interactive debate).[206] Schools that made an active effort to address religious plurality did not only experience changes in the classroom, but noticed a positive effect on the entire school structure. This suggests that it would be beneficial to address religious diversity as part of school development processes.[207] A qualitative-empirical study by Bolz/Schrumpf/Jäggle to some extent ties in with that by Fischer. They studied the religious implications of everyday school life in selected primary schools in Vienna. They investigated the question of how schools experience cultural and religious difference and were able to replicate some of the behavioural patterns Fisher et al. had iden-

202 According to Scharer only, "a positively accepted presence of religion/s in school that is capable of pluralism is sustainable in the long term." Scharer 2010b, 57.

203 Cf. e. g. Havers 1972; Prawdzik 1973. For an extensive overview of older studies – published before 1990 cf. Ziebertz 1995; Bucher 1996, 18–28, Bucher 2000a; Bucher 2000b, 16–22.

204 The state of research presented here focuses on the German speaking areas of Europe, although some international studies from other language areas do find a mention.

205 Cf. Fischer et al. 1996.

206 Fischer 1996, 110–112.

207 Cf. Fischer et al. 1996.

tified. They also observed a largely positive social climate in schools, although religion and religious difference had largely been resigned to the private realm.[208] In her qualitative-empirical study Strutzenberger expresses her "disillusionment"[209] at the fact that even RE teachers, who are directly involved in school development processes, never explicitly mention religious diversity during problem-focussed interviews on religion and school development. According to RE teachers, religion and RE lesson do not contribute anything significant to the school culture. Strutzenberger believes that RE teachers' attitude is due to their conformity with the system. She explains that since schools hardly address religion and religious diversity at all, the RE teachers she interviewed did not mention these subjects either.[210] A partial study conducted by REDCo-Projects looked at strategies teachers employ when dealing with (religious) plurality. Teachers surveyed for this study feel positively towards this issue and have strategies at their command to deal with religious plurality in school. Nonetheless, the above-mentioned studies show that all positive experiences and strategies they uncovered only influence behaviour in everyday teaching reality in a limited way.[211]

1.5.2 Research Studies on the Acceptance of RE and the Way it is Taught in Schools from the Perspective of RE Teachers

The existing spectrum of research into RE is much broader. The specific conditions RE operates in can vary considerably and this in turn influences how RE lessons are structured. Teaching religion in a large city such as Vienna is very different from teaching it outside of the city. Consequently teachers must always deal with the specific context they find themselves in and be mindful of its possibilities as well as its limitations. Jäggle's survey of RE teachers at primary schools in a large city (Vienna) and in a rural area belonging to the archdiocese of Vienna (Lower Austria), confirmed this. For example, as opposed to in the city, there are no ecumenical RE practices in rural areas; in rural areas RE is a more straightforward part of school and education than in the city.[212] A survey of RE teachers, conducted by Bucher/Rothbucher, in the archdiocese of Salzburg points to similarly striking regional differences. Their sample group comprised RE teachers from all school types. Where she/he teaches is not the only factor reflected in an RE teacher's attitudes towards different possibilities for the future of RE; her/his age and the type of school she/he teaches at also have an impact. Most teachers questioned agree that existing regulations governing RE should remain in place. When it comes to different options for the future of RE, there are, however, significant differences depending on school type, the age of the teacher and their location (urban/rural). Teachers working at AHS or BHS schools are more frequently in favour of interreligious and ecumenical learning. This group of teachers is also less attached to the status quo and less likely to reject the idea of compulsory non-denominational RE for all pupils. The younger

208 Cf. Bolz/Schrumpf/Jäggle 2000; cf. Jäggle 2000.
209 Strutzenberger 2012, 444.
210 Cf. Strutzenberger 2012, 436–446.
211 Cf. Avest/Bakker/Want 2009.
212 Cf. Jäggle 1992; Jäggle 1993a; Jäggle 1993b; Jäggle 1995.

a teacher is and the more urban her/his surroundings are, the more likely she/he is to be supportive of interreligious learning.[213] The 1999 'Essen survey' was dedicated to, amongst other things, finding out what RE might look like in the future. It surveyed RE teachers working in primary schools in the diocese of Essen and conducted comparative studies in Bamberg, Schleswig-Holstein and Kiel. According to Englert/Güth "the conditions under which RE is being delivered today", are so heterogeneous that "a universal conceptual solution" for teaching RE "is no longer possible."[214] In Essen a narrow, simple majority is in favour of ecumenical RE (45.2%), followed by those who prefer denominational RE (42.0%). General RE for all and voluntary RE offered by the church for those who are interested, find comparatively little support. If RE teachers from Essen gave preference to ecumenical RE in light of a religiously diverse body of pupils, they did so for conceptual and not for pragmatic reasons.[215]

The question of denominational cooperation in RE becomes increasingly pressing the more religiously pluralistic the body of pupils becomes. Feige et al. surveyed RE teachers in Lower Saxony on their attitudes towards models of ecumenical cooperation. The majority of them were in favour of RE taught to all pupils together in a class, where the "communalities of various denominations, religions and other belief systems are at the forefront"[216] of teaching, while maintaining a willingness for ecumenical cooperation. Denominationally segregated RE finds little support amongst this group of teachers.[217] Feige/Tzscheetzsch drew extensively on the survey from Lower Saxony and repeated it in Baden-Württemberg, this time also questioning Catholic RE teachers. The Baden-Württemberg results were almost identical to the ones gathered in Lower Saxony. Compared to Lower Saxony, the design of the denominational-cooperative model in Baden-Württemberg "*gives clear preference to facilitating an awareness of denominational identity.*"[218] At the same time RE teachers rejected the idea of no longer offering RE as a separate subject at all and expressed a preference for a generally Christian approach to RE.[219] An Austrian study on RE teachers published by Bucher/Miklas also surveyed Protestant teachers (Austria-wide) and Catholic teachers (archdiocese of Salzburg and diocese of Linz). In this case the majority of teachers questioned spoke out for maintaining the denominational character of RE (this particular opinion was held by fewer secondary school teachers than primary school teachers) and decidedly rejected both general non-denominational RE and missionising RE. There were great differences of opinion among RE teachers when it came to interreligious learning. Catholic teachers prefer this way of learning to their Protestant colleagues. Catholic RE teachers were also much more in favour of ecumenical learning and ecumenical cooperation than Protes-

213 Cf. Bucher/Rothbucher 1996, 119–129.
214 Englert/Güth 1999, 11.
215 Cf. Englert/Güth 1999, 94–99.
216 Feige/Lukatis 2000, 315.
217 Cf. Feige/Lukatis 2000, 314–321.
218 Feige/Tzscheetzsch 2005, 57. [italicised as in the original]
219 Moreover both studies contain occupational-biographical case analyses, which allow connections to be made between lived religion and conceptual orientation of RE so that perspectives on teaching habits can be reconstructed. Cf. Feige/Tzscheetzsch 2005, 54–65; Feige et al. 2000, 55–204; Feige/Dressler/Tzscheetzsch 2006.

tant ones. The authors of the study think that one possible motivation for the Austrian Protestant Church's diaspora situation on this issue may originate in the fact that they approach ecumenical cooperation from a different starting position.[220]

Lück gives extensive consideration to the correlation between the internal and the external appearance of RE. He questioned RE teachers from primary schools in North Rhine-Westphalia on this matter. To lay the foundations for the questionnaire this quantitative study was preceded by a qualitative-explorative one.[221] A mixed approach to RE came out on top (denominational-cooperative in first place, then denominationally segregated) followed by ecumenical-Christian RE (30.7%). As in the Englert/Güth study,these forms of RE are supported by mostly theological or (religious-) educational reasons rather than pragmatic ones. Denominational (12.3%) and interreligious approaches (6.1%) are largely being dismissed.[222] At the same time specific organisational forms are met with the greatest approval when "*they are to some extent already being practiced or where a given constellation of pupils would suggest a particular approach to teaching.*"[223] Lück's studies make an empirically founded case for the need to consider regional, local and school specific circumstances when organising RE.

On a European level the research project TRES ('Teaching Religion in a multicultural Europe') conducted an extensive survey of RE teachers and catechists. The ideal-typical distinctions between 'learning in religion', 'learning from religion' and 'learning about religion', modelled after Grimmit, are interconnected in RE teachers' and catechists' responses on goals and objectives.[224]

An alternative approach to RE already exists in some parts of the German-speaking region in the form of denominational-cooperative RE. Evaluations of this approach have been conducted in Vienna and Baden-Württemberg. The Austrian evaluation study questioned RE teachers who personally consider the denominational-cooperative

220 Cf. Bucher 2005a, 103–107; Danner/Lagger/Schwarz 2005, 197–204. Khorchide conducted a study on the attitudes of Islamic RE teachers in publicly run schools in Austria, it does, however, not include results on how well the organisational form of RE is accepted. Cf. Korchide 2009.

221 Cf. Lück 2002.

222 Cf. Lück 2003, 70–86.

223 222 Lück 203, 362 [italicised as in the original] What type of denominational-cooperative model RE teachers prefer was addressed in a study by Feige/Friedrichs/Köllmann. They surveyed both Protestant and Catholic students in Baden-Württemberg, using the same questionnaire they had used with RE teachers in Baden-Württemberg. Students expressed a preference for denominationally segregated RE, although all in all they were open towards denominational cooperation. Most students did not consider teaching RE to all pupils in a class together or jointly teaching Catholic and Protestant pupils an option. They preferred models that place greater emphasis on denominationalism. Cf. Feige/Friedrichs/Köllmann 2007, 55–59. In the area of denominational cooperation Lück reaches a similar conclusion in his nationwide study on students. Denominational-cooperative RE is most popular (44.1%). Just under a quarter of students questioned prefer denominational RE. Similar numbers are in favour of interreligious (12.0%) and ecumenical-Christian RE (11.8%). The least popular model is general non-denominational RE (7.3%). Nonetheless, a majority of students consider the denominational character of RE, interreligious learning and ecumenical-interdenominational learning to be very important (80.9% to 84.4%). Cf. Lück 2012, 146–152.

224 Cf. Ziebertz/Riegel 2009; Jakobs 2009; Popp 2013.

approach to be a positive thing.[225] The study undertaken in Baden-Württemberg takes the entire school community into account and delivers a positive indictment on denominational-cooperative RE.[226] RE organised in this way requires (future) RE teachers to have some specific skills, which are being evaluated within the context of theological studies in Baden-Württemberg.[227] Hütte/Mette based their 2003 study on the fact that religion is also frequently taught to all students in a class together. They surveyed NorthRhine-Westphalian RE teachers from all school types on their experiences with this approach. This qualitative-explorative study offers an insight into RE teachers' lines of argument, which are always dominated by (religious-) educational reasons.[228]

1.5.3 Research Studies on the Acceptance of RE and the Way it is Taught in Schools from the Perspective of Pupils

Alongside the above-mentioned studies on RE teachers, empirical findings on how pupils assess RE and how it is organised also exist. Studies by Verweijen and Ritzer look at pupils' reasons for attending RE and for opting out of it. While Verweijen's study focuses on upper-secondary academic schools ('Oberstufenrealgymnasium') – a type of school known for its high opt-out rates –, Ritzer looks at several different types of schools. Verweijen's study found a number of different factors that influence whether pupils attend RE or opt out. They range from what happens in lessons, such as lesson content to organisational reasons (e. g. free period).[229] According to Ritzer's study there is a connection between a good school atmosphere and pupils' acceptance of RE.[230] Remarkably there is also a connection between the importance a school assigns to RE and pupil's willingness to opt out of RE or to opt back in. The more positively pupils perceive RE's standing within their school, the less likely they are to opt out or the more likely they are to opt back in.[231] This correlation draws attention to the fact that the entire school community has an important role to play when it comes to pupils' willingness to opt out or to attend RE. It shows that RE is an educational concern for schools as a whole.

225 Cf. Bastel/Miklas 2006.

226 Cf. Schweitzer/Biesinger 2002; Biesinger et al. 2006; Kuld et al. 2009.

227 Cf. Pemsel-Maier/Weinhardt/Weinhardt 2011.

228 Cf. Hütte/Mette 2003. Even in the German-speaking regions alone there are many different approaches to RE. How teachers teach religion in schools i. e. which didactic concepts their lessons are based on, when they teach religion in a non-denominationally segregated context, has already been investigated by a number of studies within the field of classroom research. Cf. e. g. Asbrand 2000; Frank 2010; Hassanein 2013. For a qualitative-explorative study in the Netherlands, cf. Zonne 2006.

229 Cf. Verweijen 1993; cf. also Mann/Verweijen 1993.

230 Cf. Ritzer 2003, 50–60 Pupils' skills progression within one year in religious and ethics education was the subject of a quantitative longitudinal study by Ritzer. Cf. Ritzer 2010.

231 Cf. Ritzer 2003, 79–84, 89–96.

What happens during RE lessons is a crucial factor in pupils' estimation of RE. Bucher was able to prove this in his Austrian[232] and German study[233] with Roman Catholic pupils, who attend RE. RE enjoyed a high level of acceptance among those questioned. Acceptance decreased, however, the older pupils got. Pupils were not only questioned about denominational RE, but also about ecumenical and interreligious approaches.[234] Austrian pupils approve of these forms of RE to a high degree. Their approval rates go up even more the older and the more urbanised they are.[235] In Germany acceptance is significantly lower across all school types. Pupils there hold a lot of reservation towards these forms of RE. Their friends' religious affiliations do not seem to be particularly significant with regards to this. Bucher's study shows that regions with a homogenous body of pupils are more frequently prone to denominational stereotypes and more likely to dismiss ecumenical or interreligious RE. Bucher believes that ecumenical or interreligious RE in schools is necessary precisely because of these stereotypes.[236]

An international[237] youth study by Ziebertz/Kalbheim/Riegel investigated what type of RE young people themselves would like and why. They conducted a quantitative study on an international level and a qualitative study in Germany. In their factor analysis the authors were able to generate a form of non-denominational-existential approach widely accepted by young people. This approach distinguishes itself in two ways. Firstly, it conveys essential information about religions without taking a personal stance. Secondly, it supports pupils in their personal and societal development. Meanwhile pupils are critical towards the idea of catechistically focused RE and reject it.[238]

The large scale, European research project REDCo was funded by the European commission and was comprised of eight countries.[239] It employed quantitative and qualitative methods to measure i. a. how young people between the ages of 14 and 16 perceive and assess religion and religious diversity, and how important RE lessons in school are to them.[240] Whether young people want to see religion addressed in school or not, largely depends on their own experiences with the subject and on their religious background. Young people who see religion as an important part of their lives are more

232 Bucher 2006. Pupils questioned were from secondary modern schools and AHS across Austria.

233 Bucher 2000b. Pupils questioned were from four regions of Germany (Bavaria, the Rhine-Main area, region Hildesheim – Hannover and Dresden and surroundings) and attended primary schools, secondary level I, sixth-form colleges, and vocational schools.

234 On the difficulty of formulating items cf. chapter 5.3.2 Discussion with Empirical Studies. The item on ecumenical RE is worded as follows: 'My Protestant classmates should attend the same RE lessons as I.' Bucher 2000b, 93.

235 Cf. Bucher 1996, 78. A study by Lex/Gunacker found regional differences in the popularity of RE in Styria. The main focus of this study was as to ascertain how pupils from secondary modern rank physics and chemistry lessons. However, the way the study was conducted also shows how RE is ranking. RE is more popular among pupils who live in cities than among those who live in rural areas. Cf. Lex/Gunacker 1996.

236 Cf. Bucher 2000b, 93–96, 105 f.; 119–121, 146, 150.

237 Lower Franconia (DE), Syria (AT), Wales (GB), Central Netherlands (NL).

238 Cf. Ziebertz/Kalbheim/Riegel 2003, 199–230.

239 Germany, England and Wales, Estonia, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia and Spain.

240 Cf. Valk et al. 2009; Knauth et al. 2008.

likely to agree that it should have a part to play in schools and be represented by a teaching subject.[241] Pupils who live in countries where religion is seen as a private matter are more likely to reject RE entirely. These pupils are also more afraid of being missionised and tend to connect religion with conflict.[242] The results, on which form of religious education pupils would like to see in schools, are varied. As long as they have not had a negative experience with it, they prefer the approach that they are already familiar with. However, the results of this study also point towards religious minority-majority-relations in the individual countries. Accordingly, young Muslims prefer denominationally segregated RE, so that their own religion becomes more visible in a predominately Catholic country and a predominately Catholic school.[243] The quantitative study also shows significant differences between young Muslims on the one side and young Christians and non-religious young people on the other. This also points towards religious minority-majority-relations in the individual countries. While the majority of all young people questioned agree that religion and religious diversity needs to be visible and respected in schools, young Muslims are significantly more likely to be of this opinion than either of the other groups.[244]

On reviewing the current state of empirical research, the following research desideratum can be recorded: there are no studies to date that investigate the acceptance levels of possible future models of RE, which focus on those parties who are accountable or jointly accountable for it.

241 Cf. Knauth/Körs 2008, 397–399.
242 Cf. Bertram-Troost 2009, 419.
243 Cf. Knauth/Körs 2008, 397–399.
244 Cf. Jozsa 2009, 146.

2. The Qualitative-Empirical Approach: Methodological and Methodical Considerations

2.1 Epistemological Interest and the Ascertainment of Research Questions

In its position paper ÖRF argues in favour of developing context-sensitive models to help secure the future of religious education in schools in the form of an RE provision. In order to meet this demand from an educational perspective it is necessary to investigate how individual schools view religion and RE. In other words: an in-depth understanding of the context is essential in order to develop context-sensitive models. This study uses concepts formulated by Jäggle to think about alternative ways RE could be organised. At the same time it asks the question of what level of acceptance RE provision jointly organised by the churches and religious communities would find in schools. These and similar proposals are the subject of heated debates in the field of religious education studies. There is concern that continuously broadening the scope of denominational RE will undermine the denominational dimension of RE, which could be a 'slippery slope'. The fact that Jäggle's conceptual suggestion does not intend for this to happen and that it can in fact be called denominational, has already been demonstrated above. Opinions on this approach to RE vary among people involved in the field of religious education studies. From the standpoint religious education studies it is therefore necessary to collate empirical findings, which provide insight into how popular this approach might be with schools. These findings, based on the views of people actually active in schools, make a differentiated and close to life religious education assessment possible.

Before this study's research design is introduced and explained, the research questions need to be put into concrete terms:

- How is religion and religious diversity perceived and valued in schools?
- How is denominational RE perceived and valued in schools?
- What level of acceptance does RE for all, jointly organised by the churches and religious communities, find within schools?

2.2 The Documentary Method – Meta-theoretical and Methodological Considerations on the Reconstruction of Collective Attitudes

In this study, schools take centre stage; schools are the research subject. The aim is the reconstruction of collective attitudinal patterns in schools with reference to the above-mentioned epistemological interests. This study focuses on schools as its meso level.Therefore all social-scientific methods used must be appropriate to this research subject. Collective attitudinal patterns in schools can only be ascertained and reconstructed in this way. Group discussions and the documentary method are the most suit-

able methods of research and evaluation in this empirical endeavour. When combined these two methods are able to take the investigation and reconstruction of collective attitudinal patterns into account, which structure both thought and behaviour.[1]

Since the 1980s Bohnsack and Mangold significantly advanced the documentary method and established it as an important social-science research method. As is often the case in qualitative social research, the reconstructive method was developed in the context of concrete research projects.[2] The reason for this is that the subject of research and the epistemological interest on the one hand and the investigation and evaluation on the other hand are inseparably linked in a circular way (subject orientation).[3] Meta-theoretically speaking, the documentary method first and foremost draws on Mannheim's sociology of science, culture and knowledge.[4] With regards to meta-theoretical development and practical research implementations Bohnsack et al. refer to phenomenological sociology, Garfinkl's ethno-methodology and the research tradition of the Chicago School.

The documentary method aims to reconstruct collectively shared realms of experience. This means that it focuses on the collective. These realms of experience are themselves always already constructs, as reality is at all times pre-constructed by man. "Through different constructs of everyday reality man structures and interprets this world in advance. Mental objects like this determine behaviour, define goals of behaviour and prescribe the means for reaching these goals – in short: They help human beings to live within and come to terms with their natural and socio-cultural environment."[5]The researcher's task is to reconstruct these constructs (second degree constructs).[6] All constructs of reality have already been symbolically structured and are not immediately obvious. With reference to Garfinkel's ethno-methodology Bohnsack does not believe an immediate understanding between the research subject and the researcher to be possible, as they usually inhabit different realms of experience. "Garfinkel remarks that in our day-to-day verbal communications verbal utterances are *indexical*, that is to say

1 Cf. Bohnsack [9]2014

2 Cf. Bohnsack 1983; Cf. Bohnsack 1989; Cf. Bohnsack [9]2014, 33–35.

3 Cf. Lamnek [5]2010, 23–25. In contrast to quantitative research Lamnek quotes the principle of flexibility, which ensures subject orientation. "To the explorative or qualitative researcher it is vital to develop and focus his research process in such a way that his/her question, the navigation of his/her enquiry, data, analytical relations and interpretations, grow out of empirical social life and are rooted within it." Lamnek [5]2010, 23

4 Cf. Mannheim 1964; Mannheim 1980.

5 Bohnsack [9]2014, 22.

6 The documentary method must be understood as the reconstruction of reconstructions as it reflects its own research activity, justifies this methodologically and is able to 'reconstruct those procedures or methods of interpretation and reflection, which can equally be applied to the every day lives of the research subject and the every day lives of the researcher themselves.' (Bohnsack [9]2014, 27) Consequently, 'the cognitive-logical difference between everyday interpretations and scientific interpretations, in the sense that the latter is fundamentally superior to the former, can no longer be maintained." Bohnsack [9]2014, 28. This insight has consequences for the "bracketing of validity". Mannheim 1980, 88; cf. also Bohnsack [9]2014 65–67, 191–204. Consequently the documentary method does not claim to subject findings to interpretative evaluation, but to reconstruct the modus operandi of knowledge, that is to say how a particular group addresses certain issues and problems.

they are merely indicators and clues to meaning. Meaning is not 'automatically' linked to utterance. As a listener I always have to make interpretations in order to get at the true meaning."[7] People's inner constructs find expression in the indexical content of the utterance. They are documents of, or clues to underlying patterns of meaning. Through critical engagement with phenomenological sociology "'methodological individualism' […] is brought to a head" in Garfinkel's ethno-methodology – sociality "as inter-subjectivity needs to first be established situationally each time."[8] According to Bohnsack, ethno-methodology is right to point out that the nature of utterances is indexical and right to emphasise the limitations of immediate understanding, as this would only be possible if there was a shared horizon of experiences. Nonetheless, Bohnsack refers to ethno-methodology as "a 'bisected' sociology of knowledge, because ethno-methodologists do not answer the question of how an *adequate* methodological approach to 'the indexical nature' of extrinsic, milieu-specific reality can be found."[9] Bohnsack finds such a methodological approach in Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, which distinguishes between subjunctive and communicative experiences. Bohnsack adopts this distinction in his documentary method. People who are connected with one another through shared collective experiences and have thus developed sociality based on subjunctive experiences, "understand each other immediately. They do not have to interpret each other first" (intuitive understanding). However, others, who do not inhabit the same realm of experiences, "have a 'communicative' relationship based on reciprocal interpretation"[10] (documentary interpretation). This is the type of relationship the researcher has to her/his research subjects. Consequently, methodically controlled understanding of the other is an essential part of interpretative social research.

In addition to his distinction between intuitive understanding and documentary interpretation, Mannheim also differentiates between the immanent[11] and the documentary meaning of behaviour. When attention is given to documentary meaning, behaviour is understood to attest to an attitude, which structures behaviour. In order to get to this documentary meaning of behaviour the modus operandi, the developmental process of the behaviour, needs to be looked at as the collective or individual habitus expressed within it. Documentary interpretation focuses on this documentary meaning. Its sequence-analytical procedure particularly aims to reconstruct the structuring attitudinal patterns of behaviour through their developmental processes ('modus operandi'), rather than by means of the speculative intentions of its development.[12]

As already demonstrated, a subjunctive realm of experience, based on shared experiences and practices, is the foundation for a collective habitus.[13] People who share a

7 Bohnsack [9]2014, 21.

8 Bohnsack [9]2014, 59.

9 Bohnsack [9]2014, 60. [italicised as in the original]

10 Bohnsack [9]2014, 61.

11 He further divides immanent meaning into intentional expressive meaning (not empirically ascertainable) and objective meaning, including general significance of behaviours.

12 Consequently documentary interpretation "marks a shift from what- to how-questions" Bohnsack [9]2014, 65). Sequence-analytical interpretation of behaviour is at the heart of this; how people deal with problems and issues is testament to collectively shared experience.

13 Being based on "the sociology of knowledge's analysis in practice" the documentary method reconstructs the conjunctive realm of experience via its process of development "beyond the-

subjunctive realm of experience – e. g. gender, age or social background – have subjunctive "atheoretical knowledge",[14] which they themselves cannot explicate; nor do they have to in practice. This knowledge is intuitive. It shapes and structures experience. This knowledge is also contextual. In this context, Mannheim talks about existentiality ('Seinsverbundenheit') and site-dependency ('Standortverbundenheit').[15] "Every piece of knowledge and every form of meaning making is rooted in historical and social context".[16] Subjunctive realms of experience can be reconstructed if individuals inhabit a common realm of experience or if they come together in a group and enter into a discussion close to everyday life. In this case, "the group is not the social space for formation, but for articulation and objectification […] of collective stratification of experience ('Erlebnisschichtung')". It is not a space of emergence, but of representation and "thus only an 'epiphenomenon' for the analysis of milieu-specific realms of experience. Yet it offers a valid empirical approach to articulating such contexts for meaning."[17] The relationships group members have to each other within their social network need to be reconstructed, as these parallel or approximate the day-to-day communication of the group and act as testaments to the shared layers of experience.[18]

The practical approaches this research undertakes, reflectmethodological considerations regarding the documentary method. Based on these considerations practical approaches to the documentary method are exemplified in this study, initially in an abstract way and then by using concrete examples.[19]

2.3 Research Design

As this study is a reconstructive-empirical case study its aim is "*not representative status"*; instead it focuses "*its attention on investigating a few individual cases in as much*

---

oretical insight and communicational intentions" Bohnsack [9]2014, 63. According to Bohnsack the methodological grounding of the documentary method is a praxiological sociology of knowledge. On praxiological methodology cf. Bohnsack [9]2014, 205–223.

14 Cf. Mannheim 1980, 73.

15 Cf. Mannheim 1980, 272–279.

16 Przyborski/Slunecko 2010, 630. For this rooting of the documentary method in the praxiological sociology of knowledge with a focus on the collective and on contextual ties offers added value in the field of psychology, as this method is capable of enhancing "classic mentalistic and person-centred research-logic" (Przyborski/Slunecko 2010, 628) in psychology.

17 Bohnsack [9]2014, 64 f.

18 Cf. Bohnsack [9]2014, 23. For an overview of other approaches to the group discussion process and their respective epistemological interests and methodological implications, which in part adhere to the emergence paradigm, cf. e. g. Bohnsack [9]2014, 107–115; Bohnsack 2000, 370–376; Lamnek [5]2005, 53–68; Loos/Schäffer 2001, 15–28; Bohnsack/Przyborski/Schäffer [2]2010b, 9–14; cf. also Bohnsack's criticism on Lamnek in: Bohnsack [9]2014, 107, footnote 30.

19 Examples will be given for both formulating and reflexive interpretations. The consequent results will lead to discussion descriptions and case groupings. This means that the formulating and reflexive interpretation does not appear in and of itself in this study. Examples for discussion descriptions and case groupings are not necessary at this point. They are addressed in some detail in the appropriate chapters of this study.

differentiated detail as possible."[20] The design of this study has been developed based on the project's epistemological research interest. During the course of the research process the design was adapted to fit the subject of investigation (subject orientation). This was possible because, "*the principles and rules of the qualitative approach are not a rigid template but flexible tools for concrete research activity.*"[21] This means that "questions that can sensibly be asked and approaches that need to be taken in order to work with subjects in a meaningful way, often only become apparent during the course of research."[22] Such a flexible and open subject-orientated approach is in line with the qualitative research paradigm and, according to Lamnek, serves the purpose of "achieving reliable and valid assessments of reality."[23] Nonetheless, quality criteria of such as reliability, validity and objectivity within qualitative social research have come under criticism. These quality criteria are ascribed to the logic of the quantitative research paradigm, and (largely) do not link up with the principles of qualitative social research. Alongside other quality criteria,[24] the flexible subject-oriented approach to the research process definitely showsthat qualitative or reconstructive social research can be held to high standards, as "this kind of research strategy [is subject to] a constant requirement to justify all the decisions that need to be made on an on-going basis as well as to continually reflecton its own sustainability."[25]This openness does, however, not only effect subject orientation, but also the processes employed in qualitative and reconstructive data collection. Data collection takes place according to the following motto: "the less interference, the more control options; […] in other words: Research subjects are largely able to structure conversations themselves, which gives them the opportunity to express whether or not the questions posed interest them, whether there is a place for them in their lived-in world – also called system of relevance – and if so in what way might it have significanceto them."[26]

In order to obtain meaningful results the research design of qualitative social research must relate to the epistemological interest in the right way. It is therefore necessary to know which methods are being used to obtain and evaluate empirical data and why. The concept of indication, used in medicine and psychotherapy, can be appropriated for the

---

20 Porzelt 2000, 65. [italicised as in the original]

21 Porzelt 2000, 63. [italicised as in the original]

22 Froschauer/Lueger 2009, 71.

23 Lamnek [5]2005, 40. Bohnsack aptly describes the criticism of the reconstructive methods for adopting quality criteria for hypothesis-testing processes. He substantiates this by using the increasing standardisation of investigative methods, which are thus becoming instruments in the sense of the quantitative paradigm, as an example. "The problem that arises here, is the fact that standardisation restricts research communication in general and the research subjects ability to communicate in particular. This puts what is called the 'validity' of an approach or a method into question. That is to say that it is being put into question whether the method is suitable for its subject, namely the social behaviour and communication of its research subjects." Bohnsack [9]2014, 19.

24 On quality criteria and principles in qualitative social research cf. e. g. Lamnek [5]2005, 19–25; Mayring [5]2002, 140–148; Przyborski/Wohlrab-Sahr [4]2014, 401 f.; Flick [4]2011, 487–510; Steinke 2000, 319–331; Lüders [3]2011.

25 Froschauer/Lueger 2009, 71.

26 Bohnsack [9]2014, 22.

purpose of qualitative social research.[27] "Looking at questions of indication for various qualitative research methods and approaches is one way of reaching methodological decisions based on sound suitability consideration for each method or approach, in light of the research subject, the field of research and its target audience."[28] When compiling the samplings for this study, the authorpaid attention to theory and took insight from other empirical studies into account. In this way the context i. e. perceptions of and opinions on religion, religious diversity and RE as well as levels of acceptance of RE for all, jointly organised by the churches and religious communities is in schools, could be explored. Inter-subjective repicability is accounted for in the detailed layout of the research design, where the planning steps of this study get introduced and argumentatively explained in reference to the research questions. The documentation of process concerns the following areas: "An explanation of pre-research assumptions, the compilation of analytical strategies, implementation and evaluation of data collection."[29]

2.3.1 Sample Selection[30]

The selection of schools to be studied was made based onwhich cases where the most critical.[31] Schools where chosen, where there was reason to believe that RE, in its denominational form had been coming up against its limits for various reasons. ÖRF names low numbers of participants as one such reason.[32] Data provided by the Austrian Statistical Central Office, the archiepiscopal office for teaching and education in Vienna and various empirical studies provided evidence as to what might constitute a critical situation.[33] This evidence made a well-reasoned selection of schools, where data for this study could be collected and later analysed, possible. The following section outlines a number of considerations that were significant in the processof case selection.

27 Cf. Flick [4]2011, 512–518.

28 Flick [4]2011, 518.

29 Mayring [5]2002, 144 f. On explication of prior understanding cf. chapter 2.2 The Documentary Method – Meta-theoretical and Methodological Considerations for the Reconstruction of Collective Attitudes.

30 The approach to the field of research will be outlined in the individual schools' case studies.

31 Cf. Flick [4]2011, 165. "Selectingcases in a critical situation aims at the selection of circumstances, where – e. g. according to expert opinion – the correlations that are to be investigated are particularly clearly visible or wherethey are particularly important for the success of a programme that needs to be evaluated." Flick [4]2011, 165. For other sampling strategies cf. overviews in textbooks e. g. Flick [4]2011, 154–171; Lamnek [5]2010, 167–173; Przyborski/Wohlrab-Sahr [4]2014, 181–185.

32 Cf. ÖRF 2010, 62.

33 The author of this study was given an insight into participant numbers for Roman Catholic RE by the archiepiscopal office for teaching and education in Vienna. Cf. Erzbischöfliches Amt für Unterricht und Erziehung in Wien.

2.3.1.1 *Religious Plurality in Vienna*

This research study focuses its attention on Vienna, Austria's only city of over one million inhabitants,[34] where inhabitant numbers have increased significantly over the past years.[35] The Austrian capital, the socio-religious matrix of which currently differs significantly from other Austrian cities, was not only selected for this study, because the theological spotlight has increasingly been turned onto major cities,[36] but also because it can be seen as a test case for future developments in other regions/cities.[37]

Religion and religiosity are currently undergoing significant change in Austria.[38] Over the past few decades there has been a major shift in the population's religious orientation. Changes in Vienna have been more rapid than in the country as a whole. Here are a few examples:

- In 1951 89.0% of the Austrian population and 81.6% of the Viennese population were Roman Catholic. Fifty years later 73.6% of Austria's and 49.2% of Vienna's inhabitants belong to the Roman Catholic Church.
- In 1971[39] 0.3% of the Austrian population and 0.4% of the Viennese population were Muslim. By 2001 this percentage had risen to 4.2% in Austria and 7.8% in Vienna.
- In 1951 3.8% of the Austrian population and 8.1% of the Viennese population had no religious affiliation. By 2001 it was 12.0% in Austria and 25.6% in Vienna.[40]

---

34 At the beginning of 2016 Austria had 8,699,730 inhabitants, 1,840,573 (21.2%) of whom lived in Vienna. The Styrian regional capital Graz is the second largest city with 280,200 inhabitants (3.2%). Cf. Statistik Austria 2016a.

35 From 2006 to 2016 inhabitant numbers in Vienna had increased by 10.2%. Cf. Statistik Austria 2016a.

36 Cf. Sievernich/Wenzel 2013; Themenheft 'Faszination Stadt' 2013; Roebben ^{3}2012, Roebben ^{2}2013.

37 Cf. Zulehner/Polak 2009, 184–186; Polak 2008, 182–188. Polak has been observing processes of modernization in young people with regards to religion. These are particularly prominent in cities. Agreement with religious parameters is lower in cities and significantly higher in rural areas. Transformation processes are, however, taking place in rural areas too. "In rural areas socio-religious erosion processes are still on-going and the once stronger ties to church-bound religiosity and self-understanding are being lost. At the same time urban young people, though they are decidedly rejecting traditional religious jargon, are developing new forms of religiosity, which are informed by the image of a loving God, with whom one has an inner relationship and whom one also prays to." Polak 2008, 185; cf. Kögler/Dammayr 2015. In the context of the European values study Dangschat was able to identify equally large differences depending on the size of a community. In large cities religion is considered not important considerably more frequently than in small communities The European comparison of selected 'large cities' shows that in Scandinavian and former communist countries religion is met with less approval than in other European cities. Cf. also his critical comments regarding 'size of a community' factor'. Cf also Dangschat 2011, 235–238, 244 f.

38 Cf. also Paul M. Zulehner's long-term study (2011).

39 Earlier data is not available.

40 Cf. Statistik Austria 2007. The process of transformation is continuing. In 2013 62.5% of the Austrian population belonged to the Roman Catholic church. In Vienna it was only 37.1%. Approx. 3.7% of the living Austrian population is Protestant (3.5% A.C.; 0.2% H.C.). The

The following table provides an overview of the population's religious affiliations in Austria and in Vienna.[41]

Table 2: Austria's and Vienna's population according to religious affiliation[42]

	Population			
Religious Affiliation	**Austria**	**%**	**Vienna**	**%**
Total	8,032,926	100.0	1,550,114	100.0
Roman Catholic*	5,917,274	73.7	762,987	49.2
Muslim	338,988	4.2	121,149	7.8
Orthodox	174,385	2.2	89,768	5.8
Protestant	377,413	4.7	73,014	4.7
Old Catholic	14,621	0.2	7,134	0.5
Jewish	8,140	0.1	6,988	0.5
Other Christian communities	26,392	0.3	6,321	0.4
Buddhist	10,402	0.1	4,678	0.3
Oriental Orthodox	6,515	0.1	4,157	0.3
Jehovah's Witnesses	23,206	0.3	3,985	0.3
Other	11,665	0.1	6,632	0.4
Without religious affiliation	963,263	12.0	397,596	25.6
Not stated	160,662	2.0	65,705	4.2

**incl. Eastern Catholic Churches*

Vienna – as a city of immigration – shows high levels of cultural and religious plurality[43] in its population. Within Austria, Vienna, with 27.4% (start of 2016),[44] has the

percentage of Muslims in Austria is still rising. In 2012 it was 6.8% and 12.5% in Vienna. The (Oriental) Orthodox population in Austria is also growing. Currently 5.8% belong to an (Oriental) Orthodox church. Data after 2001 is based on projections and estimations as well as on statements by the religious communities. For a more in-depth overview of Austria's religiously pluralistic landscape cf. Klutz 2014.

41 The last census in Austria, which used a data entry form, was in 2001 (Volkszählung). Because of an amendment in the law a new type of Census as introduced in 2011 (Registerzählung). Data is no longer collected by asking the population directly, but via pre-existing administrative registers. Due to this change there is no up-to-date data on religious affiliation that has been raised and collated by the state. Cf. Statistik Austria 2016b. The data entry form that was used for the 2001 census was designed inadequately with regard to religious affiliation. Only six legally recognised churches and religious communities were explicitly named on it. It is also possible that problems might have arisen during the collection of data (e. g. language difficulties). The number of people who prefer not to answer the section on religious affiliation is also remarkable (160,662, 2% of the total population). Cf. Statistik Austria 2002.

42 Design by the author cf. Statistik Austria 2013.

43 Cf. also Schweitzer's i. a. (2002) differentiated considerations; especially Englert 2002.

44 Cf. Statistik Austria 2016c. In the 2001 census 19.3% of the Austrian population were foreign nationals. Cf. Statistik Austria 2013. When the population of Vienna is looked at according to their so-called 'migration background' 42.0% of people living in Vienna are foreign citizens (yearly average 2015). Cf. Statistik Austria 2016d. "Both parents of people with a migration

largest number of foreign nationals amongst its population. "It also has a longer (and more intensive) history of immigration. […] The majority of immigrants in Vienna are already in Austria for the second generation."[45] The following overview clearly shows that migration is the cause of religious plurality. Members of the Eastern Churches as well as Muslims are usually foreign nationals. Members of the Old Catholic, Roman Catholic and Protestant church are largely Austrian citizens.

Table 3: Austria's and Vienna's population according to religious affiliation and nationality[46]

	Nationality					
	Austria			Vienna		
Religious Affiliation	**Austrian**	**Non-Austrian**	**Foreigners %**	**Austrian**	**Non-Austrian**	**Foreigners %**
Total	7,322,000	710,926	8.9	1,301,853	248,261	19.1
Roman Catholic*	5,754,672	162,602	2.7	720,176	42,811	5.6
Muslim	96,052	242,936	71.7	51,483	69,666	57.5
Orthodox	39,836	134,549	77.2	25,369	64,399	71.7
Protestant	344,573	32,840	8.7	65,836	7,178	9.8
Old Catholic	13,451	1,170	8.0	6,820	314	4.4
Jewish	6,112	2,028	24.9	5,367	1,621	23.2
Other Christian communities	20,616	5,776	21.9	4,594	1,727	27.3
Buddhist	5,774	4,628	44.5	2,572	2,106	45.0
Oriental Orthodox	4,203	2,312	35.5	2,790	1,367	32.9
Jehovah's Witnesses	21,558	1,648	7.1	3,492	493	12.4
Other	6,116	5,549	47.6	3,160	3,472	52.4
Without religious affiliation	883,979	79,284	8.2	359,271	38,325	9.6
Not stated	125,058	35,604	22.2	50,923	14,782	22.5

**incl. Eastern Catholic Churches*

Vienna is particularly religiously divers. In 2001 19.3% of the Austrian population lived in Vienna. For most religions their percentage numbers are, however, higher in Vienna. In fact the majority of Muslims, people belonging to the Eastern religious traditions and Jews live in Vienna.

background are born abroad. If they belong to the first generation they themselves were born abroad. Members of the second generation were born in Austria." Statistik Austria 2016d.

45 Dangschat 2011, 232. Austrian office for national statistics has clear tables and thematic maps available. These make it easy to see regional particularities in the population when it comes to nationality and country of origin. Cf. Statistik Austria 2016e.

46 Design by the author cf. Statistik Austria 2013.

Table 4: Ratio between population and religious affiliation in Vienna[47]

	Population		
Religious Affiliation	**Austria**	**Vienna**	**%**
Total	8,032,926	1,550,114	19.3
Roman Catholic*	5,917,274	762,987	12.9
Muslim	338,988	121,149	35.7
Orthodox	174,385	89,768	51.5
Protestant	377,413	73,014	19.3
Old Catholic	14,621	7,134	48.8
Jewish	8,140	6,988	85.8
Other Christian communities	26,392	6,321	24.0
Buddhist	10,402	4,678	45.0
Oriental Orthodox	6,515	4,157	63.8
Jehovah's Witnesses	23,206	3,985	17.2
Other	11,665	6,632	56.9
Without religious affiliation	963,263	397,596	41.3
Not stated	160,662	65,705	40.9

**incl. Eastern Catholic Churches*

2.3.1.2 School Types and School Locations with low Participation Rates for RE

Low participation rates for RE can come about for a number of reasons. Three factors, however, play a central role: 1. Pupils opt out of RE classes. 2. RE is not a compulsory subject for pupils.[48] 3. Pupils are unable to take part in RE for organisational reasons, e. g. because there is a shortage of RE teachers. The third factor is particularly relevant with regard to churches and religious communities with comparatively few members, especially in regions where they are the diaspora. There is no comprehensive data available on the third factor. It therefore had to be disregarded in the selection of schools for this study. The first two reasons dominated the selection of samples.

a) School types and school location where large numbers of pupils opt out of RE
   - Secondary school level of secondary schools: Pupils are able to opt out of RE classes affiliated with their religion.[49] Ritzer's empirical study that addresses i. a. pupils' motives for opting out of RE in Salzburg, shows that the largest numbers – numerically speaking – of first-time opt-outs happen during the transition from

47 Design by the author cf. Statistik Austria 2013.

48 This group is comprised of pupils who either do not belong to a legally recognised church or religious community or who attend a school where RE is a voluntary subject. The author only had access to data that showed the percentage of pupils without religious affiliation.

49 Before year 14 a parent or legal guardian needs to opt out of RE on behalf of the pupil. Afterwards pupils can do it themselves. Cf. § Abs. 2–3 RelUG.

lower secondary education to upper secondary education.[50] This empirical finding indicates that this present study needs to focus on upper secondary education.

- Highly religiously diverse schools: During the data collection period for this study, 14 legally recognised churches and religious communities had the right to offer RE classes in schools. This can lead to organisational difficulties, especially in schools where the pupil body is very religiously diverse (pluralisation of RE). In such schools RE is an administrative challenge (e. g. designing the timetable). In his study Ritzer was able to present the connection between the design of the timetable and motives for opting out of RE in detail. Pupils who do take part in RE are significantly more likely to consider opting out, if RE classes are timetabled inconveniently.[51] Ritzer's study draws attention to the consequences of opt-outs from RE: It is easier "to lose pupils from RE than it is to entice them back once they have opted out."[52]
- BORG[53] and HASCH/HAK[54]: Opt-out rates differ considerably depending on the type of school. Ritzer discovered that the highest op-out rates are at BORG and HAK schools.[55] A look at current 'pupil statists' collated by the archiepiscopal office for teaching and education in Vienna shows that there is similar evidence for the city of Vienna.[56] These statistics show that opt-out rates in Vienna are higher in BMHS than in AHS schools.[57]

---

50 Ritzer 2003, 49 f.

51 Cf. Ritzer 2003, 100–103.

52 Ritzer 2003, 191. Acceptance of RE increases in upper secondary education as pupils progress through the years. Yet, at the same time their willingness to opt out increases too. Cf. Ritzer 2003, 179–193.

53 Bundesoberschufenrealgymnasium = upper-secondary academic school (9th to 12th form)

54 Handelsschule = medium-level secondary vocational school for commercial professions (9th to 11th form); Handelsakademie = higher-level secondary vocational school for commercial professions (9th to 13th form).

55 In the year 2001/2002 in the county of Salzburg, the publicly run school type with the highest opt-out rate from Catholic RE was the 'Bundesoberstufenrealgymnasium' (BORG) (27.1%). Higher technical and vocational schools (BHS) had the lowest opt-out rate (19.6%). Concerning BHS schools it is worth noting that rates differed depending on the schools' educational focus. Those with a focus on business achieved the highest opt-out rates, while those with an emphasis on technology had the lowest (11.2%). There are large variations even within the same school type depending on school location. Cf. Ritzer 2003, 13 f.

56 This data refers to opt-out rates from Roman Catholic RE. There are no figures available on opt-out rates for all churches and religious communities.

57 BMHS schools are of particular interest because there RE constitutes a large part of general education subjects. BMHS schools' timetables are made up of both general education and vocational subjects. The proportion of lessons dedicated to RE is high measured against other general education subjects. As schools have the option to decide their curricula autonomously they have flexibility regarding how many hours they dedicate to each compulsory subject. If not many pupils participate in RE and if the school also does not offer ethics education the number of lessons dedicated to general education subjects is reduced by 10% to 15% (basis of calculation: two hours of RE or ethics education per week). Therefore the complete absence of RE reduces the share of general education subjects significantly. Cf. analysis of the number of hours dedicated to different subject groups at BHS schools in Austria in Postl's masters dissertation. Cf. Postl 2005, 31–35.

b) School types and school locations where a large number of pupils have no religious affiliation: 'Pupil statistics' show that in primary schools large numbers of pupils without religious affiliation do participate in RE. This is not the case in either lower or upper secondary education. There are also large differences depending on the school's location. Consequently, schools selected for this study have a large proportion of pupils without religious affiliation.

2.3.1.3 Faith Schools

Pupils attending faith schools[58] cannot opt out of RE.All pupils in these schools must attend RE classes. RE is therefore a fixed part of the educational programme. Consequently, no faith schools were selected for this study.

2.3.2 To Summarise

Guided by the above considerations, this study will put two schools in Vienna (*School A* and *School B*) under the microscope and take a "*close up picture",*[59] in order to reconstruct their attitudinal patterns. Both schools offer upper secondary education (9th to 12th or 13th form) only. This is important because opt-out rates from RE are highest during the transition from lower to upper secondary education (8th to 9th form) and RE attendance rates overall are lowest in upper secondary education. Both schools have a similar number of pupils. They are, however, different types of schools. *School A* is an ORG school, while the pupils of *School B* receive vocational business training, as it is a BMHS school. *School B* comprises two different school sub-types. The length of training is different in each of these sub-types and pupils leave with different qualifications. One branch is medium-level secondary vocational school (HASCH), which takes three years. The other is the higher-level secondary vocational school (HAK), which takes five years, and ends with the university entry examination or the diploma examination. *School A* has been trialling ethics education for many years. Consequently, pupils who do not attend any RE classes must attend ethics education. It can be assumed that the religious-ethical dimension of education is secure in *School A* as it provides both RE and ethics education, and that it thus meets its religious-educational mandate. This school was, nonetheless, selected because there is empirical indication that the RE provision for smaller churches and religious communities is stretched to its limits in schools where ethics education is being trialled.[60] *School B* was selected because it is very religiously diverse, because opt-out numbers are high and the numbers of pupils attending RE is low.

58 Cf. Jäggle/Klutz 2016, 47 f.; Engelbrecht 2000; Rinnerthaler 2007.

59 Porzelt 2000, 65. [italicised as in the original]

60 Cf. Bucher 2001, 186; Clark-Wilson 2011, 60–62; Bucher 2014, 75 f.

Table 5: Overview of selected schools

School A	School B
ORG (= Upper-secondary academic school)	HASCH/HAK (= Medium-/higher-level secondary vocational school for commercial professions)
400 pupils approx.	500 pupils approx.
8 religions	12 religions
Ethics education	No ethics education
RE at this school: • Roman Catholic • Protestant	RE at this school: • Roman Catholic • Protestant • Islamic • 'Oriental Orthodox'*

**Because of the anonymisation process the exact name for this religion was omitted.*

2.3.3 Data-Triangulation for the Ascertainment of Educational Context and for the Reconstruction of Collective Attitudes in Schools

Each of the two case studies is based on four different empirical data materials, which this study uses to conduct a data-triangulation[61] making it possible to gain differentiated insight into the context of both schools. All data was collected during the summer semester of 2011/12. Two data materials are quantitative in nature. In both schools data was collected on pupils' religious affiliations on the one hand, and on attendance numbers for RE – regardless of denomination or religion – on the other. The other two data materials belong to the qualitative paradigm. They arose out of group discussions that were conducted in order to reconstruct perceptions on religion, religious diversity, RE in schools, as well as the acceptance levels of RE for all organised by the churches and religious communities.

Quantitative Data

a) Pupils' religious affiliation
   All pupils' religious affiliation was recorded with the help of the schools' administrators, who provided anonymised lists, which showed pupils' religious affiliation. The author counted up all pupils according to religious affiliation and created a pie chart.

b) Pupils' RE attendance
   Pupils' RE attendance during the year of research and previous academic years was recorded in the same way, with the help of the schools' administrators. The lists they provided showed which pupils attended RE. All pupils who did attend RE were

61 Cf. Flick [3]2011, 13.

counted up and represented in a bar chart. These lists make it possible to observe variations in RE attendance.[62]

Qualitative Data as a Point of Access to the Reconstruction of Collective Attitudes in Schools

Two discussions took place in each of the two schools – one with RE teachers and one with members of the school's elected panel of teachers, parents and pupils and the head of school (SCC).[63] These two real social groups were chosen for the following reasons: RE teachers have first hand experience of the very questions this research paper poses and can offer an internal perspective due to their role within the school. The SCC was chosen because it represents all parties in the schools and because, due to its decision-making powers and its advisory function,[64] it can be surmised that it has a context-sensitive view of the school as a whole.

The next section will explain the methods used for collecting and evaluating qualitative data in more detail.

2.3.4 Using Group Discussions with Real Social Groups to Learn about Collective Attitudes in Schools

The documentary method, with its epistemological methodological implications, lends itself particularly well to this study, as it focuses on the reconstruction of collective

62 In *School A*, which offers Roman Catholic and Protestant RE as well as ethics education for those pupils who don't attend RE, pupils can be found who …
   a) belong to one of the 14 legally recognised churches or religious communities and attend their religion's RE, which is a compulsory subject for them.
   b) belong to one of the 14 legally recognised churches or religious communities and who have opted out of RE, which compulsory subject for them, and who are attending ethics education.
   c) don't belong to one of the 14 legally recognised churches or religious communities and attend RE, which is a voluntary subject for them.
   d) don't belong to one of the 14 legally recognised churches or religious communities, which is a voluntary subject for them, but who attend ethics education.

   The data shows that in *School B*, which offers Roman Catholic, Protestant, Islamic and Oriental Orthodox RE, pupils can be found who …
   e) belong to one of the 14 legally recognised churches or religious communities and attend their religion's RE, which is a compulsory subject for them.
   f) belong to one of the 14 legally recognised churches or religious communities and who have opted out of RE, compulsory subject for them.
   g) don't belong to one of the 14 legally recognised churches or religious communities and attend RE, which is a voluntary subject for them.
   h) don't belong to one of the 14 legally recognised churches or religious communities and don't attend RE, which is a voluntary subject for them.

63 The SCC has 10 members. It is comprised of three elected representatives of parents, pupils and teachers respectively and the school's headmistress/-master.

64 Cf. § 64 Abs. 2–7 SchUG.

attitudinal patterns. It was important to find a way of learning about these patterns, in order to allow the researcher access to collective attitudes in schools. The documentary method was developed in practical research, as a qualitative-reconstructive method that consists of group discussions. Group discussions make it possible to reconstruct collectively shared horizons of experience within the group. The documentary method is well established[65] from an epistemological and methodological perspective. It is used in a wide range of disciplines,[66] which deal with questions or procedures relating to the social sciences, including religious education studies.[67] By now researchers have a lot of experience with a variety of different data collection methods that all fall within the framework of the documentary method: starting (chronologically) with group discussions,[68] followed by photographs, videos,[69] conversations[70] and various forms of interviews.[71] For this study, group discussions were conducted with real social groups in schools. Like Loos/Schäffer, this study distinguishes group discussions from group surveys/group interviews as follows: Group discussions are a process, "*where externally initiated processes of communication are launched within a group, which at least at times, approximate 'normal' conversation.*"[72]This stands in contrast to group surveys/group interviews, which take a systematic approach to group members answering questions – sometimes for reasons of time-efficiency. The moderator of group discussions takes a much more open approach to the subject matter. The aim is to initiate types of conversation that are close to everyday life. In doing so, group discussions meet the principles of openness, closeness to real life or naturalism.[73] Group discussions also differ from group conversations: The former is initiated externally, while the latter is started by those having the conversation. Group discussions nonetheless aim for their communications to be conversational, as they want to study forms of communication that are close to everyday life. Real social groups allow everyday forms of communication to develop and to be observed particularly well. By definition they "share a common realm of experiences. This [realm of experiences P.K.] is at least a, if not *the* communality, that keeps the group together or the foundation on which it was established."[74]

65 Cf. Bohnsack [9]2014; Loos et al. 2013.

66 Cf. Bohnsack/Nentwig-Gesemann/Nohl [3]2007.

67 Cf. e. g. Schmid 1989; Hilger/Rothgangel 1997; Hilger/Rothgangel 2000; Hoffmann 2009; Holl 2011; Strutzenberger 2012; Lehner-Hartmann 2014.

68 Cf. Loos/Schäffer 2001; Bohnsack/Przyborski/Schäffer [2]2010a.

69 Cf. Bohnsack [2]2011.

70 Cf. Przyborski 2004.

71 Cf. Nohl [4]2012.

72 Loos/Schäffer 2001, 13. [italicised as in the original] Loos/Schäffer stand in the tradition of the documentary method. They delineate their understanding of group discussion, which must be ascribed to the Anglo-Saxon tradition. Within this tradition real social groups or group discussions are often chosen because of time pressure. For a historic overview of the Anglo-Saxon and German development of the group discussion method cf. Loos/Schäffer 2001, 15–28; Bohnsack [9]2014, 107–130. The Anglo-Saxon tradition is not unique in choosing group discussions because of time pressure rather than for epistemological and methodological reasons. Cf. also e. g. Kühn/Koschel 2011.

73 Cf. Lamnek [2]2011, 41–43, 51 f.

74 Loos/Schäffer 2001, 44. [italicised as in the original]

Additionally,real social groups meet the principle of naturalism to a greater degree than groups that are put together specifically for a piece of research. Due to the documentary method's epistemological consideration, it is also possible to find shared experiences within groups that have been put together artificially, so long as all group members have a common horizon of experiences, e. g. they all work in the same profession.

Although in principle Lamnek believes that the number of group discussions should be decided based on the epistemological interest of the study, he suggests that there should be at least two. He suggests two to five as a guideline. These numbers have also proven sensible for this study. On the one hand, the documentary method with its comparative approach absolutely depends on there being enough cases to be compared. On the other hand, the number of cases has to be restricted for practical reasons, given that both human and financial resources are limited. This is an important factor to be considered, since explicative and reconstructive approaches to group discussions are always more labour intensive than descriptive and reductive methods.[75] Guidelines in textbooks vary when it comes to the ideal number of participants in a discussion group. Although in principle Lamnek believes that the number of people who participate in a group discussions should be determined by the epistemological interest, he feels that seven to twelve participants is ideal. Whenever real social groups were used in this study to reconstruct collective attitudinal patterns, the author was bound bythe number of people who were already members of a pre-existing group. Pre-existing real social groups offer a greater possibility for observing autonomously flowing discussions, as group members already know each other. According to Loos/Schäffer "*autonomous flow is the highest aim when conducting group discussions*".[76] Autonomous types of conversation that closely mimic day-to-day lifecan provide access to focussing metaphors[77] or collectively shared attitudinal patterns.

Handbooks on this particular subject offer extensive support when it comes to preparing and organising group discussions.[78] Methodologically founded support materials, which have proven themselves in the practical application of the documentary method, have been of particular interest to this study. Bohnsack for instance lists eight principles on how to conduct and oversee group discussions: 1. "The group as a whole is the subject of research intervention.", 2. "Suggest a subject areas, but do not make specific propositions.", 3. "Be deliberately vague.", 4. "Do not manipulate how or when group members contribute.", 5. "Encourage detailed descriptions.", 6. "Ask intrinsic clarifying questions.", 7. "A phase of extrinsic clarifying questions." and 8. "The directive phase."[79] All these principles aim to keep group discussions flowing autonomously and to keep interventions by the researcher to a minimum. This enables sections of the discussion to play out like everyday interactions, which provides the basis for the reconstruction of collectively shared attitudinal patterns. The aim of this study was to investigate collective attitudes in selected schools in order to answer the research questions outlined above. Real social groups in schools where chosen, based

75 Cf. Lamnek [2]2005, 177–182

76 Loos/Schäffer 2001, 51. [italicised as in the original]

77 Cf. Bohnsack [3]2011, 67.

78 Cf. e. g. Lamnek [2]2005, 89–168; Przyborski/Wohlrab-Sahr [4]2014, 53–78, 96–102.

79 Bohnsack [8]2008, 208–211.

on the above mentioned considerations, as schools can be seen as social spaces where joint experiences are made.

All group discussions for this study were conducted during the summer semester of 2012 in the academic year of 2011/12. They took place in either the school library or in meeting rooms of the respective schools. Group discussions with the SCC in *School A* and *School B* took place after an SCC meeting (afternoon or evening). Group discussions with RE teachers were held in the morning, when they had a free period. When and where this research was conducted is in line with the principle of neutrality. The research period (summer semester 2012) was also in line with this principle. It can be implicitly assumed that all group members had been part of their respective groups since at least September 2011 (beginning of the academic year). This fact ensured that group members knew each other and that the existing groups had already met several times before the start of the research period. They had already established a shared culture of conversation.

Table 6: Group discussion overview[80]

Group name	**School A**	**School B**
RET	4 group members: 1. *Af* (female, Roman Catholic) 2. *Bf* (female, Roman Catholic) 3. *Cf* (female, Roman Catholic) 4. *Df* (female, Roman Catholic) (Protestant RE teacher *Em* largely not present) Conducted: March 2012	3 group members: 1. *Hm* (male, Roman Catholic) 2. *Im* (male, Oriental Orthodox) 3. *Jm* (male, Islamic) (Protestant RE teacher not present) Conducted: April 2012
SCC	9 group members: 1. *Qm* (male, head of school) 2. *Rf* (female, teacher representative) 3. *Sf* (female, pupil representative) 4. *Tf* (female, parent representative) 5. *Um* (male, teacher representative) 6. *Vf* (female, pupil representative) 7. *Wf* (female, parent representative) 8. *Xf* (female, teacher representative) 9. *Zf* (female, parent representative) Conducted: May 2012	5 group members: 1. *Kf* (female, parent representative) 2. *Lm* (male, pupil representative) 3. *Mf* (female, parent representative) 4. *Nm* (male, teacher representative) 5. *Of* (female, parent representative) (the head of school *Pf* was present, but did not participate in the group discussion) Conducted: April 2012

80 On the anonymisation of group members cf. transcription guidelines in the appendix. Both RE teacher *Ff* (female, Roman Catholic) and RE teacher *Gf* (female, Roman Catholic) were members of a discussion group in schools C, which was not analysed in the end, because no group discussion with the SCC had taken place. Cf. also chapter 2.5.1. A Refection on the Enquiry Phase.

2.3.5 Following a Line of Enquiry

While the use of a line of enquiry is not mentioned in pertinent literature on the documentary method it does play an important role in the process of solidifying the research endeavour and in contiguously reflecting on it. Following a line of enquiry increases one's awareness of what the precise questions a study wants to investigate are. Consequently, this study followed a line of enquiry by usinglittle facilitation cards, whichhelped toimplement it during the group discussions. The aim of using a line of enquiry, which ran through all four discussions was, however, not to standardise the investigation, as would be the case in group interviews or group surveys. Throughout all group discussions it was used flexibly instead, giving the discussions' facilitators[81] a sense of certainty in their investigation. As long as discussion stimuli are only given, once the debate on a particular subject has been completed the implementation of a line of enquiry adheres to the principle of neutrality. Allreal social groupsrepresented in this study are already familiar with the concept of discussion stimuli anyway, as specialist group conferences and SCC meetings are usually thematically structured by an agenda. In additionexperience of using this method within the framework of the documentary method already exists since Hoffmann followed a line of enquiry in his study.[82]The results of both Hoffmann's and this study clearly show that applying a line of enquiry does not impede the researcher in the facilitation of communications that are close to everyday life. A line of enquiry ultimately helps to facilitate autonomously flowing episodes throughout the discussions. A multi-layered approach was used to pre-test whether following lines of enquiry really does enable autonomously flowing discussions, and whether the stimuli are conceptually as well as linguistically accessible to members of the groups. Experts were shown draft versions of the line of enquiry and discussed it on a number of occasions. It was then revised based on the experts' feedback. Additionally the line of enquiry was tested during discussions and conversations with various school partners before the period of research started.[83]

81 Five group discussions took place all in all. The author himself conducted four of them. One was facilitated by Teresa Schweighofer (Institute for Practical Theology, University of Vienna; now Institute for Practical Theology, University of Tübingen), because the author was abroad.

82 Cf. Hoffmann 2009.

83 Bothlines of enquiry and research design were presented to a number of experts for debate. These experts were comprised of: my colleagues from the Institute for Practical Theology at the University of Vienna (Faculty for Catholic Theology), the 'Society for Religious Education' at the University of Vienna under the direction of Martin Rothgangel and Robert Schelander (Faculty of Protestant Theology) and attendees of the AKRK meeting 'Empirical Religious Education' in spring 2011. I was able to conduct a pre-test with pupils and colleagues at my school, where I teach RE part-time, as well as with other RE teachers. I would like to thank all of them for their invaluable support with my study. After the pre-test, the lines of enquiry, its stimuli and the facilitator's interventions were put into meta-theoretical terms.

Question at the start of the group discussion to 'break the ice'*
- To begin with, I have a request for you: Please describe to me the school of your dreams.

Discussion stimuli concerning the research question: 'How is religion and religious diversity perceived and valued in schools?'
- Please tell me about a situation when religion became an issue in your school.
- 'In what way is religion present in your school's day-to-day life?

In case 'religious diversity' does not get mentioned:
- Present a chart,which illustrates the religious affiliations of pupils in their school.
- Please tell me about a situation when religious diversity became an issue in your school?

Discussion stimuli concerning the research question: 'How is denominational RE perceived and valued in schools?'
- Present a chart showing attendance levels of RE in recent years.
- Please tell me about a situation where RE was in particular demand.
- On a scale of 1–10 (1 meaning not important at all, 10 meaning very important) how important is the teaching subject RE in your school?
- What made you give this answer?
- Please tell me what is special about RE in your school?
- What would your school lack if there was no more RE?
- If not yet discussed: What are the weaknesses of RE in your school?
- Where do you see RE in your school in five years time?

Discussion stimuli concerning the research question: 'What level of acceptance does RE for all, jointly organised by the churches and religious communities, find in schools?'
- What could your school gain from RE for all, jointly organised by the churches and religious communities?
- What significance would RE for all have in your school?
- What kind of opposition would RE for all be likely to encounter in your school?

** The initial question onlyintends to 'break the ice' and gets group members talking to each other, therefore discussions prompted by this stimulus were analysed. Cf. Lamnek [2]2005, 98–100. The SWOT-analysis provided important ideas for the wording and the order of the discussion impulses, although this study does not understand itself as a SWOT-analysis. A SWOT-analysis is a structured planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in a project or business venture. SWOT-analysis, a marketing management tool, is used for controlling and evaluation purposes in business ventures and more recently in educational institutions. Cf. e.g. Simon/von der Gathen [2]2010, 230–238; Homburg/Kromher [2]2006, 28–34; Pepels [5]2009, 1414f.; Esch/Herrmann/Sattler [2]2008, 156–167; Kotler/Berger/Bickhoff 2008, 28–34. On SWOT's application in educational institutions cf. Kappler 2006.*

Figure 2: Guideline for group discussions

2.3.6 Recording Data during Group Discussions

All group discussions were recorded using a digital dictaphone. Discussions were also videotaped to aid the transcription process. This meant that individual contributions could be assigned to the particular participant who made them more easily. These videotapes were only used to aid the transcription process, to help disentangle the hubbub of voices during sections of the discussions when participants were talking in a particularly interactive and thus overlapping way. The fact that it made transcription significantly easier justified the additional technical effort and expense. The author made full transcripts of all group discussions.[84] He used the TiQ[85] transcription system (Talk in Qualitative Social Research). The decision to use this transcription system, which isapproved within the framework of the documentary method, was based on the level of detail it offers for the reconstructive process. This system allows the researcher to document overlapping speech, intonation and even non-verbal communications. While this system is very useful as it is easy to learn and easy to read,[86] it is makes transcriptions rather time-consuming, especially when the material to be transcribed contains colloquial and overlapping speech. Nonetheless, a thorough transcript must be the foundation for any reconstructive-empirical interpretation,[87] because it is "the only (version of) reality available to the researcher after the fact."[88] Transcripts enable others to comprehend interpretations made (inter-subjective controllability) and to remake them again for themselves (reproducibility).

Audio recordings of all four group discussion were done digitally. Video recording used analogue equipment and the resulting videos were digitised later. Transcripts were produced using transcription software and a foot-operated switch to fast-forward and rewind. Sections of the transcript that were to be used for detailed analysis were repeatedly compared to the original recordings and corrected where necessary. Recording the data in the form of transcripts spells a reduction of empirical material. This fact is particularly noticeable when it comes to the anonymisation[89] of people who participated in group discussions. For ethical reasons[90] it must be made impossible or at least very difficult to draw any conclusions about any individual personbased on the contextual information provided.

---

84 The author of this study produced all transcripts himself. This made it possible for him to engage with all the empirical material from an early stage.

85 Cf. transcription guidelines in the appendix.

86 On the quality criteria of various transcription systems cf. Przyborski/Wohlrab/Sahr [4]2014, 165–167; cf. Dresing/Pehl 2010, 727–729, 731.

87 Each transcript is in and of itself already an interpretation. It translates spoken into written language and thus, depending on the level of detail the transcription system offers, reduces the empirical material. "*Methodologically* speaking, it is important to understand that a transcript represents neither the recording nor the recorded. It rather emphasises certain aspects and neglects others." Knoblauch [3]2011, 159. [italicised as in the original]

88 Flick [4]2011, 384.

89 On anonymisation cf. transcription guidelines in the appendix of this study.

90 On ethical questions in qualitative social research cf. Flick [4]2011, 56–70; Hopf [8]2010; Kiegelmann 2010.

2.4 Evaluation Design – Interpretative Steps in the Documentary Method and their Applications in Research Practice[91]

Since collective attitudinal patterns get expressed in the discourse of groups, the documentary method draws on comparative sequence analysis, in order to reconstruct subjunctive experiences i. e. the attitudinal framework of the group. As already outlined above, the distinction between intrinsic and documentary meaning is central to the documentary method. This is expressed in the steps of interpretation, which are both formulating and reflecting. These steps make methodically controlled outside understanding possible. They pave the way for the reconstruction of a-theoretical constructs that cannot be accessed by discussion group members themselves. When we deal with intrinsic meaning and its descriptive interpretation the focus is on the subject matter of what is actually being said. Working with documentary meaning and its reflecting interpretation implies a focus on the reconstruction of the attitudinal framework. This step of the analysis reconstructs the dynamics of the discourse, that is to say "how participants relate to each other".[92] The overview below, designed by Nohl, illustrates Mannheim's distinction between different levels of meaning (intrinsic and documentary meaning).

Meaning		Empirical Ascertainability	Interpretative Step
Intrinsic Meaning	Intentional Expressive Meaning	Not ascertainable	-/-
	Objective Meaning	Thematically ascertainable	Formulating Interpretation
Documentary Meaning		By means of reconstructing the construction process	Reflecting Interpretation

Figure 3: "Levels of meaning and their empirical ascertainability"[93]

2.4.1 Selection of Sections for Inclusion in this Paper

To begin with, the recordings of the discussions are listened back to and initial notes are made on their thematic progression and structure, marking sections that are particularly full of interaction. Following this process sections selected for analysis – thematically very small parts of the discussions – are transcribed. A complete transcript is not necessary (this is only necessary for biographic interviews.)[94] Sections are selected based on both their formalistic and their contextual characteristics. The selection is therefore inter-subjectively comprehensible. From a formalistic perspective initial and

91 Cf. i. a. Bohnsack [9]2014, 136–155; Przyborski/Wohlrab-Sahr [4]2014, 292–305; Loos/Schäffer [3]2010, 59–73; Nohl [4]2012, 39–57.

92 Bohnsack 2000, 383.

93 Nohl [4]2012, 4.

94 Cf. Nohl [4]2012, 40.

entry phases as well as formalistically noteworthy sections get selected for transcription and consequent interpretation, because initial and entry phases "offer an initial reconstruction of how relevant the fundamental assumptions are to the specific field or case, which lends structure to the research activity."[95] Formalistically noteworthy sections can moreover call attention to the focussing metaphors. Focussing metaphors are metaphorically and interactively dense sequences, which are marked by a high degree of detail. During these sequences group members often speak in a very engaged manner, take quick turns in the conversation and speak on top of each other. Alternatively, these sequences exhibit long silences. Focussing metaphors differ from other sequences in their formal structure and their type of language. Due to their interactive and metaphorical density, they also stand out because of their highly dramatic nature, as subjects, which are "of central existential meaning" for the group, represent a "*centre of experience'*"[96]. From a contextual perspective sections are selected, which are thematically relevant to the members of the group on the one hand and to the research project on the other.

2.4.2 Formulating Interpretation

Selected, transcribed sections are then subjected to formulating interpretation. This process still remains entirely within the group's system of relevance, without explicitly making it the subject of the discussion. At this point intrinsic, communicatively generalised meaning gets paraphrased and summarised. Because the researcher translates milieu-specific language into her/his own context-specific language, this step is already an act of interpretation. This is the first step of methodically controlled outside understanding. The analytical split between intrinsic and documentary meaning also takes place as part of this interpretation procedure, so that later interpretative steps can focus exclusively on documentary meaning, without having to account for intrinsic meaning any more. As this is a method of slowing down interpretations it makes it possible to pay attention to the collective creation of texts, by focussing on interactive density from a formalistic perspective. Formulating interpretation structures discussion texts thematically by dividing them into primary (PT) and secondary themes (ST), which helps to sketch out the overall structure of the discussion text.

95 Przyborski/Wohlrab-Sahr [4]2014, 292.

96 Bohnsack [9]2014, 140. [italicised as in the original]

Examples for formulating interpretation[97]

Sections from the group discussion with the SCC/ORG (108–247)[98]

Subject discussed in this section 108–247: Living side by side in school with tolerance and without conflict

108–115 Religion as an issue, in school (the entry point to this theme is the subject of the section)
With reference to this study, which addresses RE in the city of Vienna, two questions are posed. One enquires about a situation where religion had become a particular issue the other asks how religion is a part of day-to-day life in the school.

116–126 PT: There have been no cases of abuse in this school
Cases of abuse were talked about in this school. Everybody was glad that no cases of abuse had taken place in their school.

126–178 PT: Religion does not provoke conflict in this school

> 126–136 ST: Religion is not an issue in this school. It does not get talked about in either a positive or a negative way. Religion does not polarise people, it is neither a "a positive or a negative issue" (133).
>
> 137–143 ST: RE teachers do good work. The reason given for this is ethics education. Pupils have a choice between RE and ethics education.
>
> 143–178 ST: Even when it comes to religious school services and school masses religion is not a polarising issue. There is singing involved in religious school services, which means that with "slight […] pressure" (144) almost all pupils involved in music classes take part in religious school services. The issue of religion does not cause any conflict during religious school services, because music stands in the forefront as a uniting factor. Because of music, there is no problem with religion. Nobody feels forced to attend religious school services. Even if a non-Catholic pupil does not actively participate in religious schools services, e. g. by not joining into song, it does not pose a problem. It did, however, become a problem once and it was put to a vote. Religious school services can sometimes be problematic, if one of the pupils is a Jehovah's Witness. On the other hand this would not be a problem, because the pupil in question would just not sing along.

179–247 PT: The school is characterised by tolerance and a positive atmosphere.

> 179–187 ST: The school is very tolerant in all areas. It can be seen as "an island of bliss" (185).

97 The transcript of this example can be found in the relevant discourse description. Cf. chapter 3.4.4 A Description of the Discourse.

98 GD with SCC/ORG (= group discussion with the panel of pupils parents and teachers in an Austrian type of grammar school). Numbers refer to line numbers in the transcript.

188–207 ST: This was also the case when Muslim pupils still attended the school. This had made it possible to collaborate with the Islamic RE teacher. Not all members of the group realise that there are no longer any Muslim pupils in the school. In other schools problems arise because of Muslim pupils, but this was never the case in this school.

208–214 ST: An attitude of tolerance does not only affect religion, but all areas in this school.

215–247 ST: The size of a school has an impact on the school's atmosphere. The fact that this school is small has a positive effect on its atmosphere. As schools get bigger their atmosphere changes. There is more "harmony" (225) in small schools, because people can look out for each other and nobody can "disappear into anonymity" (231). All schools should be smaller. Large schools could be split into several smaller ones. This would make it possible for pupils to have a relationship with all teachers, regardless whether they are being taught by them or not. The size of a school can have a positive impact on its social atmosphere and this in turn does not only impact on religion.

2.4.3 Reflecting Interpretation

Reflecting interpretation looks at documentary meaning. It serves to reconstruct the attitudinal framework, which homologously reveals itself again and again in the process and structure of a debate on all kinds of subjects. While formulating interpretation still pays attention to what is being said, reflecting interpretation focuses on how the group deals with a topic or a problem. Based on the 'modus operandi' it is then possible to access the conjunctive realm of experience, that is to say the collectively shared horizon of experience. Special attention is given to sections, "which are particularly interactive or metaphorically dense, the so-called *focussing metaphors*."[99] In research practice this is done in a number of different ways, by means of which reciprocally limiting horizons (positive and negative opposite horizons), and potential for enactment are uncovered. "The researcher thus asks the text the following questions: 'What is his objective? What is he averting/distancing himself from? Where does he see possibilities or obstacles for implementation?"[100] The analysis of how the discussion is organised is another important process. The various stages of the discourse provide the sequential component parts for this analysis, which "breaks the formal structure of the discourse down into relationships between different attitudinal contents."[101] This then allows one to distinguish between different modes of discourse organisation – including (parallel, antithetic and univocal) and excluding (oppositional and divergent).[102] An in-depth sequence analysis of the discussion is another procedure that reconstructs both the type of text and the stage of the discourse. It analyses how members of the group interact with each other.

99 Bohnsack [9]2014, 138. [italicised as in the original]
100 Przyborski/Wohlrab-Sahr [4]2014, 296.
101 Przyborski/Wohlrab-Sahr [4]2014, 298.
102 Cf. Przyborski 2004, 95–287.

The following questions can be helpful when conducting a sequence analysis: "What are the distinctions found during step one and which horizon was outlined to ensure that the next step could react and continue appropriately?"[103] To make it possible to reconstruct shared attitudinal patterns, three different stages of discourse are needed (proposition, elaboration, conclusion). When an attitude or part of an attitudeis first proposed, it gets introduced into the discourse in the form of a topic. These propositions occur when a new topic is introduced into the discussion. The attitude introduced in the proposition unfolds during the elaboration. This can happen in a number of ways, e. g. by putting forward an argument or giving an example. Only once an attitude introduced into the discourse reaches its conclusion and a topic comes to an end, can a commonly shared attitude be confirmed, as long as it is also held by the other group members and not only by the person who introduced it to the discourse in a proposition.[104]Alongside these three fundamental stages of discourse the documentary method also uses a wide range of terminology to analyse various stages of the discussion. It is therefore possible to distinguish between validations, ratification, antitheses, oppositions, divergences, transpositions,as well as interim conclusions and concluding propositions.[105]A situation where no shared attitudinal framework can be identified during the analysis of the stages of discourse, because participants are talking past each other, even if they e. g. address the topic, is called an incongruence of the frame.

Comparability of cases is intrinsic to the documentary method. The research process must include intra and cross case comparisons within the context of reflecting interpretation as early as possible, because when "*the interpreter's horizons of comparison* are empirically well-founded, they are inter-subjectively comprehensible and verifiable."[106] The validity of reconstruction increases, the more the horizons of comparison are rooted in the empirical material and not in the researcher's thought experiments. Intra and cross case comparison also serves to detect homologous meaning structures, which occur again and again, even in thematically diverse and unrelated sections. "The most important point of reference for analysis presentation" during reflecting interpretation is nonetheless "the *uniqueness or wholeness of the case*."[107] This point of reference only gets left behind at the point of type creation.

103 Przyborski/Wohlrab-Sahr [4]2014, 296.
104 For various types of (ritual) conclusions cf. Przyborski 2004, 74–76.
105 Cf. Przyborski 2004, 61–76.
106 Bohnsack [9]2014, 139. [italicised as in the original]
107 Bohnsack [9]2014, 139. [italicised as in the original]

Examples for reflecting interpretation[108]

Excerpt (108–143) from a section of the group discussion with the SCC/ORG (108–247)

108–113 Initiation of the topic by means of a description (108–110) and a question by *Y2* (110–112); a ratification by *Vf* (114); a follow-up question by *Y2* (115)

After a conversation sparked by the question designed to 'break the ice' *Y2* introduces the topic of the discussion. For her it is time to start the discussion ("Now", 108). She specifies the new subject by giving it a number ("second", 108). She initially introduces the new topic with a "question" (108) followed by a "request" (109). In doing so she shows herself to be the leader of the discussion. As she describes the research project she mentions "the situation RE finds itself in" (109–110) and thus reveals one of several focal points of this piece of work ("fundamental", 109). The topic is roughly sketched out and given a physical location as she mentions "the city of Vienna" (110). Once she finishes her description she follows it with a narrative question. It enquires about a memorable situation that stayed with the group related to religion "in this school" (111). By asking this question *Y2* substantiates the description of the research project. By using the demonstrative pronoun she focuses in on this particular school ("in this school" 111) and enquires about a situation where religion has become "an issue in this school" (111). As a second step she asks another question. By using the conjunctive "or" (111) she links her questions and therefore offers two narrative questions. After a silence of three seconds and a throat clearing sound "Hm" (114) by *Vf*, *Y2* adds a follow-up question. The interviewer responds to this with another prod and rolls the subject out again. She poses the fundamental question if religion features in this school at all (115) and thus elicits responses.

116 Proposition by *Um*

Um responds to the interviewer's question with his colloquial introjection "Well" (116) and introduces a proposition. He gives an example from the past ("when there were", 116), the "abuse cases" (116) ("when" 116 must be understood in the temporal sense).

117–126 Joint elaborations in the descriptive modality by *Qm, Rf, Um, Vf* and *Zf*

Um's proposition is collaboratively elaborated on in the group. *Om* substantiates *Um*'s statement by describing cases of abuse as 'an issue' in school. This gets repeated by *Rf*, and thus receives validation. At the same time *Um* feels his statement was understood and validates the substantiation ("Yes, yes", 120). *Rf* starts by delineating the topic in a negative way ("Yes, […] but not", 121) and continues with an explanation ("well", 121), but does not continue. It is obvious that group members immediately understand each other as they do not have to explain themselves to each other. *Vf* expands on *Rf*'s

108 This example refers to section of the group discussion with the SCC/ORG (108–247) and comprises lines 108–143. For reasons of presentation the reflexive interpretation of this section is not reproduced in full. This example serves to illustrate how this study was conducted.

exploration. Her mode of elaboration is also distancing ("It wasn't" 122). At the same time *Qm* and *Zf* validate these statements and distance themselves from their shared negative opposite horizon, the abuse cases. *Rf*onceagain distances herself from the abuse cases and mentions the phenomenon of "We" (125) for the first time. This phenomenon underlines a clear opposition between the shared "We" (125) – there is no more detailed definition at this stage, but due to the intra case comparative analysis it can be assumed she means the school – and the abuse cases, which are summed up as "that" (125). This opposition expresses a clear dissociation of the "We" (125) from the abuse cases. *Qm* validates this dissociation and makes it even stronger, by pointing out that there is no connection at all ("whatsoever", 126). This dissociation finds further expression when*Qm*'s asks other participants in the group to suggest other topics. With this request the group does not address the negative counter horizon any further. The dissociation from the abuse cases is brought to a head precisely because it does not get addressed any further.

The negative counter horizon is already clearly discernablеduring this short excerpt, as a problem area is being addressed. The group distances itself from this problem area, by emphasising the fact that there are no connections between the abuse cases and this school. The dissociation from this problem area reaches the point where it no longer gets addressed and the group moves on to a different subject.

127–136 Joint elaborations in the descriptive mode by *Vf* (127, 130–132) and *Qm* (133) with an interjected validation by *Sf*, an enquiry by *Rf* (129) and a ratification by *Rf, Vf* and *Sf* (134–136)

Vf pays no attention to religion, but believes that it does not cause a stir in any way. Her statement emphasises this in two ways ("never" and "nothing at all" 127). *Sf* immediately validates this. In response to *Vf*'s statement *Rf* makes a closed either-or enquiry. She does, however, not put the second half of it into words ("or" 129). As a second attempt to substantiate her statement *Vf*starts with a negative and reaches clarification. This clarification is again phrased in the negative. She clearly indicates more than once ("really", 130; "not at all" 132 are used to strengthen and emphasise the statement) that religion is not an important subject for discussion in this school. She explicitly refers to this particular school ("here in this school", 131). For her, religion is not a central topic in school, as "religion gets talked about" (131) neither very often, nor in a particularly intense way. At the end of her statement she further strengthens it, by using the mode of negation once again ("not at all" 132). *Qm*'s pursuing elaboration also shows that religion is not a topic that gets much attention. He emphasises that religion does not get addressed in any particular way. He too uses negative wordings ("neither […] nor", 133). Religion is not the subject of combative debate, it does not polarise people. At the same time religion's polarising and trouble-making potential is acknowledged ("it's neither a positive nor a negative issue", 133). This potential does, however, not come to bear in this school. His statement is ratified by three group members.

137–143 Joint elaborations in the mode of an argument by *Qm* (137, 139, 142–143) and by *Vf* (141)

Qm names the, in his view, good work RE teachers do as the reason why religion is not a polarising issue. Religion gets thus connected to the work of RE teachers. He reflects positively on the work they do and calls it "challenging" (139). He reasons that RE teachers must be doing good work as in this school their subject runs in parallel to ethics education. With this statement he makes a connection to ethics education, which he believes to be one of the causal links to the good work done by RE teachers ("I think, probably also", 137–139). *Vf*contributes to *Qm's* argument by pointing out that pupils can choose between ethics education and RE; a point *Qm* also picks up on. *Qm* also offers a delimitation ("but" 142) and adds the fact that pupils can choose to his earlier statement (cf. 133). Even though ethics education is offered in this schools, and pupils are able to choose which subject they attend, religion is not a confrontational subject ("there is nothing for and nothing against." 142–143). Religion's potential for creating conflict is expressed once again.

2.4.4 Discourse Description

Where group discussions are concerned, case descriptions, or discourse descriptions are a vital part of the documentary method. Their primary purpose is the depiction of reconstructed attitudinal frameworks in a concentrated way during reflecting interpretation. For the purpose of clarification and inter-subjective controllability, these descriptions use excerpts from the transcripts. In addition, discourse descriptions serve to retrace the discourse's structure and its reconstructed dramatic highlights. "A successful and rounded discourse description manages to comprehensively combine, both the description of attitudinal patterns and frame components ("content') and the description of the drama and organisation of the discussion ("form'), to reveal the overall characteristics of the case."[109] To make sure different forms of expression "and thus the *relationship of otherness*"[110] remain identifiable, discourse descriptions need to strike a balance between the language used by discussion participants on the one hand and the researcher's language on the other. More and more research projects using the documentary method, no longer produce case – or discourse descriptions, but illustrate cases by means of typification instead.

2.4.5 Typification/Case Collation[111]

While the documentary method permits the use of typification, this research project does not seek to go down this route, as its epistemological interest lies elsewhere. Its focus lies with school-case studies, and thus with discourse representation. During the

109 Bohnsack [9]2014, 142.

110 Bohnsack [9]2014, 143. [italicised as in the original]

111 Since this study does not use typification, it is only outlined briefly here.

evaluation phase of this study central attitudinal frameworks that came out of the discussions were collated together across all school cases. They are, however, presented in reference to the respective schools. This study works with two collations (*School A* and *School B*).

The aim of typification is to find correlations between reconstructed attitudinal patterns "and the experiential or existential background, in which these attitudes have originated".[112] Typification also uses a comparative process, which initially uses minimal and then maximal contrasts as well as a 'tertium comparationis'. Through increasing abstraction, reconstructed attitudinal frames become detached from individual cases and a typology can thus be generated. The documentary method distinguishes between meaning-genetic and socio-genetic typification. Meaning-genetic typification crystallises various attitudinal frameworks, which relate to one and the same topic or issue. Meaning-genetic typification thus makes it possible to detect similarities and differences in attitudinal frameworks that refer to a particular topic or issue, based on one basic topology (e. g. gender, socio-economic background, age). Socio-genetic typification instead looks at the origins of attitudinal frameworks. For this purpose the basic typologies of meaning-genetic typification are refined further. E. g. An attitudinal framework that could initially be reconstructed during a particular phase of life as opposed to during other phases of life (e. g. childhood), can be refined further if the same attitudinal framework could also be observed in relation to a particular gender (e. g. female) and within a particular socio-economic background (e. g. middle class). This way of working builds up a multidimensional typification, while meaning-genetic typification remains one-dimensional, referring to one particular topic or issue only. "*Contrast in similarity* is the fundamental principle in the generation of individual typologies. At the same time it is the glue that holds all of typology together."[113] In order to generate valid typologies a certain number of cases is needed so that theoretical saturation can be achieved.

Recent developments in the documentary method show that rational typification and multilateral comparison are now being pursued alongside meaning-genetic and socio-genetic typification. They are now being given initial methodological consideration.[114] Rational typification focuses on questioning how individual typified attitudinal frameworks of various dimensions are connected. E. g. How does a typified attitude of perception correlate with a typified attitude of intervention? Multilateral comparison finds relationships between typologies at various social levels (meso and macro level), and draws comparisons between them.

2.5 Reflections on the Research Process

Some reflections on the research process can already be found in parts of the research design outline above. A more systematic reflection, structured by investigation period and evaluation period, will follow now.

112 Bohnsack [9]2014, 143.

113 Bohnsack [9]2014, 145. [italicised as in the original]

114 Cf. Nohl 2013.

2.5.1 Reflections on the Investigation Period

Gaining access to the field of enquiry proved surprisingly easier than originally expected. The author of this study had assumed that people would be less willing to participate in group discussions. His assumptions were based on the fact that group discussions are a drain on RE teachers' and SCC members' time and that he was not able to remunerate participants. All in all, the author encountered an unbiased willingness to participate in group discussions and a high degree of willingness to support him. The experiences of this research project should encourage researchers not to shy away from making contact with groups they wish to investigate. One's preconceptions should not be taken at face value.[115] It also proved useful to make personal contact with individual members of the groups, initially by phone, followed by an email with an information letter about the research project.[116] Contact with group members as well as the research process as a whole was kept as transparent as possible. In order not to risk influencing results, the research topic was only sketched out very briefly during the initial contact with group members. The original plan had been to conduct group discussions in three separate schools. This would have allowed for a well-reasoned selection of two schools and their group discussions for analysis. During the research process five group discussions were conducted at three different schools. Only one group discussion (with RE teachers) took place at the third school. While the Head of this school had originally agreed to the research, no further contact with her was possible. The author does not know the reason for this. Events like this are 'setbacks' in the research process, because they render the already conducted group discussion with RE teachers useless, since this project is concerned with school case studies. Nonetheless, it is absolutely legitimate and in line with the principle of voluntary participation for any individual not to participate in a group discussion. Voluntary participation is essential for methodological reasons, so that ways of communicating during group discussions are close to everyday life and do not get blocked by coercion. It is even more important out of respect for every individual's choice and free will.[117] Even when it comes to group discussions that did take place, there were people who ordinarily are part of the group in question, but who did not take part in the discussion. There are a number of reasons why people did not take part in group discussions, for instance if they were off sick on the agreed date, or if they had other plans. There were also a few people who did not give a reason for not taking part. Aside from the principle of voluntary participation in research projects this also illustrates the principle of naturalism. Illnesses for instance are after all not predictable. Consequently, the group discussions with real social groups, which were conducted and analysed for this study, exhibit a high degree of authenticity, closeness to everyday life and naturalism.

The respective persons involved suggested the dates and times when group discussions took place. They agreed on a suitable time amongst themselves. RE teachers always chose free periods during the mornings, while members of the SCCs preferred

115 Loof/Schäffer report similar experiences. Cf. Loof/Schäffer 2001, 45 f.

116 Cf. The information letter can be found in the appendix of this study. On important elements of introductory letters cf. Lamnek [2]2005, 124 f.

117 Cf. Flick [4]2011, 63 f.

the period immediately after SCC meetings in the afternoon or evening. As participating individuals had very limited time to give to group discussions, the author took the groups' lead where timing was concerned. This meant that group members had to be well coordinated with regards to scheduling and the author had to be flexible with his time. Both coordination and flexibility when it comes to time and scheduling are important aspects of everyday life in schools. This serves as another indication that the data collected here is close to everyday life.

2.5.2 Reflections on the Evaluation Period

On a number of occasions the author became aware just how time and labour intensive the evaluation of group discussions, within the context of a qualitative-reconstructive research project, is. Listening to the recordings of group discussions over and over again, transcribing them and then evaluating the discussions according to the interpretative steps of the documentary method, all takes a long time. Many textbooks on qualitative social research express the aim of qualitative-empirical work to be the generation of grounded theory or of multidimensional socio-genetic typification. Both of which requires an adequately high number of cases. Given that studies like this also use a time and labour intensive investigation design (e. g. interviews, group discussions, observation etc.), this aim seems largely unachievable within the context of a PhD dissertation that is structured as a solo project and is not part of a larger research programme. Every study must nonetheless account for the quality and scope of its findings and must abstract the individual case in order to make a statement that is generalizable and valid across cases. This is true for all studies, even those that do not propose any grounded theories or multidimensional socio-genetic typifications, or do not even strive to do so because of their epistemological interests.[118] Throughout the research process the author remained vigilant towards both quality and scope of this study. This gave rise to a circular research process, insofar as the author kept reflecting on his methodology throughout. He repeatedly consulted books and articles on qualitative social research and engaged in intensive conversations with his colleagues. This triggered a learning process, during which the author gradually acquired the logic of qualitative social research. This meant that a "*reflexive* rather than a deductive relationship" could be established "between the methodological rules and research practice."[119]

---

118 Cf. e. g. Nohl 2013, 7 f. According to Loos/Schäffer cross-case research is unavoidable as every individual is tied into his or her wider, collective environment. "Despite the fact that statements and assertions in the social sciences usually refer to collective issues, or to issues that can only be understood in their embeddedness in collective structures, *individualising approaches* often dominate in research practice." Loos/Schäffer 2001, 9. [italicised as in the original]

119 Bohnsack [9]2014, 12. [italicised as in the original] Bohnsack aptly describes the step by step process of acquiring the methodology through using the methods. "This also means that a certain familiarity with practical research is a prerequisite for an adequate understanding of the methodology. This further means that the ability to learn 'qualitative' methods is contingent on learnt experience (through practical research). Knowledge acquired from textbooks alone is not sufficient. Simply acquiring knowledge on methodological reflection and methodical

To help with the analysis of the group discussions, the author founded an interpretation group, which met for two to three hour workshops (peer debriefings) at regular intervals.[120] This group was given excerpts from the group discussions, which had been interpreted by the author and asked to discuss them. The group acted as a critical, corrective voice, tasked with testing the author's interpretations, to ensure they were inter-subjectively traceable. It placed emphasis on the author's role as researcher, as it put some distance between him and the discussion groups. At the time this study was undertaken, the author was himself a part-time RE teacher at a grammar school in Vienna. Since the interpretation group acted as a corrective agent it was able to reflexively recognise possible unconscious processes of identification and solidarity with group members from the schools participating in this study. 'The Society for Religious Education' at the University of Vienna[121] served a similar purpose. Members of the society were presented with the individual stages of the work and with the research outcomes and asked to critically reflect on them.

Schools are hierarchical systems, where dependency-structures exist for instance between RE teachers and the (religious) education authorities. Participants must therefore be protected from possible harm. This is particularly important when, like in this study, forms of communication are used that are close to everyday life, thus giving access to sensitive data. Members of the groups placed their trust in the author and in turn he understands his ethical obligation to protect all people involved. On the one hand, this obligation is met by the careful handling of data, which only the author of this study has access to. On the other hand, steps were taken to anonymise data with the aid of data-masking techniques. Context specific information was also omitted wherever possible. However, compared to quantitative studies, providing anonymity for persons involved is only possible to a limited extent, especially if the number of collected and analysed cases is small.[122] The transcription guidelines used for this study and the sparing use of detailed context information,[123] made a high, but not an absolute degree of anonymity possible. Consequently – although this has been made difficult – conclusions can be drawn. The author understands this research-ethical dilemma, which, however, cannot be fully resolved within this study design.

---

rules, instructions and guidelines does not enable one to conduct practical research, or even to adequately understand the method. There is a *reflexive* rather than a deductive relationship between the methodological rules and research practice." Bohnsack [9]2014, 12.

120 Cf. Flick [4]2011, 500. I would like to warmly thank all the members of the interpretation group for their support, Elisabeth Fónyad-Kropf, Martin Jäggle, Andrea Lehner-Hartmann, Teresa Schweighofer und Helena Stockinger.

121 Topical research projects – primarily thesis and dissertations –addressing religious education studies are put up for discussion at the 'Society for Religious Education' at the Faculty of Protestant Theology at the University of Vienna.

122 Cf. Flick [4]2011, 65 f.

123 Detailed information on the individual group members (e. g. age, years of service etc.) were collated in a data entry form. These details were, however, omitted in the case studies. Age, for instance, was rounded up the nearest decade.

3. Case Study School A

3.1 Religious Affiliation during the Academic Year of 2011/12

During the academic year of 2011/12 approximately 400 pupils attended this school. The majority of pupils, 60.7% were members of the Roman Catholic Church. Just under a quarter were without religious affiliation (24.4%). 10.1% of pupils were Protestant, 2,5% Orthodox, and 2.2% belongs to one of five other churches or religious communities. It is worth noting that only very few Muslim pupils attend this school, despite the fact that in 2011 7.8% of the population of Vienna belonged to the Islamic faith.[1] Out of the eight religious groups represented in this school, six had the right to offer RE classes. For 74.6% of pupils RE classes offered by their church or religious community were compulsory.

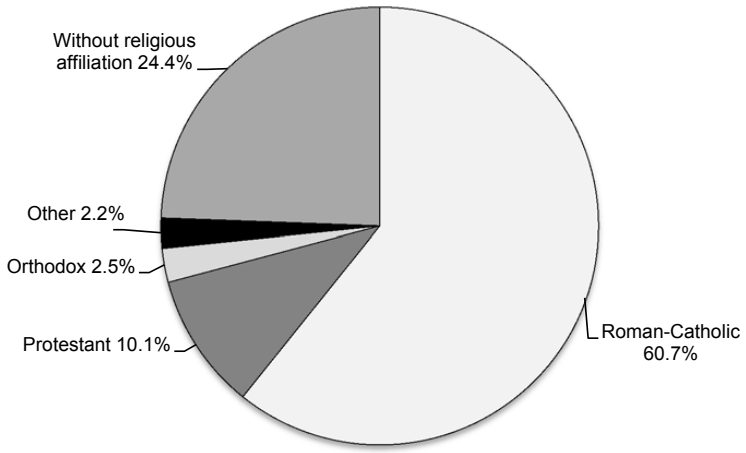

Figure 4: Religious affiliation (ORG)

3.2 Attendance of RE and Ethics Education

Ethics education has been trialled in this school for quite some time. This subject is compulsory for all pupils who do not attend RE classes.

During the academic year of 2011/12, 67.0% of pupils attended RE classes and 33.0% ethics education classes. This ratio has been relatively stable for the past few years.

1 For the purpose of comparison see the population of Vienna according to religious affiliation in the year 2001 (last census): 49.2% Roman Catholic, 25.6% without religious affiliation, 7.8% Muslim, 5.8% Orthodox, 4.7% Protestant.

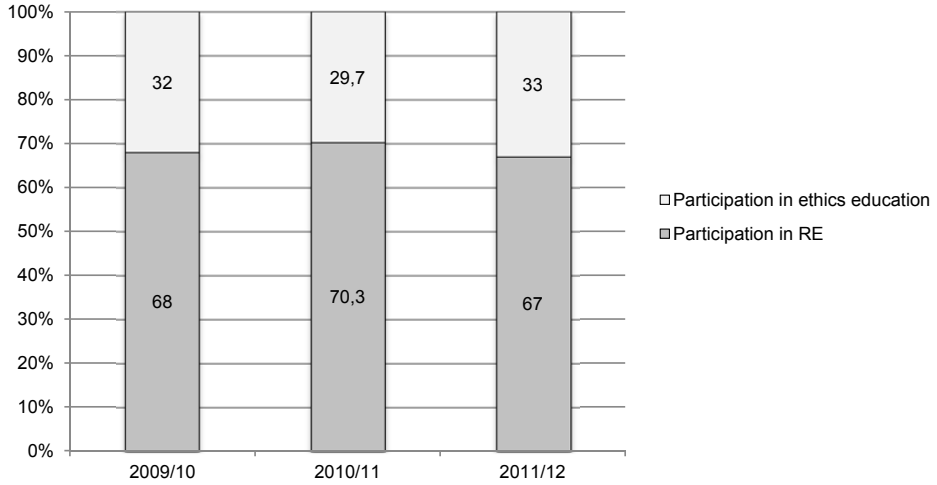

Figure 5: Attendance of RE and ethics education (ORG)

Documents provided make it possible to make the following distinctions:

- Pupils belonging to a recognised church or religious community largely attended RE classes (75.6%). Within this group there were differences depending on religious affiliation: A large proportion of both Roman Catholic and Protestant pupils attended RE classes (Roman Catholic: 78.9%; Protestant: 82.9%), while pupils from other recognised churches and religious communities[2] only did so very rarely (6.3%).
- Pupils not belonging to any recognised church or religious community (25.4%) were more likely to attend Ethics Education (58.3%) than RE. Among the latter group 72.1% attended Catholic and 27.9% Protestant RE.

Pupils were significantly more likely to attend their own denomination's RE, if lessons were held in the school itself. The main reasons for this seem to have been pragmatic ones. Pupils would otherwise have had to attend RE in a different school, usually in the afternoon as well as across year-groups and school types. The evaluation study on ethics education in Austria[3] makes such an assumption empirically plausible.

The following can be observed: on the surface, the introduction of ethics education seems to support RE. After all, 78% of all pupils in this school attended RE classes; Roman Catholic and Protestant RE primarily. By contrast only very few pupils belonging to one of the smaller legally recognised churches or religious communities attended RE. Consequently, their RE provisions seem stretched to the limit.

2 They belonged to 6 different legally recognised churches and religious communities and constituted 4.0% of the total body of pupils.

3 Cf. Bucher 2001, 186; Clark-Wilson 2011, 60–62; Bucher 2014, 75 f.

3.3 Group – RE Teachers (RET/ORG)

3.3.1 Making Contact

Contact with this group was established via the school office. The author of this study was informed that *Af* was the subject co-ordinator for Roman Catholic RE. He then contacted *Af* by telephone, briefly informed her about his research project[4] and asked her if she thought that all RE teachers as well as the SCC would be willing to participate in separate discussion groups. *Af* was confident they would be and asked the author to call back in a few days, thus giving her a chance to ask her colleagues, whether they would be happy to take part in group discussions.

The author called *Af* back at the arranged time and she informed him that all her colleagues were willing to participate. A date for the group discussion was later set via email. The group discussion took place 20 days after the initial phone conversation with *Af*. The first face-to-face contact with *Af* and the other group members took place during the group discussion.

3.3.2 The Setup of the Group Discussion

The author of this study was asked to come to the school's staff room in the morning at the arranged time. After he had signed in with the school secretary he waited outside the staff room. When a teacher came up to him and asked if she could help, it turned out to be *Bf*. They entered the staff room together where they came across *Cf*. *Bf* and *Cf* did not know where the group discussion was supposed to take place. In there opinion the staff room's meeting area would not be suitable as interruptions could occur at any time. They decided to conduct the discussion in the school library. On their way to the library they met *Af*. *Df* was already there. The group members pushed together some tables and chairs, so that they could sit in a semi-circle. The author meanwhile assembled his recording equipment and gave them a rough outline of his research interests.

The group discussion lasted slightly longer than a single teaching lesson (50 minutes). None of the RE teachers had any teaching obligations during the time of the group discussion. As *Em*, the Protestant RE teacher, was not present at the start of the discussion, the author asked if they should wait for him. This was declined, as *Df* had called him on his mobile phone and found out that *Em* was unavailable because he was at his tailor's to have a recently purchased pair of leather trousers altered.

Af marked herself out during the discussion, as she stood up, walked to a book shelf, picked out a book, flicked through it, made notes in her diary, and inspected the packaging of the recording device, which she held in her hands. Her activities did, however, not prevent her from participating in the discussion. After approximately 40 minutes *Af* informed the author of this study when the allotted lesson would end. Nonetheless, the discussion continued for a few more minutes, even once the school bell had rung, clearly indicating that the lesson had ended and the allotted time had been overrun.

4 The author sent an information sheet about the research project to all RE teachers via email. Cf. information sheet in the appendix of this study.

Once the bell had already rung the Protestant RE teacher *Em* joined the discussion group. He sat down after a quick hello and an apology, but hardly contributed during the last few minutes of the discussion.

After briefly saying their goodbyes *Af* and *Cf* left the library. The author continued chatting to *Bf* for a little while. *Df* and *Ef* remained in the library.

3.3.3 Additional Information about Discussion Participants

During the academic year of 2011/12 five individuals taught RE in this school, four women and one man. The women taught Roman Catholic RE (*Af, Bf, Cf* and *Df*) and the man Protestant RE (*Em*). All four Roman Catholic RE teachers participated in the group discussion. As mentioned above, the Protestant RE teacher only arrived during the last few minutes of the discourse. His limited contribution could therefore not be included in the analysis of the group discussion.

The four female Roman Catholic RE teachers were between the ages of 40 and 55. Some of them held at least one other teaching post, had full-time teaching duties and taught in more than one school. All of them had more than 10 years teaching experience. The only male RE teacher in the school taught Protestant RE, he was approximately 40 years old and had worked at this school for about ten years. He held full-time teaching duties and also worked in three other schools.

3.3.4 A Description of the Discourse

Religious Services and School Functions

To begin with, the interviewer asks the group to describe a situation where religion has become a particular issue in this school. *Bf* responds (Religious Services and School Functions, 44–68):

Y1: Ahm, please tell me about a situation, where religion has become a particular issue in your school. (2)
Bf: ((clears throat)) (2) Well, are we talking about this school in particular, because I can't say too much about that, I only started here this year and I know a number of different schools. it's my thing so to speak, that I can compare with other schools where I have worked, but this one in particular
Aw: What do you mean religion became an issue in the whole school or only in in my lessons?
Cf: ⌊ Subject
Y1: Well, in the whole school, yes.
Af: Religion as such, or RE teachers?
Y1: Religion as such.
Cf: Not at all?
Af: Can't think of anything off the top of my head, nothing at all.
Df: ⌊ me neither.
Cf: Religion as such? is it supposed to be an issue for teaching staff?
Y1: Whatever comes to mind.
Cf: ⌊ Have colleagues ever mentioned anything?
Af: ⌊ No
Df: ⌊ I just know that whenever there are negative headlines about the church, the pupils of course immediately start in on it, and why and how, and the church is out dated and should be abolished an- but that's

66 during lessons, in school in general I can't think
67 Cf: ⌊ I think religion isn't
68 talked about at all among teaching staff, not at all

Bf reveals that she only started to work at this school that year, and that she therefore won't be able to make many contributions relating to this particular school. On the other hand, she is able to draw comparisons due to experience in other schools. *Af* asks the interviewer some clarifying questions. Her questions are addressed to him. She wants to know how the given stimulus should be understood. In doing so she makes a double distinction in order to substantiate the given stimulus. Her distinction reveals two possible connections to religion: one the one hand she mentions religion in relation to the "whole school" (50), on the other hand religion "only in lesson" (50–51). She connects the latter statement to her own person ("in in my lessons?", 50–51). The interweaving of lessons and her own person is also discernible in *Af*'s second clarifying question (54). *Cf, Af* and *Df* validate each other. They do not recognise religion as an issue in school and see no connection between school and religion. The idea that religion could be an issue in school is emphatically denied in multiple ways. By using a conditional clause, *Df* does eventually make a connection between the issue of religion and one particular aspect of school. As *Df*'s example illustrates, the issue of religion only finds expression during lessons. In this instance it is a negative subject, as there is a self-evident, causal connection between "negative headlines about the church" (64) and the pupils' negative-rejecting stance towards the church.

Cf connects school with her teacher colleagues, and uses this to demonstrate that religion is not an issue in this school. She repeatedly denies any connection between the general teaching staff and religion ("isn't talked about at all", 67–68; "not at all" 68), and thus also between school and religion. She therefore also validates *Af*'s and *Df*'s repeated earlier statements. To her there is no relationship between religion and school. The direction of the discourse changes when *Bf* starts to contribute. She does note a connection between religion and school (Religious Services and School Functions, 69–108):

69 Bf: ⌊ Well, something just popped into my head
70 Cf: ⌊ Really?
71 Bf: well I @came@ here, when everything will stay anonymous anyway, the
72 impressions, well it had to, well at the start there is of course, well I have the
73 feeling that RE must serve for certain reflective elements for example that you
74 do something at the start ahm, but how that happens and if you get from it what you
75 need to make it reflective, nobody cares, as long as somebody does it, in their
76 own way.
77 Af: ⌊ Well, but that's what I asked, if RE teachers
78 Df: ⌊ Now, do you mean school-
79 Af: He just said, religion itself, I would also have thought of RE teachers when it
80 comes to this subject
81 Bf: ⌊ Well, but I think
82 Df: Do you mean the school functions at the start of the school year, or what?
83 Bf: ⌊ No, yes and I mean for instance religious services generally
84 Af: ⌊ Yes, yes
85 Df: ⌊ ((clears throat))
86 Af: ⌊ The functions
87 Bf: How you, well I think that this does fit into this subject area in my opinion, ok and
88 all that is expected of an RE teacher in addition to that.
89 Df: ⌊ ((coughing))
90 Df: ⌊ Well, but this has been an ongoing issue for years

here, no? Because we
Af: ⌊ But this isn't about religion I think, it's about people, who
Df: ⌊ No
Af: who does it, well for me anyway.
Df: ⌊ Well, and that there is an expectation, that we do something for certain
Af: ⌊ Yes
Df: occasions,religious services at the start and the end of the school year, Christmas, but
but nobody really wants them anyway, because it always ends the same way,
some interested teachers come and classes that do the music and maybe 3, 4 pupils
Bf: ⌊ Well ⌊ Yes
Df: when it's a religious service, yes, and nobody else is interested and then
well it was (.) changed so that sometimes before school we have a reflective,
contemplative, I don't know start or end to the school year, which is definitely no
longer a Mass, its also no longer so clearly ahm (.) what do I know, a collaboration
between Protestants, Muslims, do we even still have any of those?
Af: ⌊ Not any more, no
Df: ⌊ Not any
more, really

With reference to the promised anonymity of anything she says, *Bf* enters into a narrative, describes her first impression of this school and sees a connection between religion and school. Her impressions relate to the "start" (72), which at this point remains undefined and denotes a normative factor ("had to", 72; "of course", 72). She unfolds her impressions in a further step, substantiates them and takes account of RE. Here the normative finds expression ("must", 73) once again. The start, as well as RE are marked by normativity. Since RE must "serve" (73) something, it is presented with an externally expected function, which it has to fulfil. RE itself is not at the centre. It is rather a means to an end and must meet the goals expected of it. The specific function it is responsible for is expressed as it gets used for "certain reflective elements" (73). She exemplifies RE's allotted task with "that you do something at the start" (73–74). She does not elaborate further on who is involved or any specific activities. They are completely pushed into the background, because they only serve the reflective elements that are expected at the "start" (72). The low significance attributed to specific implementations corresponds with the indifferent attitude towards people involved while at the same time outcomes are expected ("nobody cares, as long as somebody does it", 75).

Af wants to weigh in at this point, as to her it is clear that this subject is specifically about those RE teachers who are responsible for organising school activities at the start. The relationship between school and RE teachers is addressed once again, during the course of which *Af* once more denies any connection between school and "religion itself" (79), despite the fact that *Bf* jibes at this point of view (81). *Af*'s contribution once again shows that she is oriented towards the interviewer. This already indicates her tendency to orient herself towards others (external orientation). This tendency reappears again and again throughout the discussion, with her as well as other members of the group.

The staging of the start, which *Bf* mentions, refers to "the school functions at the start of the school year" (82). Her vague descriptions also illustrate the contentious and unclear role of religion. The various names given to these school functions at the start of the school year are indicative of increasing generic towards 'secularism': names range from specific "school functions at the start of the school year" (82) to "religious services generally" (83) to "the functions" (86). *Bf* does not refer to a single event when she talks about these functions. She wants to express something more general that can be

observed in all sorts of functions. She structures her argument accordingly and takes the specific as a starting point in order to make a more general statement. These functions are intrinsically linked to what is expected of RE teachers; for them to take on activities in addition to their normal duties ("all that is expected of an RE teacher in addition to that.", 88). *Df*reminds the group that these expectations have been an on-going issue for RE teachers, thus pointing towards a shared horizon of experience within the group.

Aw points out the connection between school and RE teachers yet another time, while still denying any such connection between school and religion. For her religious services in school have nothing to do with religion ("But this isn't about religion", 92). She talks about religious services in school without any reference to religion and gives them a secular name ("the functions", 86). She thus underlines the separation between school and religion. "The functions" (86) primarily concern people actively involved in them, which again – if in an anonymised way ("people", 92) – refers to RE teachers and the work that is expected of them.

The negative opposite horizon is clearly expressed. *Df* talks about the expectations, which get mounted upon this whole group. ("that there is an expectation that we", 95). The group is expected to organise functions and celebrations, which take place throughout the school year (at the beginning and the end of the academic year as well as during high holidays in the religious year). These clear expectations are, however, paired with a categorical stance of disinterest ("nobody really wants them anyway, because it always ends the same way", 98). This is expressed as groups of people who do take part are named. It is as clear who will take part in functions and celebrations, as who will not. The group of participants is clearly outlined: interested teachers, classes involved in organising the music, and "maybe 3,4 pupils" (99). Apart from these people nobody has any interest in the school's religious services. This disinterest has led to some changes in this school. Now functions, which are marked by certain characterises, take place at the beginning and the end of the school year. *Df* is unable to describe cleary what these characteristics, are ("reflective, contemplative, I don't know", 102–103). Her description is delivered in the mode of negation: the school's religious services are not celebrations of the Eucharist ("definitely no longer a Mass", 103–104) and do not exhibit any clear religious characteristics ("it is also no longer so clearly ah, (.) what do I know", 104). She addresses the increasing secularism of the school's religious services, meaning that these functions and celebrations can no longer be definitively called religious. The location of these celebrations seems to have changed too, as they sometimes take place in front of the school building. This talk about changes to functions, which take place at the beginning and the end of the school year, leads to *Df's* inquiry, whether there are any Muslims in this school. ("Muslims, do we even still have any of those?", 105);whether she is referring to Islamic RE teachers or to pupils remains unclear.

Bf interjects once again and establishes another connection between school and religion. She views religious services as a "religious issue" (109). At the same time the challenges this school is faced with are becoming clearer (Religious Services and School Functions, 109–153):

109 Bf: Well, but I do view this as a religious issue, because for me it feels like a kind of
110 functionalisation, well who cares anyway, but on these occasions we functionalise this
111 affair, just to bring in some kind of festive element, and then I feel, I'm now

112 talking about @all schools@
113 Cf: ⌊We have an obligation, an obligation under our service contracts,
114 Df: ⌊Uncomfortable, yes
115 Cf: to organise these things, never mind if people attend or not
116 Bf: ⌊ so incredibly uncomfortable, terrible
117 Cf: Yes
118 Df: Yes, but this is precisely the issue, that we had to, how sensible is it, if it
119 Cf: ⌊Yes, yes
120 Df: passes the pupils by? I mean, I remember when I was in school,
121 I went to XXX ((gives name of school)) we were herded into church by the class full,
122 Cf: ⌊It's not at all sensible, yes, yes
123 Df: and the RE teacher stood on the pulpit and kept an eye out for who was
124 chatting, and had a word with them after mass, well?
125 Cf: But luckily @these times are over@. yes, yes.
126 Df: ⌊Yes, but now, how many pupils who aren't busy with
127 classes attend? you can count them on one hand.
128 Cf: Well, but that's just how it is then,
129 Df: Yes, but how sensible is it then that we have the duty?
130 Cf: You'll have to ask the education authority and they won't give you time off.
131 Bf: And especially with this @Ob@ligation, how often does it even pass me
132 Cf: ⌊@(.)@
133 Bf: by? And how am I then supposed to make sure it doesn't pass the pupils by, if
134 even I myself feel so uncomfortable, well;
135 Cf: ⌊But you are allowed to hold a liturgy of the word as long as you check
136 XXX ((reference school authority)), you are allowed to replace all masses with
137 Bf: ⌊Mhm
138 Df: ⌊Mhm
139 liturgies of the Word (.) there don't have to be any Masses any more.
140 Df: And what substantial difference does this make? none at all
141 Cf: Well, you can hold your liturgy of the Word in the assembly hall, and plant some pots of
142 flowers, what do I know.
143 Df: ⌊ But, we have already used the ceremonial hall, even for proper religious services
144 Cf: ⌊Yes ⌊Yes
145 Df: and Masses Celebrations of the Eucharist and there was lots of coming and going.
146 Cf: ⌊ Yes, (2) you
147 are preaching to the converted anyway, but there is nothing we can do, its our contractual duty,
148 Df: ⌊Yes
149 we have to do this, even if nobody shows up.
150 Df: ⌊So, the only thing that is an issue for the
151 the whole school, as far as religion is concerned, is again really only an issue for
152 RE teachers and how we
153 Cf: ⌊@Yes@

Bf bases her argument on the aforementioned impression that religion is being functionalised. In school religion has a limited framework of meaning. Generally it is irrelevant ("well who cares anyway", 110), yet it gets used as a means to an end for functions and celebrations. A distancing relationship between school and religion can be identified. On the one hand the subject of functionalisation does not get characterised any further ("we", 100), on the other hand religion as the object of functionalisation is referred to as "this affair" (110–111). It serves to create a festive atmosphere in otherwise separated areas, insofar as religion is viewed from the outside as bringing ("bring in", 111) "some kind of festive element" (111) to school functions. *Bf*generalises the functionalisation to "@all schools@" (112), and thus points out a general problem within schools. *Df*'s and *Bf*'s unease is based on their knowledge about the general disinterest in and the functionalisation of religion in schools. Meanwhile *Cf* reminds the group of their contractual duty to hold religious services regardless of how many people attend. This gives expression to the heteronomy of the situation. *Df* focuses the subject and points to a previously mentioned issue. The sense of such a contractual duty is put into question, as it has no

counterpart in other areas of school. If pupils have no interest in the school's religious services, these services have lost their meaning. To this group, pupils' interest in and their acceptance of schools' religious services represents the benchmark of whether a school's religious services make sense or not. If there is no interest in them religious school services are obsolete. ("It's not at all sensible, yes, yes", 122).

Religious school services are also called into question by *Df*, when she describes a memory from her own school days. Whole classes were obligated to attend the school's religious services ("herded into church", 121). In *Df*'s turn of phrase, so many pupils attended that they merged into an anonymous quantity ("by the class full" 121). In church the RE teacher occupied an elevated position ("pulpit", 123), which gave expression to his hierarchical standing. From the pulpit – liturgically reserved for the proclamation of faith – he exercised his duty of oversight and afterwards disciplined those who talked during Mass. *Df*'s recollection draws a connection between general attendance of religious school services and compulsory attendance combined with a hierarchical and disciplinarian relationship between RE teachers and pupils. Her story clearly illustrates how much attitudes towards religious services must have changed to get to the current situation. While once upon a time all classes took part in religious school services it is "now" (126) a minority ("you can count them on one hand.", 127). Absolutely compulsory participation in religious school services, as *Df*describes it from her own school days, is in and of itself not a desirable state of affairs. The general set-up of the situation is also critical: the group opposes any compulsion to attend as well as RE teachers disciplining pupils who misbehave. At the same time it is obvious that the current low attendance rates religious school services experience, form part of the negative horizon. A return to former practices is, however, viewed as equally undesirable as the current situation of low attendance rates at religious school services. The decrease of attendees raises the question if there is any sense in RE teachers' obligation to organise religious school services. At the same time the abolition of this duty is viewed as unrealistic, as such a decision could only be made by the school authority, which again shows the heteronomy in this situation. *Bf* experiences this obligation as an imposition. She too shows incongruence between how relevant religious school services are to her personally and her intentions, which she demonstrates by asking rhetorical questions ("How often does it even pass me by?", 131–133). To her congruence is a necessary condition for conveying the meaning in a school's religious services to other people ("if even I myself feel so uncomfortable?", 133–134).

Cf makes some suggestions for change, in order to better deal with the incongruence between the reality in schools (attendance numbers, personal meaningfulness) and the given obligation. Masses could be replaced by liturgies of the Word. Such a change can, however, only happen in agreement with the school authority. *Cf*'s statements show an orientation towards others (heteronomy) as she uses modal verbs, which express a hierarchical relationship ("you are allowed to", 136; "There don't have to be Masses any more", 139). Her statements illustrate how she views the relationship between the school authority and this group. The school authority is in charge. It is the authority that imposes contractual obligations on the group. It and it alone is able to affect change ("as long as you check XXX ((reference school authority)), you are allowed to", 135–136). Only once permission has been granted by the school authority the obligation can be

lifted. *Df* rejects *Cf*'s suggestions, as they do not hold any potential for change. Even if Masses were to be replaced by Liturgies of the Word, this change would only touch the surface or a small aspect of the bigger problem. It does not solve the core problem of how to deal with the situation in this school at its root ("substantial", 140). *Cf* also throws further light on this. A change of the type of religious service (Liturgies of the Words instead of Masses) a change of venue (assembly hall instead of church) and in activity ("plant some pots of flowers", 141–142) does not promise any real effect. In her suggestion ("plant some pots of flowers", 141–142) she expresses her helplessness with regards to how the situation in this school should dealt with, as she suggests an unusual activity to say the least, which is not intended for a religious service. No one is able to come up with any further suggestions for change and instead perplexity spreads though the group ("what do I know", 142). Despite all this, a striving for change is palpable ("but we have already", 143), even though all attempts up to that point had not succeeded or even done the opposite ("there was lots of coming and going", 145). *Cf* points out once again that they have a contractual obligation (heteronomy), which means that there is limited scope for action. It also shows that she agrees with *Df*'s frame of reference ("you are preaching to the converted anyway", 146–147). Nonetheless *Cf* emphasises the group's helplessness and impotence and substantiates this with their contractual obligation, which does not allow for any possible change ("we have to do this", 149), even when circumstances would support it ("Even if nobody shows up", 149). Such a situation is distressing for the group. While *Df* starts to conclude the subject ("the only thing that is an issue to the whole school", 150–151), *Af* lunges back into it. Consequently the discussion continues. *Aw* now comes up with a further example, which demonstrates the insignificance of religious school services (Religious Services and School Functions, 154–172):

154 Af: ⌊Well, I this year, well, that this our issue is also an issue for
155 some others, but only in the context of, when will you do something again?
156 Df: ⌊Yes, yes
157 Af: and why is it on a Friday? why not on Wednesday? why on Monday?
158 why not on a Thursday? and why, when we had a Liturgy of the Word once
159 Df: ⌊Hm (.) true
160 Aw: two people said, just before Christmas, ah why was there no communion? you
161 must do a communion. (3) well
162 Cf: Well, not everybody has to join in the discussion
163 Af: ((clears throat)) Of course, but we have already talked about it plenty, yes, but this is
164 something that is distressing. yes, yes.
165 ⌊We ( ) well, not everybody has a right to a say, yes
166 Bf: @One of many@ ahm things
167 Cf: ⌊@(.)@ yes
168 Af: Well a, when the issue of religion and RE teachers is being addressed, but otherwise?
169 Bf: ⌊for me this is really distressing
170 Df: ⌊Well, otherwise
171 I really cant think of anything else.
172 Cf: ⌊ No

Af recognises similarities between this group and "some others" (155) – presumably colleagues – at the school. This is a partial common interest and only concerns the religious school services ("but only in the context of", 155). Here she uses the conjunction "but" (155). This connection is, however, characterised by requests and expectations of the group ("you must" 161). It all concerns questions about dates for religious services

and how they will be organised ("you must do a communion. ", 160–161). The group has to justify itself for the dates and the types of services it chooses. While the group will not let such questions interfere with its ideas for religious school services, because there is no universal "right to a say" (165), it nonetheless shows that here too the group orients itself towards colleagues (heteronomy). Efforts to change religious services in this school (time and type) have not had the expected effect on some colleagues, quite the opposite. Despite the fact that this subject has been addressed by the group on a number of occasions, no significant changes have come into effect. The group experiences this as distressing.

Bf attempts a conclusion to the subject for the second time. She positions this subject area within a wider, if undefined, framework ("@One of many@ ahm things", 166). *Af* then brings the conclusion to a head by offering a thematic summary as well as by underlining the specific nature of this subject area ("Well a […] but otherwise", 168).

The connection between school and religion, which the group rates as difficult, finds expression at the same time ("but this is something that is distressing. Yes, yes. ", 163–164; "for me this is really distressing", 169).

When reference is made to there being no further thematic connections between school and religion (56–62), the conversation connects back to the beginning of the discussion. This once again emphasised the significance of religious services in school, as it represent the one and only issue (I really can't think of anything else", 171; "No", 172). The low significance of religion in schools is addressed again when the interviewer asks a follow up question. This time it also shows up in other subject areas (Religious Services and School Functions, 173–189):

173 Y1: Well, does religion have a role to play in any other part of daily life?
174 Af: In school? no.
175 Cf: Well, but Heringsschmaus [a traditional dish with herring eaten during Lent]. for my
176 birthday party, on Ash Wednesday, we had Heringsschmaus. that involved religion.
177 Df: @(.)@
178 Bf: ⌊ Yes
179 Cf: come on, it absolutely did
180 Df: We have an advent wreath for Christmas
181 Cf: ⌊ We have an advent wreath.
182 Df: The school caretakers always put that up, or, or, who sponsors this?
183 Af: No, they don't sponsor it.
184 Df: The headmaster's office
185 Cf: ⌊ Mhm
186 Df: We really always do have a very nice advent wreath hung up in school, that's true.
187 Cf: ⌊ Yes, that's true.
188 and we have RE classes, I mean. we are part of it. we, we are here.
189 Df: ⌊ Yes @(.)@

The fact that religion holds a marginalised position in this school is evident from *Af*'s statement. In the mode of an argumentation*Cf* gives an example of where religion appears in school. She does not take this example seriously herself and holds it up for ridicule, which is acknowledged by *Df*'s laughter. In this example of a birthday party on Ash Wednesday, when they ate Herringsschmaus, religion is once again introduced as an afterthought to a celebration – a bit like during religious school services. The presence of religion is secular. It is associated with and subordinate to the celebration.

Df also brings an example of when religion becomes visible in school. The act of hanging an advent wreath offers an analogous example that fits into the already estab-

lished frame of reference. Here too religion is seen in its functionally-aesthetic guise as part of a festivity. Its aesthetic purpose is emphasised ("We really do always have a very nice advent wreath", 186). By labouring it repeatedly and emphatically, the group jointly expresses how ridiculous this example is. After validating *Df*'s elaboration, *Cf* mentions RE classes as another example. While this is no longer directly related to functions and celebrations, it nonetheless joins the ranks of the previous examples. RE is mentioned in a context of ridicule, and in fact refers to RE teachers themselves ("we, we are here.", 188). Explicitly mentioning the mere existence of RE and RE teachers in this context, gives expression to the low significance of religion in the school's daily life. In this group's perception religion has no prominent status in this school's day-to-day existence.

Muslim Pupils

During the next section the group repeatedly establishes differences based on the pupil body's religious constellation and underlines the distinctiveness of this school. This context is initially introduced with a pie chart by the interviewer. To the group this acts as an impulse for a discussion on the distinctiveness of the school to the religious constellation of its body of pupils. They do this in the modality of differentiation (Muslim Pupils, 212–259):

212 Y1: I have prepared something for you. the admin office has provided me with some data.
213 this is the religious affiliation of pupils during this
214 academic year
215 Df: Oh, is this our school?
216 Y1: Exactly, yes.
217 Bf: ⌊ Thank you
218 (4)
219 Df: Well, look at that.
220 Af: Mhm
221 Cf: Well, but this is also abetted by admissions (.) yes.
222 Af: What do you mean by that?
223 Cf: That there are so many Catholics, because I also teach at the neighbouring school, and
224 there it's roughly mirror-inverted, there classes only have 5 Catholic pupils
225 left. tell
226 Y1: ⌊ Mhm
227 Af: ⌊ Why, what is this down to, you think?
228 Cf: On the admissions process, well that there are so few Muslims here. Because all Muslims
229 are in the neighbouring school.
230 Af: ⌊Aah::::, well
231 and entry- aptitude tests, yes:: mhm
232 Df: ⌊ Yes, since
233 we have had the entry exam, we have different kinds of pupils, I mean while we still had
234 Cf: ⌊ Yes, I see, the entry exam, yes
235 Df: the old ahm natural science classes, the largest
236 percentage was I think
237 Cf: ⌊ Yes
238 Df: actually either without religious affiliation or Muslim, well
239 Bf: ⌊ Mhm
240 Cf: ⌊ Yes, yes well (.) this does not reflect the
241 the population, the average of the population, yes
242 Cf: ⌊ Hm, this is quite remarkable
243 Af: ⌊ Mhm
244 Df: ⌊ It's true, our school is special, because here
245 Cf: ⌊ Yes, yes

246 Df: all branches have an entry exam, and that means that these kinds of people automatically
247 don't come as much, well
248 Y1: ⌊ Mhm
249 Cf: ⌊ Yes
250 Bf: ⌊ Mhm
251 Cf: Yes, yes
252 Bf: ⌊ I've been wondering about this, before I came here I looked at the website andlooked
253 through pictures of pupils, and I wondered, why aren't there any young womenwearing head
254 scarves, that immediately had me, because I come from the other school, there it was totally
255 Af: ⌊Aha, aha, yes
256 Df: ⌊ Mhm
257 Bf: clearly present and that is
258 Cf: Yes
259 Df: Okay, that's true, yes.

Initially the interviewer's pie charts, illustrating the religious affiliation of pupils in this school is met with surprise ("Well, look at that.", 219). *Cf* refers to the chart in her argument. Without describing or interpreting it first, she immediately offers an explanation for why the constellation of religious affiliations is as it is. There is a causal link between "admissions" (221), the "aptitude test" (231) and the religious constellation of pupils in this school. In the modality of comparison *Cf* juxtaposes this school against the "neighbouring school" (223), where she also teaches. The mention of geographic vicinity illustrates the powerful effect of "admissions" (221) when it comes to the religious constellation of pupils. The number of Catholic pupils acts as the point of comparison. While it is comparatively high in this school ("so many", 223), it is low ("only 5 Catholic pupils left", 224) in the "neighbouring school" (223). Contrasting this school against the other school ("mirror-inverted", 224) underlines its distinctiveness. Following a clarifying question from *Af*, *Cf* points this distinctiveness out once again. She does so by referring to the before mentioned causal link between "admissions" (228) and the religious constellation, once more. This time she uses "Muslims" (228) as the point of comparison. Similar to before she establishes her argument by laying out the differences between the two schools. She further clarifies this contrast in numerical terms, stating that there are far fewer Muslim pupils in one school than in the other ("so few […] here", 228; "all Muslims are in the neighbouring school", 228–229).

Df relates the change in the religious constellation of the pupil body to a specific point in time, namely when the "entry exam" (233) was introduced ("since we have had the entry exam", 232–233). The change in the body of pupils is stressed vocally, and thus given particular emphasis ("we have different kinds of pupils", 233). At this point the contrast comes into its own, as it is now clearly addressed ("different kinds of pupils", 233). A noticeable distancing occurs, both from this school in former times and from the neighbouring school. So far there is no value judgement. The current pupil body differs in two distinct ways; on the one hand from former times in this school (time based), on the other hand from current times in the neighbouring school (location based). There is thus something special about this school, and on numerous occasions, a connection is made between this specialty and the introduction of an "entry exam" (233; see also 221, 228, 234, 246). A connection is also made between this contrast and a certain branch of school, which now no longer exists ("the old", 235) and which used to be attended largely by pupils without any religious affiliation and by Muslim pupils. This branch of school and a certain religious constellation of the pupil body are viewed

as connected. It can be surmised from this that a perception, of an interdependency between the type of schooling offered in a school and the religious constellation of its pupils, exists.

Cf underlines the special status of this school once more. This time the population is her point of comparison. The religious constellation of pupils in this school also differs from the general population. Once again there is an atmosphere of astonishment in the room ("this is quite remarkable", 242). The purpose of the point of comparison can be reconstructed with this third point of comparison as with all the others ("Catholic pupils", 224; "Muslims", 228; "population", 240). Each time it serves to underline and emphasise the special status of this school when it comes to the religious constellation of its body of pupils. ("our school is special", 244).

Df also sees a causal connection between the school's special status and its conditions for admission ("that means that these kinds of people automatically don't come", 246–247). Emphasising the special status of the school also acts as a way of distancing it from its former non-Catholic pupils ("these kinds of people", 246), in so far as they are being referred to in a generalised way as "people" (247), without differentiating them in any way ("these", 247; rather than "without religious affiliation or Muslim", 238). In contrast to current pupils they are not being named in their role as pupils either ("we have different kinds of pupils", 233). Astonishment about the situation in this school is once again expressed in a brief statement by *Bf*. The special status of this school was obvious to her ("I've been wondering about this from the start", 252). Muslim pupils repeatedly act as the point of comparison. The absence of "young women wearing head scarves" (253–254) is cause for surprise. Again the uniqueness of this school is illustrated in contrast to another school (254), where "it was clearly present" (254–257).

Df substantiates the connection between "admissions" (260) and the changed pupil body and offers an insight into "Islamic society" (264). Now that the special status of this school has been established through repeated dissociation from, amongst others, Muslim pupils, this dissociation now receives a clear value judgement (Muslim Pupils, 260–295):

260 Y1: How does this relate to admissions, I haven't quite understood that?
261 Df: Well, because these people don't tend to come as long as
262 Af: ⌊ We have aptitude tests here. (.) for
263 for all school branches.
264 Df: ⌊ And I assume that in Islamic society, they are just less interested
267 that their children, I don't know, sing, dance, play music (.) act
266 Y1: ⌊ Mhm
267 Df: Well, we typically support the arts here in this school and the former natural sciences
268 grammar school ahm, is now for AV and media and that obviously doesn't
269 attract any.

By using the term "admissions" (260), the interviewer picks up on a central word in the discussion and asks an immanent follow up question, which he keeps fairly vague ("I haven't quite understood that", 260) thus giving it a narrative character. *Df* and *Af* jointly respond to the question. The special situation in this school is a direct consequence of admissions criteria. Once again there is a noticeable causal link ("because", 261). While admissions criteria should not be seen as a purely automated mechanism, with the consequence that there are no longer any Muslim pupils attending this school, nonetheless

this has tended to be the outcome. The likelihood of Muslim pupils coming to this school has been reduced since the introduction of admissions criteria ("that means that these kinds of people automatically don't come as much", 246–247; "don't tend to come as long as", 261). The focus on Muslim pupils, which follows, is worth noting. While earlier on in the discussion pupils were still referred to as "without religious affiliation or Muslim" (238), "these people" (261) are now Muslim. A dissociated and rejecting attitude towards Muslim people in general can be deduced. This dissociation becomes very noticeable when *Df* calls Muslim pupils "these people" (261), who remain an unspecific entity and once again do not get talked about in their (potential) role as pupils at this school, nor in the context of their religious affiliation. This circumscription puts a clear distance between them and the current body of pupils. This also shines through in *Df*'s assumption. With the use of the generalising noun "societies" (264) she expresses a general assumption about all Muslims. They place "less" (264) value on the musical education of their children. She uses this as an explanation for the low number of Muslim pupils in the school. During her speculation she draws a comparison, which hardens the dissociation. The current pupil body can be seen as the reference group. Even though *Df*'s assumptions are vague ("And I assume", 264; "I don't know", 265), they nonetheless serve as an explanatory model, join the ranks of a general assumption and reinforce dissociation. With its emphasis on the arts ("we typically support the arts here in this school", 267) this school has established a programme that stands in contrast to Islam's educational focus. Despite the school's strategic restructuring, similar subjects to the ones that were once taken up by Muslim pupils are still on offer, nonetheless the admissions criteria "now" (268) have such a strong impact, that Muslim pupils stay away ("and that obviously doesn't attract any", 268–269).

The interviewer now picks up on an area that the group has already touched upon and asks the members to describe a specific situation that happened in school, where religious diversity had became an issue. This takes the form of a narrative request with an immanent character to the question (Muslim Pupils, 270–295):

Y1: Mhm (3) ahm, please maybe tell me about a situation, where religious diversity in particular has become an issue in this school.
Cf: Well not here. this wouldn't be the school for it, yes.
Y1: ⌊ Mhm
Df: Not even, even before, when we still had more Muslims, they were in fact
Af: ⌊ No
Cf: ⌊That's the other school @yes@, not here, we don't diversity.
Df: all very integrated, some wore a headscarf, but more, I think ahm fashion consciously, because they were always totally styled, you know, these girls, yes
Af: ⌊ Ah, before there were some, yes, yes. there was a discussiononce, there was some difficulty.
Df: I remember that too, from years ago. wasn't there that one in PE, the father didn't allow her to go swimming and in the end she went swimming in a track suit.
A: ⌊ Mhm
Df: But that's years ago.
Cf: Elsewhere that's a daily occurrence.
Df: ⌊ @(.)@
Cf: PE in that full get-up.
Df: Really?
Cf: Yes.
Df: Mhm
Cf: Fully clothed.

294 Df: But she went swimming like that, no?
295 Cf: Yes, yes. (3)

To *Cf* it is immediately clear that religious diversity is not an issue "here" (272) in this school. To contrast it against something, she uses "the other school" (276) as a point of comparison. This once again underlines this particular school and its special status. Religious diversity has never been an issue, not just now, but "even, even before" (274). The subject thus moves from its initially geographical dimension into its temporal dimension, the school's own past. "Muslims" (274) are again the point of comparison. Following the interviewer's interjection into the discussion "religious diversity" (270) is addressed in terms of the integration of Muslim pupils. Retrospectively and in generalising terms, Muslim pupils are described as particularly well integrated in this school ("in fact all very integrated", 274–278). Among "all" (274–278) these pupils there were "some" (298) who wore a head scarves. Particular emphasis is placed on them. They too were integrated, because the main motive for wearing a headscarf is identified as fashion consciousness ("because they were always totally styled", 279). The headscarf itself does not represent a more or less successful integration. The motive for wearing it determines how the integration process is judged, consequently secular Islamic religion is perceived as okay. Muslim pupils in "difficulty" (281) are immediately associated with this positive representation of Islam. Interestingly the discussion is about one singular incidence ("There was a discussion once, there was some difficulty", 280–281). The incidence is put into a timeframe ("from years ago", 282) and happened a long time ago ("But that's year ago", 286). This single event underscores the fact that such "difficulty", 281) no longer occurs in this school. This dissociation is, however, not only temporal, but also shows that there is a negative opposite horizon, which is expressed through the events of the past. A female Muslim pupil – who is not named or described in any detail – is referred to with the distancing words "that one" (282) and "she" (283). The female Muslim pupil is not at the centre of the story, but the father, who forbids his daughter to go swimming as part of PE, and the fact that as a consequence "in the end she went swimming in a track suit" (283–284). While such a practice ("PE in that full get-up", 289), which is talked about as a difficulty, is in the long distant past here, it is still common in other schools ("Elsewhere that's a daily occurrence", 287). The special situation of this school is once again emphasised. Such a practice triggers astonishment and disbelief within the group ("Really?", 290). It can be surmised that what scandalises the group about the practice of a female Muslim pupil who "go[es] swimming in a tack suit" (283–283), is not the pupil – even though she is referred to dissociatively as "that one" (282), but the culturally and religiously motived practice itself ("but she went swimming like that, no? ", 294).

Teaching RE I

After handing out a graph illustrating the attendance of RE and ethics education in this school, and once this has been discussed for a while, the interviewer poses an exmanent question regarding religious education. Although the interviewer enquires specifically about RE, initially the discussion turns to ethics education (Teaching RE I, 340–388):

340 Y1: Could you maybe tell me about a situation, where RE has been in
341 particular demand? (3)
342 Df: Well, what comes to mind first is that in the 5th form very many initially sign up for ethics,
343 because its something new for them, because in the lower forms its not really offered much, or?
344 Cf: So far not at all, I think?
345 Df: So far not at all?
346 Af: Yes.
347 Cf: Not at all
348 Df: Yes, and that's why it sounds so cool ethics, lets give it a try, what ethics is and
349 Cf: ⌊ and there I know too ( ) yes, yes, yes
350 Df: they change @their minds again (.) in the 6th@
351 Cf: ⌊change their minds in the 6th @(.)@
352 Y1: ⌊ Mhm(2)
353 Af: Well it's the same with me, that there, although it's been a little different this year in the 5th
354 there are a lot, but just two years ago it was like that in the 5thjust about got the 2nd hour
355 to- together and then the pupils were. well with us it's like that for
356 ethics education two classes are always put together and ah over the years teachers change.
357 Bf: ((clears throat))
258 Af: Religion is like, do you have the folder we made? that shows a comparison
359 between ethics and RE. would you like to see it?
360 Y1: Yes
361 Af: Ahm ((clears throat)), it's in the a- secretary's office, yes. I should really have it
362 Y1: ⌊ Mhm, great
363 saved somewhere too, well. ahm it's the c-comparison because parents don't
364 Y1: ⌊ Mhm
365 Af: don't really know and the pupils, what, what, they should sign up for, well they come at
366 come at the end of the school year and must decide there and then what they will probably
367 Y1: ⌊ Mhm
368 Af: sign up for and there is, I urged that there should be an information leaflet, and then
369 ahm only at the start of the new school year do pupils realise that they are now
370 being put together with another class and some don't want that some want to be alone,
371 their class, it's like this in religion. In religion it's also mostly handled in such a way, that
372 there is teaching continuity from the 5th to the 8th some pupils love it when they are together with
373 another class and also think it's okay that when
374 their teachers change, yes, but I think that well really more pupils are in favour of
375 having one teacher and stay together only with their classmates
376 Y1 ⌊ Mhm
377 Af: and there I notice that then RE is in demand, but with us in our school there has never
378 been a situation where, I don't know, you can surely understand the question this way too, a
379 a death or a catastrophe or something, when
380 Y1: ⌊ Mhm ⌊ Mhm
381 Af: pupils have said, well I can talk about this in religion. well RE is ((clear throat))
382 I have just conducted some feedback in my 7th and 8th form, RE is consistently
383 in demand because pupils want to switch off, because they want to do something else, because
384 Bf: ((clears throat))
385 Y1: ⌊ Mhm
386 Af: RE is diverse, because we meditate, or they get information or go on
387 excursion. You can't really do that in Math for instance, yes, or (3)
388 Y1: ⌊ Mhm

The question about RE is dealt with in the context of and in delineation from other teaching subjects, primarily ethics education. Ethics education is clearly seen as a competitor to RE. To begin with, *Df* talks about pupils' motivation for frequently signing up for ethics education in the 5th form. Pupils' enthusiasm for attending ethics education does not last. It is time-limited ("very many initially sign up for ethics", 342, "initially" hinting at something time-time limited, which is confirmed later in the discussion). The lure of the unfamiliar ("because it's something new for them", 343) and its positive reputation ("it sounds cool ethics", 348) play an important role in this. Pupils make this decision in order to get to know the subject. Once they have gotten to know it they change their minds and in the 6th form choose RE instead. Consequently the situation

between the two subjects is competitive. *Af* points out that as a consequence of this competitive situation, two-hour-long RE classes are in danger in the 5th form due to low participant numbers, so that they "just about got the 2nd hour to- together" (354–355). This threat to the time allocation is, however, not an issue every year("although it's been a little different this year", 353).

The competitive relationship between the two subjects is also noticeable in how differently they are organised. *Af*describes the organisational situation of ethics education in this school. While ethics education is characterised by frequent teacher changes and merging of several classes, in RE classes are kept together and same teacher teaches the class throughout the years. The folder *Af* mentions is also indicative of this competitive situation. It contains a "c-comparison" (363) of the two teaching subjects and serves to inform pupils and parents about the organisational structure of ethics education, in order to avoid negative surprises ("only at the start of the new school year do pupils realise that they are now being put together with another class", 369–370). RE offers continuity as for as class unity and teaching staff are concerned, which the majority of pupils appreciate ("really more pupils are in favour", 374), although there are some pupils who "love" (372) teacher changes and class mergers. Due to this continuity, RE holds precedence over ethics education. *Af* also addresses the contextual-methodological dimension of RE and argues that this is the reason why it is so popular with pupils. Although in this school RE has so far never been faced with extreme situations ("a death or a catastrophe or something", it is nonetheless meaningful to the pupils and is "consistently in demand", 382–383). RE also stands out because of its methodological variety and thus differs from other subjects ("math for instance", 387), because "pupils want to switch off" (383).

The special status of RE is presented in contrast to other subjects in general and ethics education in particular. The competitive situation it is in is part of this. Difficulties in teaching RE are also being addressed. These difficulties lie in the popularity of the subject. *Bf* addresses RE's content orientation as the benchmark for popularity (Teaching RE I, 389–431):

Bf: @(.)@ Ahm, I think, the less you do as an RE- when you go into a class
at the beginning, well when you make a new start for instance a new year with a class or a
new school altogether, the less, I mean the more you say that your class has nothing to do with
the with the church @nothing to do with the Bible@ or any of the stuff you expect from RE
the more attractive it is to students and it was really funny, I was, well it
?f: ⌊ ((gasps))
Bf: wasn't really funny, yes, in the first lesson here in the 8th form, I tried my best to sum up
the 8th form curriculum as interestingly as possible, I presented the themes of the year on
a piece of paper and explained what all of it meant,
and one pupil, who had yet to decide if he wanted to do RE or ethics, he
@listen to it all@ and than said, well this programme does not interest me
at all, and then you think, oh, didn't you present it well enough, yes and at the same time
Cf: ⌊ @(.)@
Bf: you also feel, in one hour you can't, I don't even know what
they expect, what you can tadaa magic up @right now@, that will make RE
Af: ⌊ ((coughs))
Bf: seem appealing, yes and now he, just to round the whole thing off nicely,
he now sat in on my class, because ethics is just one hour and RE
is two hours;
Af: ⌊ What?
Bf: Isn't it?
Af: No;

411 Bf: Yes, they only have one hour.
412 Af: ⌊ That's not possible.
413 Bf: Are you sure?
414 Af: Yes, Mr. headmaster must have dropped a lesson.
415 Bf: ⌊ Really, okay
416 Cf: @(.)@
417 Bf: Well then I, okay, but anyway, but with me (.) but they sit in, well, it must be
418 Af: ⌊ Because the inspector was here today (.) at 10
419 Bf: in the other school, over there it is only one hour, okay, well anyway
420 Af: ⌊ Yes
421 Bf: he sat in on my class and then he said, he had now had the chance to experience it
422 and said, yes he nearly regrets it now that he didn't stay
423 just how do you deal with this, well how are you supposed to do that? you can't present it all in
424 one hour and that causes, although ethics is a parallel thing, it's got inherent
425 @potential for frustration@ I think. You have to present it so amazingly,
426 Cf: ⌊ Yes, but he has, if he is in the 8th form, he would have got to know
427 either RE or Ethics in the 5th, 6th, 7th at least a little bit somewhere
428 and ( )
429 Df: ⌊ Yes, maybe he is new in this school,
430 Cf: Well, one has to @get to know new things@ at some point in your life otherwise, yes,
431 (.) yes

RE becomes more attractive the less it deals with religion-specific subject areas ("that your class has nothing to do with the with the church @nothing to do with the Bible@ or any of the stuff you expect from RE", 391–392). Whether something is a religion-specific subject area or not is determined by the teacher ("you […] as an RE-", 389; "that your class", 391). *Bf* uses her own experience in the school to substantiate this connection. Her example illustrates the difficulty of marketing religion to pupils within a limited timeframe. The marketing process has to happen in front of the backdrop that RE and ethics education are in competing positions for pupils. This is experienced as a burden. RE also has to be marketed at a particular time. It happens at the beginning of the school year, which is a stressful time. On the one hand it is described as "really funny" (393), an the other hand this statement is immediately retracted ("well it wasn't really funny, yes,", 393–395). A dedicated introduction of the subject area is far from guaranteeing an enthusiastic response from the pupils. Self-doubt can arise when faced with the challenge of having to present RE in a favourable light in front of pupils at the beginning of every year. ("didn't you present it well enough", 400).

Bf speaks of a pupil, who had not yet decided whether to sign up for ethics education or RE. He did not reject RE as a matter of principle ("he @listened to it all@", 398–399), but he was not "convinced" (399) by the content. By expressing that pupils expect the impossible, to "make RE seem appealing" (403–405), *Bf*makes it plain that having to market RE presents an excessive demand. *B*f is unable to clearly name the pupil's expectation, but it oversteps her competency in any case ("I don't even know what they expect, what you can tadaa magic up @right now@", 402–403).

The difficulty of this situation is equally clear at a later point in the school year. Due to the cancellation of an ethics lesson, the same pupil who had decided against attending RE at the start of the year had the opportunity to "experience" (421) the every day side of RE. As a consequence he changed his mind about RE. Even though RE was judged positively "then" (421), *Bf*still feels overwhelmed by the task of having to present it well at the start of the year ("well how are you supposed to do that? You can't present it all in one hour", 423–424). Consequently, the given competitive situation holds "@potential

for frustration@" (425), even though "ethics is a parallel thing" (424). Marketing RE and the material covered by it at the start of every school year becomes a burden ("you have to present it so amazingly", 425).

*Cf*offers an argument to deflect the cause of this burden away from *Bf*. She reminds the group that the pupil in question would already have had experience with RE and ethics education and that consequently marketing RE to him was unnecessary. While *Df* challenges *Cf*'s line of reasoning ("Yes, maybe he is new in this school", 429), she also offers a further disburdening argument. It is the pupil's decision to try something unknown, "new" (430). She thus offers another argument against the notion that teachers are forced to act in a particular way.

Bf now starts to talk about further burdensome aspects of RE (Teaching RE I, 432–472):

Bf: Well, but more generally now for us, I think, you don't know, you are being pulled to pieces
somehow, yes, one side wants you to do this, from above you get @these demands@ and
Df: ⌊ Mhm
Bf: it's made to look so great, all the things you should do with the content and from the pupils
you really get the exact opposite, the less the content they can associate with the church
the better, the worst thing was; I said to one, well, I talked about Caritas (*a Christian charity*)
and he then said; what, Caritas is connected to the church? I can't believe that,
Af: ⌊ Mhm
Bf: because Caritas is a good thing, well, it's those little things that you get thrown at you
Af: ⌊ @(.)@ that's crazy
Cf: ⌊ Mhm @(.)@
Bf: on a weekly basis that make @you think@, what what is happening in society? °our
situation is part of this°
Df: ⌊ Yes, but I think you can't prevent this, cause when people talk about the church
they only ever talk about the institution and how idiotic the Vatican and the Pope are and
if all this couldn't be abolished and so on, they can't really be convinced
that church is also something else and that we have to work on it together and
and all the good things the church has done, no?
Bw: I don't really think that's possible, you'd have to invent a new language for this, that has a
new word for it, because it already has such negative connotations; until you've worked through
Df: ⌊ Mhm
Bf: and can say let's start again at 0. It's not really possible I think.
Df: ⌊ Well, for instance in my 7th
form, my favourite class, you see? I've really decided now, I'll just throw films at them one
after the other, we just watched a feature film about Scientology that was recently on TV and
is quite good, so that they pay attention, ha? otherwise, when you just talk to them
Cf: ⌊ @(.)@
Df: about something, they immediately shut down and just get loud and destructive.
Bf: ⌊ Yes
Cf: Yes, but if that's something they respond to isn't that a good thing
Df: Well, yes, but is that the intention from above that we
Cf: ⌊ Well, but there is lots of stuff out there
Df: teach like that.
Cf: Yes, but its not realistic.
Df: Yes, yes, yes but, that's right but you are caught in the middle there (2) when I think
Cf: ⌊ ( )
Df: back to the first few years, or or when ((XXX surname)) was inspector
he visited twice a year, if he caught me twice showing a film
Af: ⌊ Mhm, mhm
Bw: @(2)@
Af: ((clears throat)) (2)

Bf now generalises her narrative and refers to the group as a whole ("more generally now for us", 432). She once again expresses how overstretched she feels teaching religion ("you don't know, you are being pulled to pieces somehow", 432–433). To *Bf*

this excessive demand originates in the need to live up to very different expectations. It is impossible to consolidate them. Expectations from "above" (433) have normative content ("wants you to do this", 433) and demand the comprehensive teaching of all the religious themes in RE. Such expectations can, however, not be consolidated with those of the pupils. Consequently, *Bf* experiences incompatible expectation from "above" (433) on the one hand and "from the pupils" (435) on the other. While expectations from "above" (433) are high ("all the things you should do with the content", 435), they are not shared by the pupils, and the popularity of RE amongst pupils is dependent on material that appeals to them. Again *Bf* points out that pupils reject any material that they feel has a connection to the church. Therefore the popularity of RE rises the less content it covers. An incongruence thus arises between the material RE teaches are required to cover "from above" (433) and pupils' expectations. For *Bf* this incongruence leads to the feeling that teaching RE is excessively demanding. She describes this experience of excessive demand ("the worst thing was", 437), by giving an example about a particular pupil, which horrifies *Af* and *Cf* ("@(.)@ that's crazy", 441; "@(.)@", 442). This pupil had not been aware that Caritas (*a Christian charity*) was affiliated with the church, and could simple not conceive of this idea, because in contrast to the church, Caritas has positive connotations for him. Her experience with this pupil is a small but ever recurring example for *Bf*. To her it speaks of how alienated all of society is from the church. At the same time this shows a certain alienation between *Bf* herself and a society dissociated from the church ("@you think@, what what is happening in society? ", 443).

The excessive demand put on RE teachers can be surmised from *Bf*'s statements, given that the church as an institution experiences rejection from society. To *Bf* the popularity of RE is thus directly related to the rejection or acceptance of the church. If there is incongruence between the expectations and beliefs of the pupils and those of the teacher, teaching religion becomes difficult.

Df also describes an insurmountable distance between pupils and the church. She believes that this distance is the reason why teaching religion is difficult. According to *Df* this distance is insurmountable, because pupils' view of the church is a negative one and there is no possibility for change in sight ("cause when people talk about the church they only ever talk about the institution", 345–346). The fault lies with pupils, because they are unable to differentiate between the institution that is the official church and the church as *Df* sees it. *Df*'s idea of the church is broader and inclusive of all people not just church officials ("that church is also something else and that we have to work on it together", 348). Pupils' negative perception of the church does thus not allow them to see its positive sides ("all the good things the church has done, no? ", 349). *Df*'s statements hint at a strained relationship with pupils, it can therefore be surmised that in this case too there is incongruence between *Df*'s views and those of her pupils. *Bf* now also expresses that the distance is insurmountable. She describes the impossibility or extreme difficulty of such an endeavour. She feels that negative feelings towards the church and dissociation from the church could only be overcome through a "new language' (450), "that has a new word for it" (450–451). Otherwise it would require an enormous effort, and is believed to be practically impossible.

Df talks about the difficulty of teaching religion again in another example. She talks about her 7th form, her "favourite class" (455). By calling it that and by using the

superlative, she makes it clear that this class is in some way special. The course of the discussion reveals that it is a difficult class for *Df*. In order to cope with the difficulties in this class *Df* made the decision to just show them "films […] one after the other" (455–456). In this class films resolve disciplinary difficulties and make pupils behave as is expected of them ("so that they pay attention, ha", 457). *Cf* believes that this practice is legitimate as it brings the desired results ("isn't that a good thing", 461). While *Cf* agrees with D*f*, she reminds her of the different outcomes expected of them "from above" (462). There is a noticeable discrepancy between the practice of teaching and the expectations "from above" (462), since they are "not realistic" (465). This now also reveals a discrepancy between things as they are and things as they should be in RE. This is experienced as a burden by the group. ("but you are in a bit of a dilemma there", 466).

Besides throwing light on the difficulties related to teaching RE, *Df*'s story about how her classes used to be frequently shadowed when she first started the job also show an inherent heteronomy ("When I think back to the first few years", 466–468). *Df* feels obliged to uphold the standards set "from above" (462), but at the same time she is aware that there is a big difference between her teaching practice and these standards. If an inspector came to the school her teaching practice of showing films would be revealed ("caught […] showing a film" 469).

Teaching RE II

The interviewer draws on the discussion so far by asking an exmanent question. He enquires about the significance of RE in school and asks for this to be rated on a scale from 1 to 10. (Teaching RE II, 473–551):

473 Y1: I will give you a scale of 1 to 10. 1 being not significant at all and 10
474 being extremely significant, how significant would you say is RE in your
475 school? (2)
476 Df: From whose point of view, the headmaster's, or the pupils' or other teachers'?
477 Y1: From your point of view.
478 (6)
479 Bf: Hm (2) well, ahm
480 Af: 4
481 Bf: Yes, I would have @said 4 too@
482 Cf: 5 (3)
483 Y1: How did you get to these numbers?
484 Df: ⌊ @(.)@
486 (6)
487 Df: Because in everyday school life it doesn't really have any significance as we have already
488 said before (.) the
489 Cf: ⌊ I think it's important for the pupils, as you said, to have this lesson for
490 loosening up. I think the other colleagues before and after
491 Df: ⌊ Exactly
492 Cf: couldn't teach as they do, if Religion just, well if ( ) it crammed pupils full of facts
493 everybody benefits if pupils are well and have had a good lesson
494 all other subjects benefit from that, they just never thank you for it, but it all lives from
495 Df: ⌊ Yes. And they say that
496 Cf: these more relaxing subjects, pupils would break down otherwise.
497 Df: ⌊ Cause pupils also always say
498 Bf: ⌊ Mhm
499 Cf: Without these subjects they wouldn't manage
500 Df: ⌊ Religion must be a lesson where we can recover and we don'treally

Cf: ⌊ Yes
Df: want to change that, we want to have discussions and, (.) yes, but li:ke, when it comes
Cf: ⌊ Yes
Df: conveying information about religion, I don't think it ranks highly at all, I sometimes try to,
because I have the B class, well, teach religion and biblical issues or in art history,
but that's also only really possible in the 7th and 8th form. (3) but all in all, they don't sit in
RE classes because they want to learn something about our Christian culture;
Cf: A little maybe, but @maybe (.) a little@
Bf: ⌊ Well, when I first got here, my first conversation was with
the headmaster when I introduced myself and he said, and that's why I said
4, cause you said 1(.) is worst, yes ahm, that's why 4, which I think
Df: ⌊ Worst
Bf: is @actually@ quite high, because the headmaster said that in our school
RE is regarded very highly, because we take the religion-ethics approach, which means that the
quality here even in the upper forms because of the double lessons, which really is true, cause
in other schools practically nothing happens anymore in the upper forms, where the alternative
is a free period, well I can see that, but then I felt, aha, here we have got quality, and I was
immediately so inspired somehow and I then thought
that over the holidays I will look through my stuff
Cf: ⌊ @(4)@
Af: ⌊ @(4)@
Bf: and wow, it's in the XXX ((number)) district and high quality and I
Cf: ⌊ @(3)@
Bf: believe this stuff, yes, this this is a @problem@ of mine, that I believe this stuff(.) yes I
Cf: ⌊ after 10
years working here do you still believe it? @(3)@
Bf: you know, I think
Af: ⌊ No, but then she had only met that person for the
first time
Cf: ⌊ I see
Bf: these things, because I think to myself, okay, the expectations, that people
Cf: ⌊ @(3)@
Af: ⌊ °Wow ()°
Bf: have of me now, I want to live up to them, I do all the preparations, and come in
Cf: ⌊ @(.)@
Bf: with a, well, you should think, you then @really have a@ small vision, but in
real life, you realise, come on you could have known that from the start, it's all just talk
Cf: ⌊ @(.)@
Bf: and then it feels like this, well, come o- @best if that means anything to you@ forget it
now, because look at it, and most of the time the quality is so incredibly
Af: ⌊ Yes
Cf: ⌊ @(3)@
Bf: below, what you had thought somehow, well I always feel too well
prepared, as in if you are prepared, you also want to do it then, and then you realise,
its not possible anyway, someone comes in, leaves, runs, always toing and froing, best
you do, you think, it will be shit anyway, cause maybe something good can come of it then,
Cf: ⌊ @(2)@
Bf: right? but it's best, yes really, you learn that at some point, to protect yourself from
Cf: ⌊ @yes that's one strategy@ ⌊Yes
Bf: always running into walls;
Af: °the bell goes at 20 to, ( ) just to let you know°

At first the question isn't clear to *Df*. She asks which group of people the interviewer's question refers to and names three possible groups (directors office, pupils and other teachers), but not parents. The interviewer encourages the group to tell him their own estimations. The group hesitates in giving answers and then names numbers without commenting on them further. Even when the interviewer asks one of the group members how she reached her decision, there is still marked hesitation.

By pointing out the non-existent significance of religion in the daily life of this school, which has already been mentioned earlier in the discussion, *Cf* is the first one to explain the number she gave. *Df* structures her argument around the focus of RE classes.

The way religion is taught in this school does have any significance, neither for pupils nor for other teachers. According to *Cf* RE is significant because it compensates pupils for all their stresses in school, not so much because of its subject matter. It is a "lesson for loosening up" (489–490). Alongside other subjects ("these more relaxing subjects", 496) it is effectively meaningful to pupils, other teachers and "all other subjects" (494), because it has a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing. In this respect it differs from other teaching subjects. There is not so much material that needs to be covered that it presents a burden. Other subjects need RE, ("it all lives from these more relaxing subjects", 494–496), because it compensate for all the stresses pupils are exposed to in school. Otherwise they would "break down" (496), and "wouldn't manage" (499) the pressure. *Cf* and *Df* perceptions of how much this role of RE gets appreciated by their colleagues, differ. While *Cf* does not think they appreciate it at all ("they just never thank you for it", 494), *Df* does ("Yes, and they say that", 495).

RE consequently does have significance, but not because of its content. *Df*explains the fact that RE is meaningful in its role as "a lesson for loosening up" (489–490) through the expectations of pupils. RE's profile correlates with pupils' expectations. The expectations that RE is a "lesson where they can recover" (500) are presented in a normative way ("must be a lesson where we can recover" (500). Pupils "don't really want to do anything" (500–502). On the contrary, discussions are popular and form part of the "lesson where we can recover" (500). *Df* distinguishes this profile from "conveying information about religion" (504) as part of a contextually oriented RE. Contextually oriented RE is not popular with pupils, however, despite this fact, *Df*has made repeated attempts to introduce this dimension by increasingly talking about biblical issues and art history. The potential for such interweaving of content is, however, limited, since it is "only really possible in the 7th and 8th form" (506). Aside from her argument related to age, *Df* talks about pupils' expectations in a negative way. They have no or only very limited (508) interest in learning about "our Christian culture" (507). This again shows a distinction between pupils' expectations and RE's contextual profile. Therefore there is incongruence between RE lessons that are sophisticated in content and the expectations of pupils who want a "lesson where [they] can recover" (500). RE, that understands "conveying information about religion" (504) as part of its remit, is less popular with pupils. Once again it is obvious that the group orients itself towards other people (heteronomy), in so far as the remit of RE is presented from the perspective of the pupils. Such a remit jars, however, with the expectations of the group.

Bf's recollections of when she first started working in this school also show that she had different expectations. Initially *Bf*'s ideas of what RE in this school would be like were influenced by her introductory conversation with the headmaster. This conversation was the reason for her high expectations of RE, which would not have been as marked otherwise. During this conversation the headmaster stated that "RE is regarded very highly" (514), because the school also offers ethics education. *Bf*'s expectations were influenced by this statement ("here we have got quality", 517). This promised "quality" (515) of RE is connected to this specific school. As its "quality" (515) was linked to organisational conditions (514–517) and this particular school (522), *Bf*'s expectations had been raised. This shows *Bf*'s orientation towards the headmaster. As a consequence and in order to comply with "expectations" (531), she spent the "holidays"

(519) preparing herself (heteronomy). The promised "quality" (515) did, however, not correspond with "real life" (537). *Bf*'s "small vision" (536) was debunked and turned out to have been an illusion. In retrospect *Bf* feels she was naïve to have aligned her work to the headmaster's statements. This sentiment is also reflected by *Cf*'s (520) and *Af*'s (521) laughter and *Cf*'s rhetorical question aimed at *Bf*'s unrealistic assessment. There was incongruence for *Bf* between how she had imagined things to be ("small vision" 536) and what was required of her "in real life" (537), because "most of the time the quality is so incredibly below, what you had thought somehow" (540–543). *Bf*'s story is accompanied by *Cf*'s laughter, which underlines the discrepancy between "vision" (536) and "real life" (537). The real life situation is determined by poor lesson quality and disruptive pupil behaviour. ("someone comes in, leaves, runs, always toing and froing", 545). Having her illusion debunked was a disappointing experience for *Bf* ("it's all just talk", 537) and caused her to minimise her expectations. The trail of thought "you think, it will be shit anyway, cause maybe something good can come of it then" (546) has turned into a helpful strategy for her. The aim of this "strategy@" (549) is to balance out the existing incongruence and to adjust her "small vision" (536) to "real life" (537) in order to protect herself and avoid frustration. *Bf*'s account once again shows the burden teaching religion carries when there is a discrepancy between one's own objectives and the actual practice of teaching. There is also a clear difference between her own goals and those she was told about by the headmaster.

Once *Af* has informed the interviewer of the remaining time, *Df*introduces another burdensome aspect (Teaching RE II, 552–583):

552 Df: Well I just find it so frustrating, when every year for the high holidays I,
553 Bf: ⌊ @(.)@
554 Df: I don't know, I do Advent or Lent and and I've got the feeling I do that
555 Cf: ⌊ @(2)@
556 Df: every year in every class again and again, but still they look at me every time as if they
557 had never heard it before, they don't even know the really simple banal stuff and I simply find
558 that frustrating, you can't build on anything. (.) I assume that's what you mean,
559 isn't it?
560 Bf: ⌊ I mean, how can it work, you explain the most beautiful possibilities to them
561 what it all can mean, then if you are lucky they might go to a parish church, because
562 they want to experience it once, @and maybe experience the opposite@ well it doesn't always
563 Df: ⌊ Mhm
564 Bf: fit then with the environment, I mean, where should they go to really experience it like
565 that, that it is something beautiful, enriching, and relevant to one's own life? And if they don't
566 have that either in their family or in their parish, then we are supposed to be able to
567 show them? I mean I don't even want to tell them about something that they then can't
568 Df: ⌊ Mhm
569 Bf: find. Well @or that I myself can't find anymore@
570 Df: Well, but you do get pupils, the ones that come from the countryside, who have a
571 very active parish life there, an- and they are really mostly positive. Of course there are others
572 too, but, the ones that come from rural areas, they have, they find out
573 somehow.
574 Bf: ⌊ Mhm
575 Cf: And everything is 10 years behind there.
576 Df: Yes, it seems that way
577 Bf: @(.)@
578 Cf: Maybe you should move to @Lower Austria, you'd have another 10 years of idyll there.
579 Bf: ⌊ No, that's
580 where I'm from, they're @all Catholic there, that's even worse@
581 Df: ⌊ @(3)@
582 Cf: ⌊ @terrible, how awful@
583 (4)

Her frustration shows that *Df* has also experienced discrepancies within RE. To her it is "frustrating" (552) when pupils show no growth in their learning even after repeated lessons on the same subject. In this context she names important religious times such as Advent and Lent. The frustration is caused because her expectations are disappointed. While *Df* goes over the same material "again and again" (556), and none of the expected learning happened for the pupils, as if "they had never heard it before, they don't even know the really simple, banal stuff" (556–557). It can be surmised that the difficulty of teaching religion lies in the discrepancy between the effort put in by the teachers and the absence of the expected learning outcomes. *Df* feels that it is therefore impossible to ever work on a deeper level, which she finds "simply […] frustrating" (557–558). The recurrent theme of experienced discrepancies in the discussion continues. For *Bf* this discrepancy also exists between idealised and lived religion. RE presents idealised religion in the superlative form ("the most beautiful possibilities", 560), which, "if you are lucky" (561) leads to pupils wanting to get to know it in a parish church, but lived religion in the parishes differs fundamentally from idealised religion. In the mode of rhetorical question *Bf*ask after a place where there is no such discrepancy, where there is "something beautiful, enriching, and relevant to ones' own life? " (565). Such a place does not exist. Consequently, she does not want to teach such idealised religion either, as it does not correspond with reality.

While *Bf* talks about the discrepancy between idealised religion and lived religion in the parishes, *Df* distinguishes between different pupils depending on where they come from. According to her, pupils from the countryside do have contact with parish life ("Of course there are others too, but, the ones from rural areas", 571–572). Consequently, there is no such discrepancy, as described by *Bf*, for those pupils. *Cf*confirms that there is a difference between pupils from the country and pupils from the city. The city itself is not explicitly named. It determines an inequality in pupils' religious socialisation depending on where they come from. Pupils from rural areas are connected to parish life. This is connoted positively and referred to as an "idyll" (578), which will disappear within the next ten years, which will eliminate the current difference between city and country. *Cf* suggests that *Bf* should move to the countryside to escape from the lack of pupils' religious socialisation, which she is complaining about. *Bf* rejects this idea and points out that she comes from the countryside and stipulates that Catholic homogeny there is "even worse@" (580) by comparison ("they're @all Catholic there, that's even worse@", 580).

'RE for all'

Towards the end of the discussion the interviewer asks the group an exmanent question. He wants to know what advantages they could see in RE classes for all pupils that are jointly organised by the churches and religious communities (RE for all, 584–624):

584 Y1: What could your school gain from RE classes for all that is jointly organised by
585 the churches and religious communities?
586 Af: Pardon? Come again (.) more slowly
587 Bf: ⌊ @(3)@
588 Cf: ⌊ He means that Muslims, Protestants, Orthodox, Catholics

589 should do RE together,
590 Y1: RE classes for all that is jointly organised bythe churches and religious communities?
591 (2)
592 Af: Does that mean, such an idea could actually happen? what would that mean here?
593 Y1: Yes
594 Af: What would be the advantage here, or what do you mean?
595 Y1: What do you think?
596 Af: Well, better than no RE.
597 Bf: Well I, I could imagine it would be enriching, because when I was at the other school,
598 where there was a lot of ahm religious diversity, I always thought it was really stupid, that
599 I'm only allowed to teach the Catholic ones, the others are often much more interesting,
600 Af: ⌊ Mhm
601 Bf: sometimes a Muslim girl simply refused to leave, and I thought, well, that's nice
602 I'm actually happy about it, but I'm not really allowed to, yes, but they always turned out to be
604 really enriching lessons, because when those from a different, from a different religious
605 horizon bring their stuff then it is very, I think it would be very fruitful for everybody and
606 @I even think@ everything else has little future. Because each religion ah is already really
607 Af: ⌊ Yes
608 Bf: pressed into a corner somehow, and that everybody now also does their own religion
609 Af: ⌊ Yes
610 Bf: that that becomes such a secluded position, that's only met with, I don't know, what's up
611 Af: ⌊ Exactelly ⌊ Yes
612 Bf: with you anyway? Yes, I think this joint thing would ( )
613 Af: ⌊ I think, the young people too are more likely
614 to say, we all believe, or I always hear pupils say, we all believe in the same God
615 anyway, and they even come up with thoughts like, well, He
616 Df: ⌊ Hm Mhm
617 Af: is just always given different names and in this way this could even unify
618 different cultures and maybe even, yes, impact on the outside, ahm, so that, so that
619 Bf: ⌊ Mhm ⌊ Yes
620 Y1: ⌊ Mhm
621 Af: understanding in the street would improve
622 Df: ⌊ Mhm
623 Y1: ⌊ Mhm
624: Bf: Yes

Af does not understand the question straight away and asks the interviewer to repeat it. After an explanation by both *Cf*, who talks about the joint activity of four religions ("Muslim, Protestant, Orthodox, Catholic", 588) and the interviewer, *Af* still asks further clarifying questions. In doing so she refers to the organisational form of RE mentioned during the introduction to the subject as "such an idea" (592). Her repeated requests for clarification indicate that she prefers being asked precise questions. The group's orientation towards other people (heteronomy), which has already been established earlier on in the discourse, is palpable again during this sequence, in so far as *Af* wants to hear a precise question from the interviewer. The interviewer does not oblige and leaves the discussion open.

The passage that follows shows the lack of understanding for denominationally segregated RE, while acceptance is expressed for jointly organised 'RE for all'. This is, however, not an ideal solution for *Af* either. In the mode of a comparison *Af*, speaks positively of RE organised in such a way, when the point of comparison is "no RE" (597), but itt is not an ideal way forward for her.*Bf*also views this approach to RE in a positive light and estimates that it would be "enriching" (597). *Bf* raises multiple arguments, which all illustrate the marginalised position denominationally segregated RE is in. Her reasoning is based on her own experience in "the other school, where there was a lot of ahm, religious diversity" (597–598). Religious diversity is the context in which *Bf*has always experienced segregated RE classes as "really stupid" (598).

Religious diversity itself enriches RE and is meaningful for everyone ("I think it would be very fruitful for everybody", 605). *Bf* can see the advantage of this form of RE in the greater motivation "the others" (599) bring, which in turn increases the value of RE. *Bf* mentions "a Muslim girl" (601) as an example. On the one hand this example illustrates the regulations, which *Bf*experiences as constricting ("refused", 601), on the other hand it shows the positive side of the proposed approach to RE. *Bf* mentions both organisational and didactic reasons for this. She believes that the current approach to RE has "little future" (605), because the segregated forms of denominational RE occupy "such a secluded position" (610), due to the marginalised position of religion ("pressed into a corner somehow", 608). The marginalised position of RE in its segregated form is responsible for other peoples' lack of understanding ("I don't know, what's up with you anyway", 610–612), which further reinforces the marginalised position. This position represents RE's negative opposite horizon. Now a positive horizon is presenting itself. The approach to RE, introduced by the interviewer, "this joint thing' (612) represents an alternative. This joint nature of this alternative approach is placed in the foreground, as the group takes a look at it from the perspective of the pupils. According to *Af* for instance, there is a shared belief in God, which only is differentiated by the names different religions give Him. This joined up dimension elevates the position of RE to significant importance in the sense that joint RE "could even unify different cultures" (617–618). While denominationally segregated RE reaps incomprehension, joined up RE is met with universal "understanding" (621) by people "in the street" (621).

Unity in the area of religion is also seen as a positive thing by *Df* (RE for all, 625–703):

625 Df: I already collaborate a lot with our Protestant colleague, because we share a
626 classroom for our lessons and we often do things together and it's usually quite
627 interesting (.) and I've never experienced any dividing issues or anything like that, quite
628 the opposite
629 Bf: ⌊ Yes
630 Cf: ⌊ Well, no- not to to
631 the Protestants, but to the Islamic ones yes, well, when my pupil says, she is now going to
632 Af: ⌊ Although the Protestants, well ( ) yes
633 Cf: to go to her Imam instead of RE, I just say no, I can't allow you to do that, you can't just go
634 anywhere, not possible, yes, well, it's written in the concordat and in the law for religious
635 Df: ⌊ ((gasping))
636 Cf: education and I think the Catholic Church says that now Islamic @RE teachers
637 Catholic ahm@
638 Df: ⌊ But why shouldn't she?
639 Af: ⌊ But I f-, but it's, but isn't it
640 Df: ⌊ Yes, yes
641 Cf: ⌊ Yes
642 about, that, if we, if we can imagine doing this? If you can imagine doing
643 this?
644 Cf: ⌊ Ahm a joint one for everyone,
645 well, ahm (.) ahm
646 Bf: ⌊ Well
647 from a legal point, or we aren't even really allowed to pray together according to these
648 Cf: ⌊ We aren't allowed to, no, no we are not allowed to do that
649 guidelines, which I find totally absurd, well I'm sorry, but I really think it's absurd, they always
650 Af: ⌊ Yes
651 Bf: argue that, yes, you must not, I think, betray what's your own, and you must
652 always recognise the difference so you don't do an injustice to the other, but
653 I mean, if we can't even find a common language, well then I can't,
654 I couldn't ever live in a relationship with a man who isn't also a Catholic
655 because maybe we won't find each other, well, we do find each other, and if we

656 Cf: ⌊ @(.)@ (.) as an RE teacher I'd
657 I'd strongly suggest you don't, yes
658 Bf: can't find each other and are able to pray together, without betraying anything
659 Cf: ⌊ @(.)@ find anything else
660 @(5)@
661 Bf: that would be, for me this is not a way forward; (.) that I can live with
662 Cf: ⌊ Oh, I'm sorry
663 Df: But the way you say this, you'll just have to live with the consequences and just leave
664 Cf: ⌊ Yes
665 Df: the church, if the love for another is stronger, or not
666 Cf: ⌊ Well, I mean, there are many
667 Df: ⌊ Well I know but
668 Cf: well, every year 50,000 people leave the church, that's just how it really is
669 Df: ⌊ Yes, but
670 this is the grave the church digs for itself with all these rules
671 Cf: ⌊ Yes
672 Bf: ⌊ Mhm (.) and
673 on the side @while it is@ digging, something is already getting lost, that's my
674 impression, following from what you said, because they, f-, well with, I've experienced it, they
675 ⌊ ((school bell rings))
676 Bf: say, the pupils don't even just say, well everyone believes in the same God anyway, but
677 this shifts towards the universe, yes, it's the universe, and then I get to the point
678 ⌊ ((school bell stops ringing))
679 Af: ⌊ Yes
680 Bf: well, there is the personified God and there is the apersonal God and
681 this duality alone, you see, why do we even have to separate this, can't the universe
682 also be experienced on a personal level, well I can't handle these
683 Af: ⌊ Mhm
684 Bf: artificial, ah, it's all so important, this personified God, it doesn't get us
685 Af: ⌊ Mhm
686 Bf: anywhere anymore. They said that, you know, and I think it's justified, it is possible
687 Af: ⌊ Mhm
688 to have a personal relationship with an ahm universe, with something so general
689 Af: ⌊ Yes (.) yes, yes
690 Bf: which I also want to respect, and I don't need to say
691 Af: ⌊ Mhm, mhm, mhm
692 Bf: hold on a moment, that isn't the personified God, yes, you can also make experiences
693 Af: ⌊ Mhm ⌊ Mhm, mhm
694 Bf: like that and that's already another step further @in my opinion@ the church
695 the church lags behind and the longer it lags behind, the more will be lost, because it always
696 Df: ⌊ Mhm
697 Bf: carries on, and by now we have reached this, yes universe, a spiritual
698 possibility beyond denominational distinctions and religious ones, well also the
699 the inter religious element, it should already be much stronger, the question is, well but it
700 would have been a start, ahm would have been @I don't know@ if there is actually still
701 time for it
702 (5)
703 Bf: ºYes,º

Df brings up her frequent collaborations with the Protestant RE teacher, explains them by the fact that they share a roomand describes them as "usually quite interesting" (626–627). She denies any "dividing issues" (627). The element of togetherness is emphasised instead. *Cf* picks up the thread of the polarity between division and togetherness. She too sees communalities with the Protestant RE teacher, but division when it comes to the "the Islamic ones" (631). "Islamic" (631), in connection to "Imam" (633), is not an equally valid alternative to Catholic RE, which becomes apparent, when she compares RE classes in school to those at a mosque ("to her Imam instead of RE", 633). *Bf* mentions different institutions – RE as a teaching subject in school on the one hand, and the Imam as part of a mosque on the other. In doing so she underlines the fact that an alternative of equal standing to current RE does not exist. To her the mosque is no alter-

native place of learning or an alternative to RE in school. Due to the Islamic side not having equal standing, Catholic RE cannot be replaced by jointly organised RE. ("you can't just go anywhere", 633–634). While *Df* questions *Cf*'s argument, Af focuses on the interviewer's questions, and wants to know if *Cf* can personally imagine that such an approach to RE could work. *Af*'s interjection once again shows her orientation towards others (heteronomy), in as far as she reminds *Cf* of the interviewer's question and asks her to answer it. *Bf*'s statement shows this orientation too, as she now points out the limiting nature of laws and guidelines, which run contrary to her own beliefs ("which I find totally absurd, well I'm sorry, but I really think it's absurd", 649). By quoting a position that contradicts her own beliefs, *Bf*reveals the negative opposite horizon, which is characterised by underlining difference and ignoring commonality, apparently in order to satisfy the other.

According to *Bf* prayer is the foundation of commonality ("a common language", 653). She then comes up with a comparable example and names the relationship to a man. Even if the man is not a Catholic, "a common language" (653) is essential. Shared experiences are also possible in the face of religious difference, without doing an injustice to the other ("without betraying anything", 658). *Bf*feels that the church's rules on how to engage with people from other religions are restricting. Since they do not allow joint prayer, there is no foundation to build on. In this way *Bf* once again reveals her arms-length relationship to the rules of the church, which cause incongruence and are not compatible with her own beliefs on how relationships to others or to a non-Catholic man can be lived, since they emphasise separateness due to religious difference and thus prevent togetherness. *Cf*advises *Bf* that "as an RE teacher" (656) she had better stick to the church's rules. This advice shows orientation towards others (heteronomy), as it measures up to the church's regulations. This is also evident in *Cf*'s laughter and her apology, which both further illustrate the inappropriateness of *Bf*'s narrative in relation to the church's rules. Despite the fact that these regulations exist, there is a clear difference between them and "how it really is" (668), people's lived reality. This is clear from the sheer numbers of people who leave the Catholic Church. With all it's rules the church alienates itself from "how it really is" (668), and thus behaves in a self-destructive manner. The fact that its regulations are currently irreconcilable with lived reality is clearly expressed.

In addition, there is a discrepancy between church doctrine and pupils' beliefs. Pupils not only advocate the belief in a universal God, meaning that everybody effectively believes in the same God (613–617), but *Bf* also notices a shift away from the concept of God itself "towards the universe" (677). While the church adheres to a personified image of God, *Bf*, who feels that it is possible to have a personal relationship "with an ahm universe, with something so general" (688), agrees with her pupils' point of view, and argues that a clear distinction between a personified and an apersonal concept of God would be "artificial" (682) and unsustainable. Official church doctrine is once again perceived to be a constraint that stands in the way of finding a common ground. According to *Bf* the pupils' concept of God as the universe holds the potential for creating togetherness "beyond denominational distinctions and religious ones' (698). A focus on "the inter-religious element" (699) is highly overdue. The church's official doctrine, however, stands in the way of any such endeavours.

The discrepancy between the church's rules and doctrine on the one hand and "how it really is" (668) on the other is huge and affects many areas: joint prayer, a relationship to a man who is not a Catholic and the concept of God. Due to its rules and doctrine the church is perceived as a constraint. The development of the church does not relate to the lived realities of people. If the church does not take active steps towards creating increased congruence with "how things really are" (688), it "lags behind and the longer it lags behind, the more will be lost" (695).

3.4 Group – School Community Commitee (SCC/ORG)

3.4.1 Making Contact

After his first telephone conversation with the RE teacher *Af* the author of this study called the headmaster *Qm*, who gave him permission to conduct his research in this school. The group discussion with the SCC was scheduled to take place directly after an SCC meeting, so that members of the group would not have to find an additional date in their diaries.

A month and a half after the group discussion with the RET-group the author of this study got back in touch with the headmaster *Qm* to arrange a date for the group discussion with the SCC. At this point the author found out that the next SCC meeting would take place on a day he could not attend, due to a work-related trip abroad, a fact the author had already communicated to the headmaster in an earlier email. *Qm* insisted that changing the date was out of the question, as the academic year was coming to an end and there were no other dates available, due to the upcoming school leaving exams amongst other reasons. *Qm* suggested to the author that maybe he could find another person who could facilitate the group discussion. The author asked a colleague at the Institute for Practical Theology at the University of Vienna if she could take on the role and she agreed. *Qm* was happy with this arrangement.

3.4.2 The Setup of the Group Discussion

The group discussion took place three weeks after the date had been agreed by telephone. *Qm* asked the interviewer to wait outside the library where the group discussion was going to take place in the afternoon, where he picked her up to show her the part of the library where the SCC meeting, the last one of the year, would take place. *Qm* told the interviewer that the start of the meeting had been postponed. It would now start an hour later than planned. *Qm* was in a different part of the library with some pupils preparing for their oral school leaving exams while the interviewer set up the technical equipment for the group discussions.

The pupil representatives arrived first, followed by the other members of the SCC. The two pupils talked to each other about RE while they waited for the rest of the group. *Qm* had not told the group that the interviewer would be present, meaning that the author's colleague had to briefly introduce the research project. She was given the option to either conduct the group discussion before or after the SCC meeting. She decided to

do it afterwards. The interviewer was present for the duration of the 20-minute meeting, which dealt with organisational issues looking ahead to next academic year. The group discussion took place straight afterwards.

During the discussion *Qm* left the room twice. Once he was called out by somebody who needed to talk to him. Despite the fact that he was not present the whole time, *Qm* contributed extensively to the discussion. All group members contributed to the discussion more or less equally, as they had done during the SCC meeting. The group discussion lasted approximately 50 minutes. Afterwards they said goodbye to each other and to the interviewer and parted company.

3.4.3 Additional Information about Discussion Participants

The group discussion was attended by nine people: three parent representatives (*Tf*, *Wf* and *Zf*), two pupils (*Sf* and *Vf*), two female teachers (*Rw* and *Xw*), one male teacher (*Um*) and the head master (*Qm*). All of the parent representatives were in there early 50s and had been members of the SCC for four years at the time this research was conducted. Both pupils had been members of the SCC for one academic year, attended the 11th grade and were 17 and 18 years old respectively. The teacher representatives and the headmaster were between 40 and 60 years old and has been in their profession between 20 and 40 years. Almost all of them had worked in this school for their entire career to date and gad been members of the SCC – some not continuously – for 15 to 20 years. Their teaching subjects comprised i. a. ethics, foreign languages and natural sciences. All of them worked full time and only in this one school.

3.4.4 A Description of the Discourse

Island of Bliss I

The interviewer introduces a new subject in several stages. Once the introductory question seems to have run its cause ("Now, 108) she asks a further question. In doing so she touches on the subject of this research project and encourages the group to develop narratives. She asks about situations that had stuck in their minds, where "religion has become a particular issue in this school?" (110–111) while at the same time placing the focus on "religion […] in day-to-day life in this school" (111–112). It is clear right from the beginning of the discussion that religion is a problematic issue, as it immediately gets connected to the cases of abuse (Island of Bliss I, 108–126):

108 Y2: Now I will move on to my next question, my second question, or my, my second
109 request, ahm, this project's fundamental concern is the situation
110 RE finds itself in in the city of Vienna, can you think of a situation, where religion has
111 become a particular issue in this school? or how does religion feature in
112 day-to-day life in this school? yes these two lines of thought.
113 (3)
114 Vf: Hm
115 Y2: Does it feature?
116 Um: Well when there were the abuse cases.
117 Y2: ⌊ Mhm

118 Qm: As an issue
119 Rf: ⌊ As an issue, yes
120 Um: Yes, yes
121 Rf: Yes, but notwell,
122 Rf: ⌊ It wasn't @(2)@
123 Qm: ⌊ Thank God
124 Zf: ⌊ Thank god
125 Rf: @We don't have anything to do with that@
126 Qm: ⌊ We don't have anything to do with it whatsoever. Anything? can you think of anything?

The group does not immediately respond to the interviewer's questions. There is clearly some initial reluctance to engage with the subject. The interviewer responds to this with another prod and rolls the subject out again. She poses the fundamental question if religion features in this school at all (115) and thus elicits responses. *Um* responds to the interviewer's question with his colloquial introjection "Well" (116) and introduces a proposition. He gives an example from the past ("when there were", 116), the "abuse cases" (116). Both *Qm* and *Rf* confirm this to have been "an issue" (118) in their school. *Um* agrees and validates their point (120). *Rf* seems keen to further define what is meant by the "abuse cases" (116) and starts an explanation ("Yes, well", 121) but does not continue. *Vf* picks up *Rf*'s statement in the mode of dissociation ("It wasn't @(2)@", 122), but does not elaborate any further either. *Qm* and *Zf*then validate these fragmented statements with "Thank God" (123–124). Although the group does not go into any detail and all their statements remain fragmented, a shared horizon of experience is evident. Members of the group understand each other without having to go into detail. Their contributions to the discourse supplement each other. The fact that group members talk about religion in the mode of dissociation shows the alienation they feel towards the subject. This alienation is also clearly noticeable when *Rf*differentiates between "We" (125) and the abuse cases ("with that", 125). There is no connection between the two. *Qm* agrees, he too asserts that there is no connection "whatsoever" (126). He then initiates a ritualised conclusion in the mode of a meta-communication and is thus done with talking about the "abuse cases (116). This shows the groups' dissociated attitude towards this subject areaonce again. This short passage of the discussion already reveals the negative opposite horizon. Religion is perceived as problematic, as it is connected to the abuse cases. The group distances itself from this problematic issue, turns away and above all stresses that there is no connection between this school and the problematic issue; it does not have "anything to do with that" (125 and 126).

During the next section of discourse religion is again seen as a problem. Initially, however, *Vf* responds to *Qm's* request for further contributions to the discussion. (Island of Bliss I, 127–162):

127 Vf: Never:, I can think of nothing at all
128 Sf: ⌊ No
129 Rf: What now, that religion is an issue? (.) or what
130 Vf: ⌊ No, it is, well I wouldn't say thatreligion really
131 gets talked about a lot here in this school, or anything like that, (.)
132 or very intensively, well not at all,
133 Qm: ⌊ Well it's neither a positive nor a negative issue, it is,
134 Rf: ⌊ Yes
135 Vf: ⌊ Yes
136 Sf: ⌊ Yes
137 Qm: RE teachers do a good job, I think, probably

138 Sf: ⌊ ( )
139 Qm: also quite challenging, because it runs parallel to ethics education.
140 Sf: ⌊ ( )
141 Vf: And pupils can decide.
142 Qm: And pupils can decide, but there is nothing for and nothing
143 against. And when every once in a while there is a school Mass, than there is lots of singing
144 and then there is some slight, quiet, I don't want to say pressure, but it is; almost everybody
145 from the music classes will go and;
146 Rf: ⌊ @(2)@
147 Xf: And there is no conflict around it.
148 Qm: ⌊ There is no conflict, exactly
149 Rf: ⌊ Yes
150 Wf: But it's the music that connects, you mustn't underestimate that, because the primary thing
151 Qm: ⌊ Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah
152 Xf: ⌊ It feels, ⌊ Of course
153 music connects.
154 Wf: is the music, but that means that there aren't ever any problems.
155 ?: ⌊ Well of course
156 Xf: ⌊ Of course, but nobody feels forced.
157 Rf: ⌊ But it's not
158 an issue now, that now if a non-Catholic pupil also com:es along,
159 Xf: ⌊ No ⌊ No
160 Rf: it's not an issue with you here you know. they do that.
161 Vf: ⌊ And sing along
162: Qm: yes

Religion is completely outside of *Vf*'s and*Sf*'s field of awareness. This fact gets stressed twice in *Vf*'s statement ("Never", "nothing at all", 127) and is immediately validated by *Sf*. *Rf* asks *Vf* to clarify her statement. Her question offers two options, but she does not fully articulate the second one. In a second attempt to express herself more clearly *Vf* starts with a negative, which continues throughout her entire statement. She reveals that religion is no significant issue'here in this school" (131). Accordingly "here in this school" (131) religion is neither addressed very frequently nor "very intensively" (132). At the end of her statement she stresses once again that there is practically no connection between religion and this school ("well not at all", 132). This shows a disconnection between this school and religion. *Qm* builds on *Vf*'s statement of how religion is being addressed in school. He underlines the fact that religion does not get addressed in any particular way. The other members of the group agree with him (134–136). *Qm* uses negative terminology ("neither […] nor", 133) and thus reveals his own dissociation from religion. He does, however, not see any problems related to religion in this school, "it's neither a positive nor a negative issue" (133). This in turn shows that more generally speaking religion is seen as a polarising issue with the potential to cause problems; just not in this school. *Qm* uses the example of RE and ethics education to substantiate this viewpoint. According to him RE teachers do a good job; teaching RE is "challenging" (139) because, he reasons, it "runs parallel to ethics education" (139) ("probably also […] because", 139–139). As he gives RE and ethics education as an explanation for why there are not any problems with religion in this school, it can be surmised that both RE and ethics education are solutions to a problem. They are able to keep any problems that could potentially arise from religion in check. Religion can therefore be placed outside the field of awareness and is "neither a positive nor a negative issue" (133).

While on the subject of ethics education *Vf* addresses the choice pupils have between RE and ethics education. *Qm* repeats and thus affirms her statement. *Qm* then offers another example to prove that there is "nothing for and nothing against" (142–143)

religion in this school. At this point he refers to "school Mass" (143), which takes place periodically and in the mode of a conditional sentence, he stresses the important role singing plays on such occasions. Singing in and of itself is popular, and acts as a way to draw people in. Attendance of school Masses is regulated through singing, and takes place under "some slight, quiet, I don't want to say pressure" (144). While *Qm* distances himself somewhat from this pressure to attend school Mass, he feels that the outcome justifies the means; due to this pressure attendance levels at school Mass are high ("almost everybody […] will go", 144–145). *Xf*names another effect the pressure singing puts on people to attend school Masses has, namely that there is "no conflict" (147) around religion in school. In doing so she follows on from *Qm*'s statement (133 and 142–143). *Qm* feels understood by *Xf*, repeats and confirms her statement (148), and thus validates her. *Qm*'s example of "school Mass' shows once again that religion is seen as problematic, as in during Mass religion itself is circumvented and therefore causes "no conflict" (147). The activity of singing is instead places into the foreground, which means that "school Mass' does not pose a problem. This is evidenced by high levels of attendance, which are achieved by slight pressure (144).

Wf's interjection adds that it is "music" (150) and not religion that unites people during school Mass. With the use of the conjunction "but" (150), she stresses the importance of music, which *Qm* and *Xf* had already attributed to it by pointing out its capacity to unite people (151–153). In *Wf's* mind the fact that music is "the primary thing" (150–154) during school Mass has clear consequences. Because of music, school Mass does not cause "any problems" (154). Consequently, singing and music have another function during school Mass, aside from helping it to fall into line with the required normativity. They are able to contain religion's potential for causing problems, ("that means that there aren't ever any problems" 154). Therefore singing and music fulfil a similar purpose as RE and ethics education (139) – as mentioned earlier by *Qm*. There is continuity in the group's conclusions as they all stress the absence of conflict in relation to religion, as long as potential problems are contained or deflected. *Xf* validates this and at the same time comments on the pressure mentioned by *Qm*. She does not perceive it as such ("but nobody feels forced" 156). *Rf* illustrates this further in her line of argument. Despite the pressure exerted on pupils to attend, it does not provoke any arguments if a "non-Catholic pupil' does not attend school Mass. This once again aims to show that no conflict exists. By using the non-Catholic pupil as a point of reference, being-Catholic is identified as the norm. The fact that some people do not sing along, while most do sing along ("they do that", 160), does not pose a threat to the containment of conflicts that religion could cause.

This passage shows that religion can be reconstructed as a potential area of conflict. According to the group this potential does, however, not come to bear in this school. The group names RE and the "parallel […] ethics education" (139) as well as singing and music during school Mass as examples of how this school tries to avoid or contain any problems related to religion.

Sf's brief interjection shows, however, that problems related to religion can nonetheless arise during school Mass. (Island of Bliss I, 163–187):

163 Sf: There was an issue once.
164 Rf: There was an issueonce; yes.

165 Sf: ºThere, ( )º
166 Tf: What?
167 ?: Mhm
168 Sf: XXX ((name of a pupil)); when we had a vote.
169 Qm: Who? I see.
170 Tf: ⌊ Yeah, but come on that wasn't such a big deal, cause when a mother
171 somehow yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah (.) yeah
172 Rf: ⌊ Well it is occasionally
173 an issue; when there is a Jehovah's Witness in a class or something like that; then they
174 just don't sing along, when we sing in church; yes.
175 Xf: Yeah, but that isn't a problem, (.) it's completely,
176 Qm: ⌊ Yes
177 Sf: ºand they only look at churches in Rome, because there isn't anything else @(.)@ º
178 Vf: ⌊ º@(.)@º
179 Qm: ⌊ Well I think we
180 really are pretty tolerant; in every sense.
181 Xf: ⌊ Tolerant. Hm, yeah that's true.
182 Rf: ⌊ Yes, I
183 agree,
184 Y2: ⌊ Mhm
185 Rf: Well, I think we sort of live on an island of bliss in this respect; also when it comes to
186 Qm: ⌊ Yeah
187 Rf: peaceful coexistence in school.

Sf pointedly mentions that religion was an issue "once" (163) in the past, but does not go into further detail. She hints at a specific event ("once", 163). *Rf*immediately know which event she is referring to (164). *Sf* starts to speak again, but her statement remains fragmented. Initially some members of the group do not know which event *Sf* is talking about and ask her to clarify (166 and 169). *Sf* mentions a pupil, but only hints at the specific situation. She mentions a vote that had taken place ("XXX ((name of a pupil)); when we had a vote.", 168).She does not need to say any more, as the group immediately knows which event she is referring to (169–170). Once *Tf* has revealed that she too is aware of what happened, she minimises the significance of the event ("Yeah, but come on that wasn't such a big deal", 170). She gives a very rudimentary explanation of her stance and mentions a mother. She does not go into any more detail. *Rf* moves on from this specific event and starts to generalise it. While it started off as a specific and unique incidence, it is now placed in a wider context as one of several incidences that "occasionally" (172) happen.

At the same time RE juxtaposes the Catholic norm against those who deviate from it. They are initially presented as individuals (a Jehovah's Witness in a class or something like that;", 173) but immediately afterwards summed up with the demonstrative pronoun "they" (173). Those who adhere to the Catholic norm are referred to as "we" (174). The two groups *Rf* juxtaposes against each other also differ from one another depending on whether they sing in church or not. While those who belong to the Catholic norm sing in church, the others do not. The fact that a few individuals, who are affiliated to a religion other than Catholicism, do not sing in church, is not seen as a disruption to the system, because "they just don't sing along" (173) and "that isn't a problem" (175). *Sf* also feels that there is a difference between the two groups. She expresses this difference in a whispered exchange with *Vf*, hinting at the different interests during a study trip to Rome (177). *Rf*, *Sf* and *Vf* all mention the two separate groups. By generalising a specific, unique case, *Rf*pushes the real difficulties experiences back then into the background. They are slotted into a wider context and thus disappear. While the issue

of singing in church holds the potential for conflict, this does not unfold through a few individual pupils, who do not belong to the Catholic norm and do not sing along.

Qm draws a sweeping conclusion from all that has been said up to that point. He postulates that this school exhibits a comparatively high level of tolerance. He does not mention what he is comparing this school to. His statement consists of hugely generalising descriptions in two separate ways; on the one hand he uses the generalising pronoun "we" (180), by which he means the whole school; on the other hand he establishes that they are tolerant "in every sense" (180). This assessment is met with approval (181–183). *Rf* elaborates further on *Qm*'s description of the school. She too talks about it in a very generalising way ("we", 185), and thus shows that she identifies with it. She points out a similarity between this school and an "island of bliss" (185) and also applies this similarity to "when it comes to peaceful coexistence in school" (185–187). A positive horizon is created around the idea of school being an "island of bliss" (185). This idea is believed to be a reality in this school, in so far as the potential for conflict, inherent in religion, is being kept in check. As mentioned above, RE, "parallel […] ethics education" (139), singing and music in church make sure of that. Even though those who do not adhere to the Catholic norm could bring this potential for conflict to bear, they are not able to. There are merely individual cases that come up "occasionally" (172), but do not disrupt the system.

Qm continues talking along the lines of the "island of bliss" (185) and substantiates it with an example (Island of Bliss I, 188–214):

188 Qm: Even when we still had Muslims here; it's got to be said, for instance
189 Rf: ⌊ I see, yes
190 Qm: XXX ((name of a teacher)), the Muslim teacher, the Islam teacher, was
191 excellent, you could really work with him.
192 Sf: °Is he actually (real) ( )°
193 Vf: Does that still happen?
194 Qm: No, we don't have any Muslims at all any more.
195 Rf: ⌊ We don't have any Muslim pupils at all
196 any more.
197 Vf: A few?
198 ?w: None at all?.
199 Qm: No, none at all.
200 Rf: ⌊No, not a single one.
201 Wf: ⌊ None at all? (.) really?
202 Qm: Shame really, it gave us a multicultural aspect, that I
203 think
204 Vf: ⌊ Yes, I have noticed that in the;
205 Wf: Well, if it works it's all good; but the things you hear from other schools
206 Qm: ⌊ Good, was good, yes
207 Wf: it doesn't necessarily work, I'd say.
208 Qm: ⌊ Yeah, yeah, as Rf says, we live on an island of
209 bliss;
210 Wf: ⌊ Mhm, yah definitely
211 Rf: No really, and I don't just mean on a religious level either, but I just think
212 Zf: ⌊ In general
213 Wf: ⌊ Mhm, yah.
214 Rf: that a lot of tolerance is exercised in this school building yes;

Qm widens the scope of this school as an "island of bliss" (185) by bringing the school's past history, when there were "still […] Muslims" (188) in the school, into the same domain. The former presence of Muslim people in the school and the fact that even then everybody in the school got on in "peaceful coexistence" (187) is mentioned explicitly

("it's got to be said", 188). There is a noticeable juxtaposition between the school, which *Qm* identifies with ("we", 188), and Muslims. *Qm* uses an exemplification to underline his assertion that even back in those days the school could be seen as an "island of bliss" (185). He makes reference to the "Islam teacher" (190) in three separate steps. First he gives a name, then he mentions his general role as a teacher and only then does he mention his specific role as "Islam teacher" (190). This puts this person's role as the Islamic RE teacher into the centre of importance. In this role he is described as "excellent" (191) and the possibility to collaborate with him emphasised in particular. Being able to work with this person does not seem to be self-evident to *Qm*, as he points out specifically that "you could really work with him" (191). With this example *Qm* clarifies that the "Islam teacher" (191) and the fact that cooperation with him was "really" (191) possible, are an expression of "peaceful coexistence" (187) in the sense of an "island of bliss" (185). The initial juxtaposition of school and Muslims was bridged by means of the "Islam teacher" (190) and the ability to cooperate with him. *Qm*'s talk about the "Islam teacher" (190) prompts *Sf*and *Vf* to ask whether he and "that" (193) – no further specification is given – does still exist in this school. *Qm* answers their question in the negative. He gives a generalising answer and states that there are no Muslim people in this school, which he again refers to as "we" (194), which indicates polarisation. While *Qm* phrases his answer in generalising terms by speaking of Muslims, whom he does not define any further, *Rf* answers more specifically. Her statement overlaps with *Qm*'s. She too uses the communal "We" (195) to mean the whole school, in which there are not "any Muslim pupils at all anymore" (195–196). These statements trigger bewilderment. Several questions follow enquiring after the number of Muslims in the school. Both *Qm* and *Rf* use double negatives in response ("No, none at all" 199; "No, not a single one", 200). Further clarifying questions clearly indicate that this fact is both astonishing and unusual. These questions are aimed at the truth of the statements ("None at all? (.) really? ", 201). While the exact number of Muslims in this school was initially not clear to *Vf*, she had "noticed" (204) a change. The description of her observation does, however, remain fragmented. Since the group is not clear on whether there are any Muslim people in this school, and are astonished when they hear that there are not, it can be surmised that the presence of Muslim people in school is taken for granted, yet at the same time they had completely banished the fact from their awareness that there are no longer any Muslims in this school. This fact is met with differing responses from the group. While *Qm* thinks it is a shame, because "it gave us a multicultural aspect" (202), *Wf* names a clear condition in the mode of a conditional sentence. Only as long as the presence of Muslims in school "works" (205), is it viewed in a positive light. In evidence for her statement, *Wf* compares this school to other schools. There "it doesn't necessarily work" (207). This links Muslims to potential problems. *Qm* confirms *Wf* statement and makes a comparison between this school and others by referencing *Rf* and calling this school an "island of bliss" (208–209), thus establishing a bracket in the conversation (185). In this section religion in general and Islamic religion in particular can be reconstructed as a potentially problematic area. At the same time this potential is perceived as not realised within this school, in so far as this school is viewed as an "island of bliss" (185 and 208–209). This view of the school is not new, it already

existed in the former times, when there were Muslims in the school, as evidenced by the "Islam teacher" (190), even though Muslims in general are potential sources of conflict.

Island of Bliss II

Both *Rf*and *Zf* now widen the scope of the school as an "island of bliss" (185 and 208–209). While *Rf* used the phrase not only in relation to religion ("I don't just mean on a religious level", 211), *Zf* generalises it even further ("In general", 212) and states that there is "a lot of tolerance" (214) in this school. *Wf* also expands on the subject of "tolerance" (214) in relation to the size of the school amongst other things. (Island of Bliss II, 215–247):

215 Wf: It makes a big difference that this school is small
216 Rf: Yes, of course, naturally, that is; that is an important factor, yes
217 Qm ⌊ Yes
218 Twf ⌊ Yes, yes
219 Ww: ⌊ Well I have experience of a school, that when it grew, you could
220 watch (.) how the atmosphere changed with every 10 new pupils,
221 Qm: ⌊ Yes
222 Rw: ⌊ Mhm
223 Wf: I mean @as drastic@ as it sounds, it's true, it's true. the smaller the school the greater the
224 Qm: ⌊ Mhm ⌊ Yeah
225 Wf: harmony, that's unfortunately.
226 Rf: ⌊ Mhm
227 Xf: Well because everybody knows everybody.
228 Wf: Yeah, yeah; you're more likely to be considerate; than if you don't even know them.
229 Rf: ⌊ Yes
230 Zf: Of course
231 Qm: Cause you can't just disappear into anonymity, no
232 Wf: ⌊ Mhm, mhm, that's a positive thing really,
233 Qm: ⌊ Yes
234 Wf: all schools should be a bit;
235 Qm: Smaller units.
236 Wf: Smaller units and also the whole school building; no polytechnics with 1600
237 pupils or 2000 pupils, that's not really desirable; that (.) if there are 5 schools
238 where people still know each other and where pupils have a relationship to the teachers and
239 Qm: ⌊ Yes
240 Wf: really know every teacher, even if they don't have him in class; that just makes for
241 Rf: ⌊ Yes
242 Wf: a different atmosphere (2) It's completely irrelevant if it's about religion or anything else;
243 it just makes for a better social atmosphere.
244 Qm: ⌊ Yes
245 Rf: ⌊ Yes
246 Xf: ⌊ Exactly, precisely;
247 Qm: Great, so it's not really an issue.

Wf sees a connection between the lived tolerance in this school and its size, as it "is small" (215). This argument finds support from several sides (216–218) and is seen as an "important factor" (216). To support her argument *Wf* gives an example in a narrative sequence. She uses a school that had grown (219) as an example. As this school grew and took on increasing numbers of pupils *Wf* was able to observe how the atmosphere in the school was changing step by step. ("you couldwatch (.) how the atmosphere changed with every 10 new pupils", 219–220). To her there is a causal connection to the size of a school, that is to say between the numbers of pupils on the one hand and changes in the school's atmosphere on the other. This connection has a negative connotation and is

"drastic" (223). Large schools with high numbers of pupils represent the negative opposite horizon, because the atmosphere in these schools suffers. In contrast, small schools are established to be the positive horizon. In the next step of her argument *Wf* once again points out the connection between school size and school atmosphere, but this time she switches it around ("the smaller the school the greater the harmony", 223–225). *Wf*'s argument finds further support from *Xf* and *Qm*. A small school makes it possible for people to know one another ("Well because everybody knows everybody", 227), which means that there is room for trust and personal issues ("Cause you can't just disappear into anonymity", 231). *Wf* then substantiates what she means by school atmosphere by talking about how people relate to one another. In small schools "you are more likely to be considerate" (228). This statement is explained by the fact that people know each other. Following on from this argument, *Wf* continues with a normative demand directed at all schools. That, which has been experienced, recognised and substantiated in small schools, "should be a bit" (234) present in all schools. Following on from this *Qm* demands "smaller units" (236) and *Wf* adds for the whole "school buildings" (236). She mentions the large numbers of pupils at polytechnics as an example. She distances herself from these schools and finds them undesirable. The negative opposite horizon becomes apparent, as "harmony" (225) suffers in these schools. Following on from this a positive horizon is presented once again, which is reflected in a preference for smaller schools. In reference to this horizon she suggests to split up larger schools. What sets these schools apart from others is the fact people are familiar with one another there. An indicator of this familiarity is the relationship with and the knowing of all teachers regardless of whether they teach a particular pupil or not. *Wf*asserts that such schools "simply make for a different atmosphere" (240–242), which brings her focus back to the issue of living together in harmony at school ("it just makes for a better social atmosphere", 243). Her statement, which is validated by other group members (244–246), is now put into an altogether bigger horizon, as the size of a school has implications on all areas of school life ("it's completely irrelevant if it's about religion or anything else", 242). Although divorced from the issue of religion, this passage also allows one to reconstruct the fact that this school understands itself as an "island of bliss" (185 and 208–209), because the school's small size contributes to the fact that conflicts do not arise, in the sense that in small schools "harmony" (225) does not suffer as it does in large schools. A small school offers intimacy and fulfils the group's wish for a conflict free existence. Parallels between the discourse on religion and that on the size of schools become apparent at this point. The desire not to let problems arise in this school can be reconstructed from both sections. The potential for conflict within religion needs to be supressed. On the one hand RE and ethics education, singing and music during school services and the cooperation with the "Islam teacher" (190) amongst other things seem to serve the purpose of fulfilling this desire. On the other hand the size of a school seems to have an analogous function. The smaller the school, the more it is able to fulfil the desire. The group itself views this school as an "island of bliss" (185 and 208–209), thus believing that their positive horizon has been realised within it.

Qm ends this section with a ritualistic conclusion, which generalises parts of the orientational framework. It shows clearly that religion is not an issue in this school, or that it should not be, as it represents a problematic area. Religion does not even arise as

a problematic area, but is suppressed. The size of the school and the number of pupils contribute to this process.

Vagueness

The interviewer initiates a new subject with an exmanent question. She offers the group a scale of 1 to 10 to represent the significance of RE in this school. The question does, however, not specify to whom RE is or is not significant. A certain reservation towards the significance of RE can be reconstructed from both initial reactions to the interviewer's question, and from the discourse throughout this section as a whole (Vagueness, 391–428):

391 Y2: Very well. Here you have a scale from 1 – 10. Let's assume 1 means not significant at all
392 and 10 very significant. What value would you attribute to RE in
393 Um: ⌊ Hm
394 Y2: your school? Between 1 and 10. 1 not significant at all and 10 very significant.
395 w::hat do you think. (3)
396 Um: ⌊ ( )
397 Xf: I'd rank it somewhere in the middle; at 5.
398 Y2: At 5.
399 Qm: Yeah 4 to 5.
400 Um: Yeah, as I already said earlier; before this question;
401 Tf: @(.)@
402 Vf: ⌊ @(.)@
403 Tf: What do you think?
404 Qm: What do you think?
405 Vf: I'm also somewhere in the middle, cause there is also ethics education @that well
406 Um: ⌊ ( )
407 Vf: there is ethics education@, well (.) that aside.
408 Qm: In your opinion has religion become more or less significant
409 with ethics education.
410 Sf: I'd say generally less significant.
411 Rf: Say that again.
412 Sf: Generally it's become less (.) significant ºREº.
413 Rf: ⌊ Religious, do you mean
414 lived religion?
415 Sf: Yes
416 Xf: We are now talking about RE as a subject.
417 ?f: ⌊ about the subject
418 Sf: Yes, RE as a subject too; I think.
419 Vf: Hm; with us th-, I'd say that it has rather gained; because you get, well people are
420 doing it out of interest.
421 Sf: Yes, well the question is what is genuine interest, or
422 Rf: ⌊ or if it's just a guaranteed A grade
423 Sf: Yes
424 Vf: Well; that ( ) I
425 Rw: ⌊ Well, one can't really know this with 100% certainty, I think; yes'
426 ?f: ⌊ Yes
427 Vf: Yes
428 Sf: For me its pretty high; but ah RE as a subject; well like 9 or 10.

The first answers come after a few seconds of silence, and a degree of reservation about this subject area is palpable right from the start of this section. This reservation also finds expression in the way *Xf* who is the first to give an answer phrases her statement. Phrased in the conjunctive, she classes RE to be "somewhere in the middle; at 5." (397). The group members' contributions that follow also all express this reservation and hes-

itation, in the sense that answers are brief and often state in-between values. Only *Um* is clear about the answer to the interviewer's question on this subject, even before the question was even asked. His answer is, however, not clear (396 and 400). In contrast to the other group members *Um* does not hesitate with his answer. After a brief burst of laughter from *Tf* and *Vf*, both *Tf* and *Qm* turn to the two pupils *Sf* and *Vf* to ask them questions. They are being encouraged to say something. *Tf* and *Qm* redirect the question to them, which is also a sign for group members' hesitant behaviour and their embarrassment when it comes to dealing with this subject.

Vf's evaluation falls in line with what has already been said. She sees herself as part of a bigger whole, and chooses a value "somewhere in the middle" (405). In this context she brings ethics education into play, which she mentions twice. She substantiates her decision with the existence of ethics education in this school ("cause", 405; "well", 405 in the sense of "because"). It forms the foundation for her decision, without it she would have made a different decision ("that aside", 407). She does, however, not mention what this alternative decision would be. Now that ethics education has been mentioned by *Vf*, *Qm* picks up on it in another question. Once again he turns to *Vf* and *Sf*. He asks them whether in their opinion religion has become "more" (408) or "less" (409) significant because of ethics education. With his question, RE and ethics education are juxtaposed against each other. As the two possible, contrasting answers he mentions represent categories of gain and loss, they clearly illustrate the rivalry between these two teaching subjects. To him the introduction of ethics education to this school most definitely represents a change in the significance of RE. *Sf* answers in a generalised way. She speaks in the conjunctive, remains vague and refers back to central words, which *Qm* used. She states that RE has lost significance ("generally less significant", 410). When *Rf* asks her to repeat what she said, she clarifies her statement and signifies that there has been a general loss of significance. Her statement refers to both "lived religion" (413) and "RE as a subject" (418). *Sf*understands her answer to be a speculation ("I think", 418). This too shows that she is vague with regards to the significance of RE.

This whole passage shows that the group deals with the question of RE's significance in a hesitant and reserved way. Its significance cannot be described clearly. It is uncertain. RE is placed somewhere in the middle of the scale, where a clear definition of the position is lacking. The question is then delegated to the two pupils in the group, *Vf* and *Sf*. All statements about RE are and remain vague. The course of the discourse during the section of the discussion, where *Sf* vaguely describes something and *Rf* repeatedly asks questions in order to obtain more clarity, clearly illustrates the attitudinal framework. It is not possible to make clear statements about RE. It is a nondescript subject in this school.

Vf's statement is also vague. In an example from her year group, with which she identifies ("with us", 419), she talks about that in her own experience, which she herself cannot quite pin down ("th-, I'd say that it has rather", 419), RE has become more significant. How much more significant remains unknown and is phrased in vague terms ("rather", 419). She thinks that one possible reason for her observation might be the fact that "people are doing it out of interest" (419–420). Her observation that a genuine interest in the subject is at the forefront of pupils' motivation to take part is a plausible reason for an increase in the subject's significance. *Vf*'s observation seems dubious to *Sf*.

She questions whether people really take part out of "genuine interest' (421). She seems to have an alternative possibility in mind ("or", 421), but does not name it. *Rf*continues *Sf*'s trail of thought and names an alternative possibility. She sees a "guaranteed A grade' as a clear alternative reason for why the significance of RE in this school has increased. *Sf* agrees with her. *Vf* starts to say something, but *Rf* picks up on her statement and continues it using the same words. She thinks that the reason why RE's significance has increased is uncertain. This uncertainty can be detected in a number of ways. To her this area as a whole is shrouded in a general sense of uncertainty, as evidenced by the facts that she uses the non-specific word "one" (425), precludes the possibility of absolute certainty ("can't really know with 100% certainty", 425) and understands her statement as speculation ("I think", 425). In contrast to this general vagueness, *Sf*gives another example. In doing so she leaves the question of RE's significance behind and describes how significant RE is to her on a personal level. Looking at it from her own point of view, she is able to make a clear judgement. In this context she rates RE remarkably highly ("like 9 or 10", 428). Her statement calls attention to two things. Firstly, she leaves behind the sense of vagueness that can be reconstructed from this section, in so far as she switches from general to personal significance. Secondly, *Sf's* personal experience of how significant RE is to her, stands in stark contrast to her speculations that the significance of religion and RE is generally dwindling.

The group does not respond to *Sf*'s personal estimation. *Qm* then turns to the parents in the group and asks them to share what they think (Vagueness, 429–443):

429 Qm: Mhm, what do the parents think, how do you experience this?
430 Tf: Well, I'd say (.) it ranks somewhere in the middle.
431 Zf: ⌊ Not at all to be honest.
432 Wf: Me neither.
433 Zf: We don't really hear anything about it from the pa- from the kids, at least I don't.
434 Tf: No I do.
435 Zf: Really you do?
436 Tf: Yeah
437 Zf: Okay @(.)@
438 Qm: Mhm
439 Zf: And you?
440 Tf: It wasn't really apparent until confirmation classes, really only
441 afterwards.
442 Wf: ⌊ No, not really.
443 Qm: Hm

The question about how significant RE is, is being delegated once again. *Qm* now turns to the parents and asks them a two-part question on how they experience the subject. ("do you experience this", 429). While his first direction of enquiry remains open, the second one focuses on the perception of RE by parents. The second question none the less remains vague, since *Qm* does not specify the object of the experience he is referring to. He simply refers to it as "this" (429). *Tf*does not seem flustered by this situation. She has an answer to hand. This answer is, however, characterised by uncertainty as she phases it in the conjunctive. Her answer attempts to rank RE. It is "somewhere in the middle" (430), which yet again expresses uncertainty and inconspicuousness. *Zf*'s and *Wf*'s answers are different from *Tf*'s. At first sight their answers are phrased precisely, and do not show any vagueness. Nonetheless the fact that RE is an insignificant subject can be reconstructed through them as well. Both of them "to be honest" (431) are not

even aware of anything to do with RE at all. The reason given for this is the lack of communication between parents and their children ("We don't really hear anything about it from the pa- from the kids", 433). While *Zf* initially talks about parents in general ("we", 433), she then limits the accuracy of her statement to herself ("at least I don't", 433). Despite the initially precise nature of her answer, the vaguenesss of her statement comes through ("really", 433). *Tf*'s perception of RE differs from the others. She is aware of RE, which surprises *Zf* and prompts her to ask further questions. *Tf* confirms her statement (446), which is met with an "Okay" (437) and brief laughter from *Zf*, which indicates her astonishment. She now turns to *Wf* to ask her what she thinks. She also indicates in a vague way that "No, not really" (442), she is not aware of anything to do with RE. *Tf* explains her position at the same time. She names "confirmation classes" (440) as the event from which point onward some things have become "apparent" (440). She does not give any more detail.

This section draws attention to the interdependency of some of the group members when it comes to how they perceive RE. Patent's perception is contingent on how and if their children talk about it. The vagueness and uncertainty in relation to this subject also shines through once again. The parents in the group have nothing general to say about RE. As long as they talk about themselves they are able to be clear, despite the fact that their statements differ.

Once the parents have made their vague statements about their perceptions of RE *Rf* starts to talk about the form teacher (Vagueness, 444–456):

444 Rf: Well; as a form teacher you only hear, well I kn- have noticed it this hear, because
445 because my colleague, who is new here with us in the school, is really very delighted with how
446 my class treats her and she isn't used to that from other schools; and that was
447 really the only feedback, I've ever had; but I think, there is always,
448 you only ever hear about positive developments, or when there are conflicts of course; yes.
449 Wf: ⌊ Mhm;
450 mhm; you don't hear about anything in between, exactly.
451 Rf: ⌊ You hear it in those two and in between you hear
452 nothing, yes.
453 Wf: As long as it's quiet, everything is okay.
453 Xf: ⌊ Yeah, but there are hardly any conflicts in RE.

Following on from the previous discussion ("Well", 444; in the sense of "consequently"/"therefore ") *Rf* starts a brief narrative, in which she speaks about the role of form teachers in general terms. Speaking in such a general way ("as a form teacher you only", 444; "you" in the sense of "one"), does not enable her to say much, or in much detail ("only", 444). She turns away from this way of speaking and enters into a narrative about her perceptions based on her personal experience, which is informed by a conversation she had with a colleague in this school. During this conversation the new colleague gave *Rf* feedback on her class and told her how it "treats her" (446). She described the way she was being treated as positive, and different from "other schools" (446). Her narrative also reveals that perceptions of RE and its significance is contingent on the views of other people. Direct experience of it does not exist, which is probably one of the reasons why it can only be talked about in vague terms. RE is rarely talked about. This is evidenced by the fact that *Rf* talks about the above mentioned conversation as the "only feedback" (447). This gets substantiated with a speculation. *Rf*, W*f* and *Tf* postulate that

"you only ever hear about positive developments, or when there are conflicts of course' (448). Apart from this RE is not mentioned (449–454). This shows once again that RE is on the whole perceived as an insignificant and unnoticed subject. It is only mentioned when something particularly positive or particularly negative happens, and even then only briefly. There is no direct relationship to RE and any experience of it is contingent on the reports of others that "you […] hear" (448). Experiences are built on hearsay.

Together *Wf* and *Xf* come to a conclusion and generalise the attitude that was jointly expressed in the discussion, namely that RE is an insignificant and unnoticed subject. They embed this attitude into a wider frame of attitudes. The fact that you do not hear much about RE is a good sign ("As long as it's quiet, everything is okay", 455). At the same time, a connection is made between RE and conflict. This illustrates the already reconstructed attitudinal framework of RE's level of insignificance. Since only vague things rather than anything specific can be said about RE, the question about its significance within the group is being delegated and anything that is known about it comes from hearsay – all experiences of it are passive ("the kids", 433; "feedback", 447; "you hear", 451) – it can be reconstructed as an insignificant subject in this school. This is also compatible with the group's attitudinal framework that was reconstructed earlier, where this school is seen to be an "island of bliss' (185 and 208–209).

Values

Since RE and its special position has already been addressed in the discourse, the interviewer now asks the group about the significance of RE to the school. While the following section poses an exmanent question, this is not done arbitrarily. The question is not a narrative one, but aims to elicit opinions and explanations from the group (Values, 495–532):

495 Y2: What do you think, would your school lose, if it no longer offered RE
496 classes? we know this scenario from the world of politics. what would be lost?
497 (5) ((Qm returns))
498 Y2: What would be lost if RE was om- abolished in this
499 school. This is the question again addressed to everybody of course.
500 Qm: Well I think this is purely hypothetical, it just doesn't arise, I won't think about this.
501 It's a question of the concordat, it's rooted in it pff. It's just like saying, what would be, if
502 there was no more school. (.) this question does not arise for me.
503 Xf: ⌊ No Math, or n
504 Y2: Okay
505 Wf: @(.)@
506 Xf: ⌊ that is
507 Qm: I think, that despite everything it is an integrative part of value education, that
508 luckily you can opt out of, or opt in to and that's it.
509 Rf: ⌊ ((clears throat))
510 Xf: Yes, it is about passing on values and that is why its no (.) question for us.
511 Rf: ⌊ Yeah
512 Qm: ⌊ Yes
513 Um: ⌊ well of course because
514 Rf: ⌊ What did you say,
515 XXX ((male first name))?
516 Um: Well, it would be a loss, if it didn't exist;
517 Y2: ⌊ Mhm
518 Rf: I think, that you can learn the culture of conversation in this subject, like in no
519 Um: ⌊ Like the
520 Rf: other to be honest, cause it's of course also about issues that

521 Sf: ⌊ Mhm
522 Rf: that get close to a pupil's personality, and in math of course you talk
523 about Math, but how a person is feeling, I can rarely discuss in
524 a lesson.
525 Wf: ⌊ No time; yeah
526 Qm: So you are lacking empathy in Math? @(2)@
527 Tf: ⌊ @(.)@
528 ?f: ⌊ @(.)@
529 Rf: ⌊ No, I don't think
530 so, but but, you don't have time for these things.
531 Qm: ⌊ Okay (.) no, (of course) (.) no it is inevitably integrated and the question
532 doesn't really arise. (2)

The interviewer asks the group what would be lost, if RE was no longer offered in this school. She phrases the question twice in the conjunctive form and asks the group for their opinion. By posing the question in the conjunctive form, she is referring to something that is not a realistic prospect for this school, but is a nonetheless a conceivable scenario to her. She illustrates this be referencing debates in the "world of politics" (496). The interviewer asks the question twice. When *Qm* returns to the group – somebody had asked him to step outside in the middle of the group discussion – she asks the question a second time, thus emphasising that the question is addressed to the whole group. She uses a demonstrative pronoun to link this thought exercise to this specific school ("in this school", 498–499) and to ascertain the significance of RE in this school.

Qm, starts to give an answer immediately and thus gives an insight into his opinion. The scenario suggested by the interviewer is highly questionable to him and stands outside of reality ("hypothetical", 500). For this reason the question does not arise for him. He uses the concordat as an explanation for his opinion. The concordat gives RE its legal status. In making reference to the concordat and the fact that RE is "rooted" (501) in it, he expresses its irrevocability. RE cannot be messed with. To him this scenario is not even worth thinking about, as RE's existence is written in stone. He expresses the irrevocability of RE in a comparison. The scenario suggested by the interviewer was equivalent to no longer having school at all. This comparison is phrased in the conjunctive, which once again gives expression to how far the scenario is removed from reality and how unshakable RE is. RE has its firm place and just like without school itself reality is unimaginable without RE. *Xf* picks up *Qm*'s comparison and adds further examples, thus extending the trail of thought. While *Qm* uses school as a whole as his example, *Xf* mentions "Math" (503). She starts giving another example, but does not name it. By comparing it's presence to that of school or "Math' the permanence of RE's existence finds expression. It's existence cannot be discussed. It is non-negotiable. It is "rooted" (501).

Qm then elaborates on his opinion regarding RE. "Despite everything [RE] is an integrative part of value education" (507) to him. What exactly "despite everything" (507) is referring to is unclear in this section. It does, however become clear against the backdrop of other sections of this discourse. Both religion and RE are seen as potential sources of conflict in school. Despite the fact that RE is tarnished by this potential, its presence in school is justified, as it contributes to "value education" (507). As a subject of value education it serves the group's desire to understand this school as an "island of bliss" (185 and 208–209), where everybody lives in "peaceful coexistence" (187), characterised by tolerance. *Qm* puts strong emphasis on the possibility to decide either

for or against a subject. In doing so he is referring to ethics education. The fact that this possibility to choose "luckily" (508) exists, makes sure that value education in this school is covered. To him and *Xf*, who speaks in the generalising "us" (510), no further discussion about the existence of RE is therefore necessary ("and that's it", 508). RE has its purpose in school, namely "value education" (510). *Qm*'s and *Xf*'s statements are validated by a number of other group members (511–513). To *Um* the possible non-existence of RE would signify a "loss" (516).

While *Qm* and *Xf* speak in general terms, without going into much detail, *Rf*is more specific. To her RE stands out specifically as a subject for learning "the culture of conversation" (518). This also distinguishes it from all other subjects. By mentioning RE as a place where "you can learn the culture of conversation" (518), she gives an example for "value education" (507) and for the "passing [on] of values" (510). This is where, compared to other subjects, the special contribution of RE lies. It consists of its meta-disciplinary educational function to foster the ability of being with one others. This function is explained through its contextual and subject-specific orientation. If not exclusively so ("of course also", 520), *Rf*takes it for granted that RE addresses "issues that get close to a pupil's personality" (520–522). She illustrates its function with a concrete example. For this she uses Math lesson, where for her mathematics is undoubtedly the number one priority ("and in Math, of course you talk about math", 522–523). Personal wellbeing is "rarely" (523) talked about in Math. *Wf* reasons that this is because there is not enough time. *Rf*'s elaborations clearly show what kind of image RE has in this school. RE addresses personal issues and in doing so, it inevitably makes an essential, meta-disciplinary contribution to "peaceful coexistence", 187). Consequently it occupies a special position in school, which is different from that of all other subjects.

In the intonation of a question *Qw* comes back to the *Rf*'s lack of empathy "in Math?" (526), ("So", 526 on the sense of a summarising "therefore"). This passage also shows the kind of image RE teachers enjoy. They are characterised by their capacity for empathy. In his description *Qm*, however, states that "empathy" should not only be a quality RE teachers have, but one that teachers of all subjects should exhibit. In this context he mentions, if jokingly, *Rf*'s lack of empathy "in Math" (526). *Rf* denies a general lack of empathy on her part, and explains that the purely subject-specific focus of Math lessons is due to the lack of time "for these things" (530). *Rf* thus makes it clear that other teachers are empathetic too, but that they simply do not have the time to address issues, which deal with "peaceful coexistence" (187) and who each and every pupil is as a "person" (523). RE does have time for these issues, and in this way it differs from other subjects. *Qm* validates *Rf*'s statement and then refers back to the beginning of this section of the discourse, thus creating an arch in the conversation (500–502). He repeats the attitude expressed at the beginning, which has been elaborated an during the course of the discussion. According to him RE "is inevitably integrated and the question doesn't really arise" (531–532). Once again the attitude expressed earlier comes through and is brought to the point. RE is seen as a fixed part of school, in as far as it is responsible for meta-disciplinary matters such as "value education" (507), the "passing [on] of values" (510) and teaching a "culture of conversation" (518). Other subjects do not have time for this. Meta-disciplinary matters are delegated to RE. RE is both trusted and obliged to make an essential meta-disciplinary contribution in school and

consequently its existence is not put into question. Due to the focus on values and on the individual, which is intrinsic to the subject, RE contributes to "peaceful coexistence" (187). It thus has a stabilising role in this school that is viewed as an "island of bliss" (185 and 208–209).

'RE for all' I

Since future developments for RE had just been mentioned in the course of the discussion, the interviewer uses the opportunity to introduce a new subject. She calls this thematic continuation a "wonderful transition into the next subject." (635) She herself sees the introduction of the new subject as a natural transition, despite the fact that it is phrased in the form of an exmanent question (RE for all I, 635–675):

635 Y2: A wonderful transition into the next subject. this research project,
636 this paper, that's being written, ahm is also looking, wishes to illuminate at an alternative
637 organisational form, namely
638 RE for all, that is organised jointly by all ah religious groups that are
639 present in a school. what do you think of this concept? what could your school
640 gain from RE for all that is jointly organised by the churches and
641 religious communities?
642 Qm: Well like the KPH-model?
643 Y2: Yeah (2)
644 Qm: We partly do that. (2)
645 Vf: Yes, but I
646 Qm: ⌊ Rarely, but we do it
647 Y2: ⌊ Mhm
648 Vf: Yes, but it wouldn't be bad, if also ahm well because all the individuals
649 go to their own RE classes, they don't find anything out about other religions
650 and this way everything is, ahm everybody finds out about everybody and
651 ?f: ⌊ Hm
652 Vf: that will maybe bring more tolerance or more understanding and well, that it
653 somehow @comes together better@, well, that religions are no longer so
654 strictly segregated, but that they also somehow, yes mix with each other. well no not like that,
655 not that religions mix, but the people also get more
656 Qm: ⌊ I see ( )
657 Rf: ⌊ Yes, I think, that this
658 really is a good point, yes because
659 Wf: ⌊ More tolerant
660 Vf: Yes, tolerance
661 Rw: This is, I don't think the school is the problem, it can happen in in school,
662 this is rather a question for the religious community, but if the religious community wants
663 this from their side, and would also also take joint responsibility for it, yes;
664 Qm: Well I think, this is really a massive point of criticism, especially for leaders of the
665 Catholic ah religion, it's really perverse in my eyes, if one preaches
666 tolerance and but then doesn't allow a Catholic to attend Protestant
667 RE, visa versa it's not allowed for a Protestant to participate in
668 Catholic RE, I mean, for me this is absurd and you really have to respond
669 with criticism. (3) Sorting this out would be child's play. (3) that is to say that is precisely
670 Rf: ⌊ Well but, this acceptance
671 does not exist, well if I now
672 Qm: ⌊ I mean, the point, it's down to the religious community and not
673 Rf: ⌊ Yes
674 Qm: teaching. We do it anyway and we inverted commas don't give a damn.
675 (6)

The interviewer introduces the next subject by making reference to the study she is conducting this research for. In doing so she establishes a link between this paper and her question. Since this project deals with an "alternative organisational form" (636–637)

of RE, this subject needs to be discussed in the group. This clearly shows the exmanent content of the question. In a further step the interviewer constructs the "alternative organisational form" (636–637) in a number of ways. A more detailed definition of this organisational form is given by referring to who would participate in it ("RE for all", 638) on the one hand and by naming who would be responsible for it ("organised jointly by all ah religious groups that are present in a school", 639) on the other. She asks several questions aimed at finding out the groups' attitude towards this specific form of RE. She also wants answers to her question of what this school could "gain" (640) from this type of RE. *Qm* immediately asks the interviewer a clarifying question. He wants to know if the alternative organisational form of RE introduced by the interviewer is comparable to the KPM-model. The interviewer confirms that there is a similarity.

Qm speaks in the generalised "we" (644 and 646) and initially establishes the fact that this practice does already exist in this school. He then limits its frequency ("rarely", 646), while still emphasising that the practice does exist ("but we do it", 646). *Vf* struggles for a chance to speak, as she wants to object to something ("but", 645). Once she is given the chance to speak she voices her objection. She starts by hinting at her agreement with the organisational form introduced by the interviewer ("it wouldn't be bad", 648), which is later confirmed in her comparison of this form and RE that is segregated by religion. In her objection, which delineates a negative opposite horizon, she distances herself from religiously segregated RE ("strictly segregated", 654), as this does not allow for different religions to get to know each other ("they don't find anything out about other religions", 649). She juxtaposes the possible advantages of getting to know other religions ("everybody finds out about everybody", 650) against this. As she does so, she uses the adverb "more" (652) and the comparative "better" (643) twice. She locates the advantages in the realm of tolerance, understanding and togetherness. She repeatedly speaks out against the separation of religions ("strictly segregated", 654) and expresses her desire for togetherness. Increased togetherness does not so much effect particular religions, but people ("well no not like that, not that religions mix, but the people also get more", 654–655). This expresses a positive opposite horizon. Other members of the group also share this horizon. *Wf* picks up on another term used by *Vf* ("More tolerant", 659), which is then repeated by *Vf* ("Yes, tolerance", 660), which shows their shared attitude. The wish for "tolerance" (660), and thus for a school that is an "island of bliss" (185 and 208–209) is expressed in this section once again. RE that is divided by religion runs contrary to this perspective. The alternative organisational form of RE suggested by the interviewer, which *Qm* believes has in part already been put into practice, supports this desired perspective, because togetherness is made possible when different religions get to know each other, in as far as it is not "religions' that mix, but "people" (655) who find each other.

Once the advantages of this type of RE have been discussed, some potential difficulties are mentioned. *Rf* and *Qm* believe that putting this alternative organisation form of RE into practice will be problematic. In this context they make a distinction between this school and the religious community, which to *Qm* means the "leaders of the Catholic ah religion" (664–665). While *Rf* is talking more generally about "religious community" (662), *Qm* narrows this down to the "leaders of the Catholic ah religion" (664–665). In both cases it is possible to reconstruct a discrepancy between "religious community"

(662) or the "leaders of the Catholic ah religion" (664–665) on the one hand and school on the other. Consequently problems related to putting the alternative organisational form into practice are not school-internal ("it can happen in school", 661; "sorting this out would be child's play", 669), but are located in areas outside of the school's control. It is seen as questionable, if the religious communities would even "want" (663) it to be put into practice and if it would find any support. *Qm*'s criticism of the "leaders of the Catholic ah religion" (664–665) exemplifies incongruous action when it comes to tolerance as a negative opposite horizon. Contrary to its teachings, it prevents tolerance ("perverse in my eyes", 665). *Qm* illustrates this incongruence with an example about the conditions for participation in RE. A Catholic is not allowed to attend Protestant RE and visa versa, because the Catholic Church forbids it, despite the fact that it "preaches tolerance" (665–666). Once again *Qm* draws attention to the fact that this is not an organisational problem that could be solved by the school. The problem clearly lies with the Church ("it's down to the religious community", 672). *Qm* points out the different practices within the religious community and in this school. Again he places a gulf of difference between school and the Catholic Church. Practices in school are not guided by the "leaders of the Catholic ah religion" (664–665) ("we inverted commas don't give a damn", 674). A picture of the school can be reconstructed based on the fact that the Catholic Church was chosen as a contrast to the school. In so far as the Catholic Church inhibits tolerance while the school's practices are seen in contrast to such actions, the school sees itself as fostering tolerance. This can be embedded into the desired image of this school as an "island of bliss" (185 and 208–209), as expressed in earlier parts of the discourse.

After a six second break the interviewer continues by offering another stimulus, which is immanent in character. She focuses on "resistances" (676), which could be expected within the school if faced with this alternative organisational form of RE. She narrows the question down by asking about any possible oppositions "beyond those coming from the religious communities in this school" (677) (RE for all I, 676–710):

676 Y2: What kind of opposition would such a concept, what kind of opposition
677 would it come up against, beyond those coming from the religious communities in this school?
678 Would there be any, or? who what do you think with regards to this? (2)
679 Qm: Hardly I can't imagine any, I think.
680 Rf: Well, I can, from from the established religious communities, or can't I
681 imagine it, I can't really make a judgement now, how it would be, like if somebody
682 is a Jehovah's Witness, I don't know, I have too little insight, yes. That there would be some kind
683 of obstacles, I could: imagine that, because I don't have enough information, on how it
684 works there, yes.
685 Y2: Yes but coming from within the context of the school
686 Xf: °Yes°
687 Rf: ⌊ I don't think so
688 Qf: Well I think, how we do it, you are best placed to say, but
689 Vf: ⌊ It
690 Tf: Are there Witnesses in the school?
691 Xf: Not many
692 Rf: ⌊ Not many, but there are 2 or 3.
693 Tf: They go to ethics classes, I assume.
694 Xf: Really?
695 Rf: Yes
696 Qm: ⌊ Yes, yes exactly, I've got one in the eight form at the moment.
697 ?f: ⌊ Mhm
698 Wf: °That's a religion? I thought that is a sect.°
699 Rf: No, it is a recognised religion.

700 Sf: ⌊ Aha okay
701 Wf: But it hasn't been for long, or?
702 Sf: No
703 Rf: Well 3 years, or something like that.
704 Wf: ⌊ I must have missed something there, (.) whatever, I'm just saying.
705 ?f: ⌊ ( )
706 Xf: Well, it's recognised now, yeah.
707 Vf: ⌊ °I didn't even know that we had any in school.°
708 Qm: We need to keep an eye on the time.
709 Y2: I would be, if there is anything else
710 Qm: ⌊ Ah already, mhm, okay

Although the interviewer asked specifically about "oppositions" (676) within school, she gets very diverse answers. While *Qm* does respond to her question and states that he cannot see any, *Rf* returns to the established religious communities (680), even though she knows that her speculation are based on insufficient knowledge. She substantiates her speculation by referring to a Jehovah's Witness, whose shoes she cannot really put herself in ("I have too little insight, yes", 682; "I don't have enough information, on how it works there, yes", 683–684). She speculates nonetheless and assumes that "some kind of obstacles" (682–683) would arise from members of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Since *Rf* is now talking about religious communities, the interviewer intervenes and asks another question to bring the focus back to the "context of the school" (685). Both *Rf* and *Qm* answer this question in the negative. *Vf* starts to give an answer, but does not continue (689). Once again the juxtaposition between religious community and school can be reconstructed. They differ in their stances towards tolerance. This school practices tolerance ("how we do it", 688), but when it comes to the religious communities "some kind of obstacles" (682–683) are suspected. *Qm* then asks the two pupils *Sf* and *Vf* to contribute their opinions, as they are "best placed" (688) to respond to the question. *Tf* immediately asks a follow up question. Her question concerns Jehovah's Witnesses once again. At first she asks if there are any "Witnesses" (690), she does not specify this further, in this school. The number of "Witnesses" (690) is stated to be "Not many" (692) and as the numeric value "2 or 3" (692). This number is, however, given with the conjunction "but" (692) in the sense of "at least" or "all the same", as a precursor, which shows that they demand attention despite their small numbers. The "Witnesses" (690) Tw speculates, attend ethics education. This triggers bewilderment in the group. This bewilderment goes beyond the fact that they attend ethics education and stretches to their status as a religion, since *Wf* had understood them to be "a sect" (698). Once *Rf* has informed her that Jehovah's Witnesses are a recognised religious community, *Wf* expresses astonishment about this status again by bringing attention to the fact that it has not been long since their status was changed ("but it hasn't been long", 701). *Sf* confirms this recent status change and *Rf* says how many years it has been, but *Wf* is still bewildered. *Wf* is not the only one who shows that Jehovah's Witnesses are outside of her field of awareness ("I must have missed something there", 704), *Vf* has also never noticed their presence in this school ("I didn't even know that we had any in school.", 707). The way Jehovah's Witnesses are being discussed in this section indicates a dissociated relationship between them and the group. On the one hand there is an assumption that they will put "some kind of obstacles" (682–683) in the way when it comes to 'RE for all', on the other hand they are not even in the field of awareness of some group

members. Jehovah's Witnesses participation in ethics education and the fact their status was changed to a "recognised religion" (699) triggers as much bewilderment as the mere fact that they are present in this school.

'RE for all' II

Qm's reminder for the interviewer to keep an eye on the time initiates a ritualistic conclusion, which never quite comes into being. The interviewer herself is happy to end the discussion, but she puts the ball back into the group's court. She gives the group the chance to further contribute to the discussion. By asking an open question she gives group members the opportunity to make some final contribution ("any final words on RE in this school in general", 711) on RE in this school. She does not specify the question any further. She asks twice if the group has anything else to say. She uses narrative questions. *Rf* answers first and offers further insight into how she views RE (RE for all II, 711–772):

711 Y2: In the end any final words on RE in this school in general.
712 Does anybody have anything else to say? anything missing?
713 Rf: Yes, that religion must keep up with developments in society. I would
714 wish for that. (3)
715 Y2: ⌊ Mhm
716 Qm: And I even think following on from this, that RE in in
717 schools in general and naturally also in our school is a pioneer in this, because it is simply
718 already much more tolerant and developed than how individual religious communities
719 and above all it's got to be said the Catholic Church presents itself.
720 (5)
721 Y2: Mhm (3)
722 Wf: Well it's got to come from the church anyway I'd just say it's got to give permission
723 in inverted commas if they don't send a sign, the school can, it already does
724 what it can, I'd say, more can't be done I don't think, that's already a great thing and if it
725 doesn't come from the religions, then nothing will change, and nothing will change
726 any time soon, cause, the way I
727 Rf: ⌊ Well I think there is just a bit of fear on the part
728 Wf: ⌊ Of course
729 of the Catholic Church, for instance about allowing ethics education to become established.
730 Wf: ⌊ Certainly
731 Rf: Because they are scared that more will migrate over to ethics
732 Wf: ⌊ They don't really want to ⌊ Yeah, yeah, yaeh
733 Sf: ⌊ Yeah
734 Y2: ⌊ Mhm
735 Xf: Although with us it's not like that.
736 Rf: Course, but it's an example, of course only, I don't know, if it's
737 Wf: ⌊ Yeah, yeah, mhm
738 Sf: ⌊ Yes
739 Rf: like that across Austria. (3)
740 Y2: Well, I don't know many, but the schools, I do know, it's the same issues that show up that
741 show up in this school.
742 Rf: ⌊ Yes, exactly, yes
743 Wf: ⌊ Yes, mhm
744 Xf: ⌊ Whi-
745 Qm: Well in the beginning we did get beaten up for introducing ethics education
746 the turning point was back when XXX ((name of a bishop))
747 was in our school and really got to know the system he even gave the
748 formal address ah and since then the education authority has @strictly@ stuck
749 Rf: ⌊ Yes, but t-
750 Qm: to it and XXX ((name of a bishop)) was also here, and XXX ((name of a bishop)),
751 they were all very positive about the idea and I think
752 that's a good thing.

753 Rf: ⌊ @Now we have just got to
754 invite Ratzinger,@ @(4)@
755 Ww: ⌊ @(3)@
756 Tw: ⌊ @(3)@
757 Xf: ⌊ @(3)@
758 Qm ⌊ I don't have a problem with that. (2) but and XXX ((name of a politician))
759 was also very much in favour of that, it's got to be said, yes.
760 Rf: ⌊ @(2)@
761 Wf: ⌊ @(2)@
762 Um: XXX ((name of a bishop)) wasn't her?
763 Qm: XXX ((name of a bishop)) wasn't her, well and the
764 Rf: ⌊ XXX ((name of a bishop)), well the (.)
765 Qm: What was his name again the fat one?
766 Rf: XXX ((name of a bishop))
767 Qm: XXX ((name of a bishop)), course
768 Vf: ⌊ ºCan you put this in your pocket please?º
769 Um: ( )
770 Qm: Well you don't have to invite everyone. great
771 Vf and Sf: ⌊ ((whispering to each other))
772 Y2: Great, thank you very much for your time

Rf expresses a wish that also gets picked up on by *Qm*. She points out the need for greater progressiveness on the side of "religion" (713). She thus registers that established religious communities and "society" (713) are at different developmental stages. According to *Rf* "religion" (713) must keep up with developments in "society" (713). Hers is a normative statement ("must keep up with", 713) in order to overcome the difference she has identified. An example for a development towards greater tolerance and progress is RE both in schools in general and in this school in particular ("naturally also in our school", 717). RE in school is a pioneer when it comes to tolerance and progressiveness ("much more tolerant and developed", 718). Because of this fact it differs from the practices of religious communities, especially the Catholic Church. This illuminates the differences between RE in schools and the religious communities, especially the Catholic Church. The higher degree of tolerance is attributed to RE in schools. RE in schools, especially in this school, therefore forms part of the positive opposite horizon. This is because RE stands for tolerance and progress and does therefore fit with the groups' attitudinal framework. By way of contrast the religious communities and above all "the Catholic Church" (719) belong to the negative opposite horizon. *Wf* also contributes to the discourse, now only focusing on "church" (722). In doing so she departs from the mode of speech generally used by religions and religious communities. Any change to RE is only believed to be possible if it comes from the church. Such an initiative has to originate from within the church, as only it has the authority to make decisions ("give permission", 722). Within the given parameter the school already does its bit and does as much as it can ("it already does what it can", 723–724), which is seen as outstanding ("that's already a great thing", 724). The issue of 'RE for all' is therefore delegated to the church as it is its reasonability. As the decision-making authority lies with the church, any changes depend on it, and thus change is not expected any time in the near future. *Wf* starts to provide an explanation (726), but does not complete it. Instead the explanation comes from *Rf*. In her speculation she senses some "fear" (727) within the Catholic Church. This fear extends beyond changes to RE and encompasses "allowing ethics education to become established" (729). She reasons that this fear stems from the fact that RE is in competition with ethics education ("that more will

migrate over to ethics", 731), although according to *Xf* and *Rf*there is no indication of this in this school. *Rf* reminds the group of the scope of what is being discussed – it is not possible to assume that what is true for this school is the case in all schools across Austria. *Rf* thus resists generalisation. At the same time this school gets elevated above others in a very special way. The competitive situation with ethics education, the origin of the church's possible fear, is not an issue here. Consequently, this school is "already […] great" (724) and is viewed as a shining example. Possible concerns the Catholic Church might have with regards to ethics education cannot be confirmed in this school either. *Qm* starts to talk about the experience of having ethics education in this school. By stating that "we did get beaten up for" (745) it, he makes it clear that the Catholic Church initially took a hostile position towards ethics education. This position experienced a "turning point" (746). The visit of a bishop, him finding out more about ethics education in this school and his public speech during a school celebration, marks this turning point. This change of direction was not without consequences, in as far as the school authority changed their stance as well to come into line with the Episcopalian position. *Qm* mentions two further bishops who visited the school and were positively impressed by ethics education. By mentioning "Ratzinger" (754)[5], and suggesting the school should invite him for a visit too, which triggers laughter among the other group members, *Rf*names the highest person in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. This gives expression to the power of the Catholic Church. What form RE can take resides within it. *Qm* responds that he does not "have a problem" (758) with *Rf*'s suggestion. He then names a politician who had also been to visit the school and who felt positive about ethics education. *Qm*'s stories of politicians and bishops, one of whom represents the turning point with regards to ethics education, visiting the schools who all had positive feelings towards ethics education, shows that ethics education enjoys a high level of acceptance in this school. This acceptance does not only come from the church, but also from the political ranks. Ethics education is receiving external affirmation. The path this school took, for which it was initially "beaten up" (745) is now accepted. *Um* asks if one other particular bishop had also been to visit. *Qm* answers that he had not. One further bishop is mentioned who has also never been to the school. *Qm* puts no value on the visits of these two bishops. He distances himself from them ("you don't have to invite everyone", 770). No value is put on the approval of ethics education by some particular people within the Catholic Church. In *Qm*'s mind they do not have the authority to approve. While *Qm* is still talking *Vf*and *Sf* start whispering to each other, which initiates the ritualistic conclusion of this discussion, which *Qm* carries forward by offering an evaluation without being specific about what it is he is evaluating ("great", 770). The interviewer picks up on the ritualistic conclusion, repeats the evaluation and thanks the group members for their participation.

The fact that the group believes RE and ethic education in this school to be exemplary and the fact that the path this school has taken has gradually been accepted both by the church and politically, demonstrates the pioneering role of this school. According to this group there is a discrepancy between society and school on the one side and the Catholic Church on the other. The two sides differ in their progressiveness, which is reflected especially in how tolerant they are. In establishing this distinction, the group

5 At the time of this discussion he was the current pope.

delineates this school's outstanding status. Because of this practice it slots into the already reconstructed attitudinal framework, within which the group views this school as an "island of bliss" (185 and 208–209).

3.5 Case Collation School A

In areas relevant to this research project, the two discussion groups in *School A* exhibit different attitudinal frameworks. Despite these differences there are also noticeable similarities. Even in areas where similarities exist, collation does not intend to homogenise the attitudinal frameworks outlined during the discourse descriptions. The aim of collation is rather to focus the multi-layered nature of the attitudinal frameworks with regard to the research questions of this study, while paying heed to readability, without allowing the complexity revealed in the discussions to disappear. Case collation furthermore makes comparative analysis, which was already used during reflecting interpretation, more clearly obvious than it is in the way the discourse description is presented.

3.5.1 On the Perception and Assessment of Religion and Religious Diversity in this School

A Tendency to Harmonise

A functionalisation of religion in this school can be reconstructed in both discussion groups in *School A*. This is expressed multiple times and in different ways. The SCC-group believes religion to be a problematic area and connects it to cases of abuse. This group clearly distances itself from religion. It emphasises on several occasions the potential for conflict and polarisation it sees in religion. This potential does, however, not come to fruition in this school; it is contained and kept in check. Several steps are taken to make sure of this. These steps reach from the introduction of ethics education with its positive effect on the image of RE, all the way to the school Masses, where music rather than religion takes centre stage. Contrary to the polarising tendencies of religion, music is able to foster common experience, harmony and positive, tolerant togetherness in this school. Religious services in school also have the tendency to harmonise religious difference. According to the SCC-group, "religion without religion is acceptable'. Religion is legitimised as long as its religious dimension is blocked out, which makes it compatible with school.

Religious services in school show that religion is being increasingly blocked out. This fact is also recognised by the RET-group, but it interprets it in a different way, in so far as it presents a different attitudinal framework. Religion in school is clearly associated with RE teachers and RE lessons. In contrast to this, any kind of connection to the school is repeatedly and vehemently denied. According to the RET-group religion has to meet the school's expectations and is associated with and subordinated to these expectations. The RET-group believes that religion is not significant in this school other than in a selective and functional way, as demonstrated by religious services in school. Religious services in school in and of themselves do not have any religious

characteristics. Over the years they have rather turned into school functions. Once its religious dimension has been blocked, religion serves these functions. RE teachers are responsible for organising them, even though the school is not interested in the content. Their work is not valued. While the SCC-group perceives this to be a positive development, since religion with all its polarising and problematic potential does not take centre stage, it is a burden for the RET-group, because although religious services in school are welcome in their manifestation as school functions, there is no interest in religion. Furthermore, interventions by the RET-group with regard to school services changing into school functions were unsuccessful. The RET-group feels "caught in the middle" (466). On the one hand it wants to fulfil the professional duty it holds towards the church's school authority, on the other hand it also wishes to respond to the school's reality, as shown by the decreasing numbers of people participating in religious school services as well as increasing disinterest. Faced with the functionalisation of religion and the blocking out of its religious dimension the RET-group can only see a limited scope of action for itself.

Muslims Serve as an Opposite Horizon

It can be reconstructed from both groups that they distance themselves from Muslims and partially block them out. Some group members are unsure whether or not there are any Muslims in this school. There is some uncertainty and bewilderment around the fact that there are no Muslims in this school any more. This shows a partial block in perception and simultaneous value judgement around this issue in this school. The SCC-group repeatedly reassures itself that this school has no problem related to religion, and never has had, even back in the days when there were still Muslims in the school. This expresses the potential for conflict inherent within both religion in general and Islam in particular. This potential never came into effect. So long as Muslims do not cause any conflict and fitted in with the school's image of itself as an "island of bliss" (185 and 208–209) they were not seen as problematic in this school.

It is clear that in order to maintain the school's image as an "island of bliss" (185 and 208–209), the SCC-group has a tendency to harmonise the pupil body, while designating being-Catholic as the norm. By contrast the (Catholic) RET-group clearly distances itself from the non-Catholic pupil body in general and from Muslim pupils in particular. On the one hand they serve as a point of comparison in order to represent the Catholic pupil body, on the other hand Muslim pupils and Muslim people in general are stereotyped. As the RET-group is talking about the change of religious affiliation among the pupil body, the group comes up with stereotypical reason why there are not any Muslims in this school any more. The group stipulates that the type of education this school offers does not match what Muslims want from education, since Muslims are not interested in their children receiving a musical education. Muslims are associated with problems in the school's daily life, even though these only came to bear quite rarely. The wearing of headscarves by Muslim girls is for instance seen as a problem, even tough it never caused any conflicts in this school, because it was not religiously motivated, but merely a fashion statement on the part of the Muslim girls. A dissociated

stance towards Muslims is apparent. This dissociation finds expression in the rejection of certain religiously motivated or culturally influenced practices.

3.5.2 On the Perception in and Asessment of RE in this School

RE is Unremarkable and a Subject that is Difficult to Teach

The two groups' perceptions of what goes on in RE classes differ. They do, however, share their perception of its function. Both the RET-group and the SCC-group talk about RE in the context of ethics education, but as opposed to the SCC-group, the RET-group also sees ethics as an active rival. In the SCC-group's view RE is an insignificant, unremarkable subject. This is believed to be a good thing, as it is a sign for the absence of conflict. The group is generally unable to say anything about it. The question of RE keeps being delegated to other group members. Vagueness and uncertainty about RE can thus be surmised. Any knowledge about RE is vague and second-hand. Apart from the two student representatives in the group nobody has any direct insight into how RE is taught.

The perception of RE on the side of the RET-group is quite different. It's members see it, as well as themselves since they are connected to it, as being under pressure. Since pupils can choose between the two subjects, RE and ethics education are in competition with each other. Because of this RE has to market itself, as otherwise the number of hours assigned to RE would be under threat. Whilst, as opposed to ethics education RE stands for organisational continuity and is therefore more popular with pupils, its popularity also depends on content. There is thus a direct relationship between its popularity amongst pupils and its contextual orientation. Its popularity increases the fewer religion-specific issues it covers. This does not only put RE itself under pressure, but also the members of this group, since they want to meet the expectations "from above" (462), despite the fact that this is not "realistic" (465). Once again the RET-group is restricted in its scope of activity and "caught in the middle" (466).

Diverging what is Expected of RE

The SCC-group has particular expectations of RE. The presence of RE in this school is unquestionable and self-evident to the SCC-group, as despite religions potential to create conflict, it makes an undeniable contribution to value education. Since ethics education has been introduced in this school value education is believed to be secure. RE is thus assigned with an inter-subjective function. Due the RE's orientation, as a subject that places people at its centre, it helps pupils learn the culture of communication and contributes to a sense of togetherness in the school. In this school it consequently takes on a stabilising function and thus satisfies the school's wish to be an "island of bliss" (185 and 208–209).

The RET-group also attributes an inter-subjective function to RE. RE serves pupils, colleagues and other teaching subjects. By being a lesson where pupils' "can recover" (500) it believe to be doing what is expected of it. The RET-group is similarly critical

of these expectations from RE as it is of religious services in this school. They do not overlap with the group's own expectations, which means that there is a disparity between the group's "vision" (536) and "real life" (537). This is for instance reflected in the fact that pupils do not achieve expected learning outcomes. All in all the RET-group feels that teaching religion is very difficult, since it is faced with a situation it experiences as burdensome (e. g. lack of religious socialisation for pupils, the church authority's expectations, discrepancy between real, experienced and idealised religion).

3.5.3 On the Acceptance of RE for all Jointly Organised by the Churches and Religious Communities in this School

The Emphasis is on Communalities

Both groups generally accept the idea of RE for all jointly organised by the churches and religious communities. Both also emphasise the advantages this way of teaching RE would bring. Without giving any concrete details the SCC-group feels that this form of RE is already partially being put into practice in this school. This means that a transformation of RE as it currently stands together with ethics educations seems unnecessary to this group. Both groups share the options that they would accept this form of RE and see it in a positive light, as its objective is the fostering of what we all have in common. The current way RE is organised forms the counter-image to this communality, as it solidifies separateness. The SCC-group believes that the advantages of the proposed form of RE would be increased tolerance, understanding togetherness – like a red thread running through everything, the perspective of a school as an "island of bliss" (185 and 208–209) is clear. The RET-group in contrast brings organisational, didactic and contextual arguments in favour. These reasons are also brought from a perspective of fostering communalities. Since, RE as it is currently, with all its different organisational forms, separated according to denominations and religions, is in a marginalised position, 'RE for all' would be met with greater acceptance and less incomprehension. At the same time, this type of RE would also enrich the subject on a didactic level, because it would bring all the different faith traditions pupils come from together in the classroom. Although pupils belong to different denominations and different religions, their communalities would be in the foreground, as pupils share a common belief in God. Consequently 'RE for all' would have the potential to bring religion out of the "corner" (608) and to "unify different cultures" (617–618).

Religions, Above all the Catholic Church, Put Obstacles in the Way

Both groups name obstacles that are likely to get in the way of making this form of RE a reality. According to the SCC-group the school already exhaust the full scope of activity available to it. The group feels that everything the school does is very positive. In contrast both groups predict that the religious communities, and above all the Catholic Church will cause difficulties when it comes to establishing the proposed type of RE. The SCC-group suspects that members of the Jehovah's Witnesses will put fur-

ther obstacles in the way of making it a reality, while the RET-group distances itself from Islamic RE. The SCC-group is clear that the problems do not lie with the school, because the school is in favour of fostering tolerance. Both group see the religious communities and the Catholic Church in particular as negative examples when it comes to tolerance. The SCC-group for instance, feels that the Catholic Church is incongruent in the way it promotes tolerance and the way it practices it. Consequently, the Catholic doctrinal position is viewed to be backward. This becomes particularly clear when it comes to the introduction of ethics education in the school. By introducing ethics education the school has distinguished itself in the areas of tolerance and progress. That the Catholic Church did not keep up with this development in schools is clear from the fact that it rejected ethics education at first; a viewpoint, which only changed at a later point. The RET-group also perceives the Catholic Church as a hindrance when it comes to fostering tolerance, which means that it is lagging behind "real life" (668) and society. The church's rules are therefore viewed as restrictive. This shows for instance in the question about joint prayer, the relationship with a non-Catholic partner and in the insistence on a particular image of God. Since the church and its doctrinal positions are incompatible with "real life" (668), it remains in a marginal position.

4. Case Study School B

4.1 Religious Affiliation during the Academic Year of 2011/12

During the academic year of 2011/12 approximately 500 pupils attended this school. Roman Catholics (38.6%) were almost equal in number to Muslims (34.1%) among pupils. 16.1% of pupils were Orthodox, 2.3% Protestant, 1.1% were members of an Oriental Orthodox church, and 2.3% belonged to six further religious communities. Only 5.5% of pupils were without religious affiliation. The large proportion of Muslim and (Oriental) Orthodox pupils is striking. The numbers are considerably higher than those shown by the last census in 2001, when 7.8% of the population of Vienna were Muslims and 5.8% (Oriental) Orthodox.[1] Eight of the 12 churches and religious communities represented in this school had the right to offer RE classes. 93.6% of pupils belonged to one of these, which means that RE was a compulsory subject for them.

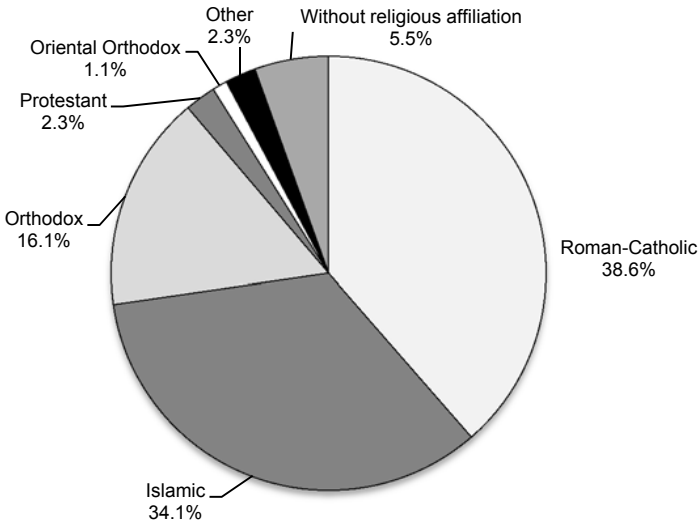

Figure 6: Religious affiliation (HASCH/HAK)

1 Comparative figures for the whole population of Vienna in 2001 are as follows: Roman Catholic: 49.2%; Muslim: 7.8%; Orthodox: 5.8%; Protestant: 4.7%, without religious affiliation: 25.6%. This school is split into two branches: HASCH and HAK. Pupils in both types of school are receiving professional training. The difference between HASCH and HAK lies in the number of years it takes to complete them and the type of qualification pupils leave with. While HASCH only comprises years 9 to 11, HAK runs from year 9 to year 13 and pupils finish with a diploma and higher education entry examination. Certain aspects of religious affiliation also differ greatly between the two branches: Roman Catholic: HASCH 23.4%, HAK 46.3%; Muslim: HASCH 53.8%, HAK 24.1%; Orthodox: HASCH 13.3%, HAK 17.4%; without religious affiliation: HASCH 3.2%, HAK 6.8%; Protestant HASCH 1.3%, HAK 2.9%; Oriental Orthodox: HASCH 1.3%, HAK 1.0%; other religious affiliations: HASCH 3.8%, HAK 1.6%.

4.2 Attendance of RE

During the academic year of 2011/12 42.2% of all pupils attended some form of RE. Attendance was similar during the previous year.[2]

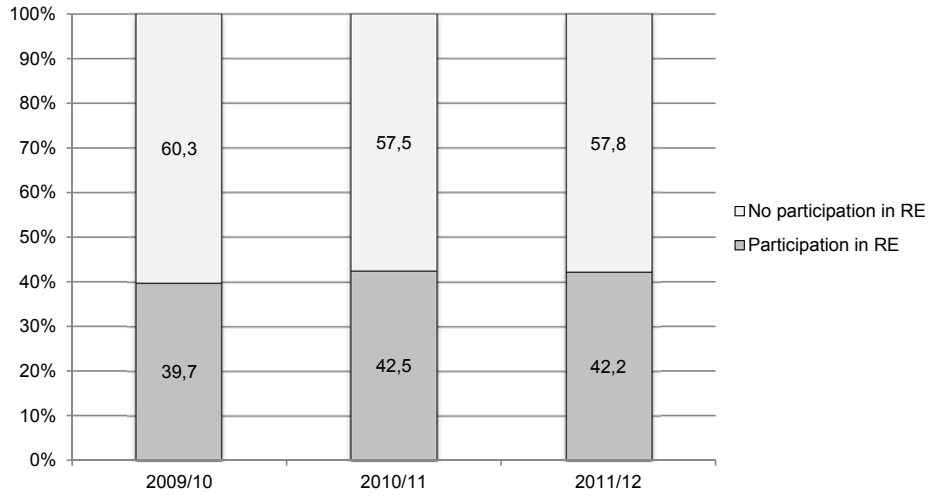

Figure 7: Attendance of RE (HASCH/HAK)

Due to documents provided the data can be differentiated further in this school too:

- During the academic year of 2011/12 RE was a compulsory subject for 93.6% of pupils. Less than half of them actually attended RE (45.1%). 61.3% of Roman Catholic and 50.6% of Muslim pupils attended RE, as did some of the Protestant and Oriental Orthodox pupils. None of the Orthodox pupils attended RE.
  Due to the number of pupils participating in it, Roman Catholic and Islamic RE are allocated several lessons per week, whilst the other two groups only get one lesson. Pupils from more than one year-group come together for Protestant RE and for RE organised by an Oriental Orthodox church. Protestant RE is taught in blocks in the afternoon in the school building itself. The Oriental Orthodox one is also taught in blocks, but on Saturdays and in a building belonging to the parish.
  The data shows some interesting facts: there is a striking correlation between whether or not RE classes take place in the school building and its attendance rates. For 17.7% of pupils RE classes did not take place inside the school building (16.0% Orthodox, 1.7% other). Most of these pupils opt out of RE.[3] The fact that despite

2 There are no significant differences between the school's two branches when it comes to the attendance rates of RE. In the academic year of 2011/12 39.9% of HASCH pupils and 43.4% of HAK pupils attended RE. In terms of RE attendance in the two branches there aren't any significant differences between the different religious communities represented in this school. Muslim pupils (HASCH: 44.7%: HAK 57.3%) and Protestant pupils (HASCH 50.0%; HAK: 22.2%) are the exception.

3 Not many pupils attend RE classes that take place outside of the school's building.

the high number of Orthodox pupils Orthodox RE is not offered on the school's premises indicates that the Orthodox school authority is unable to supply schools with sufficient numbers of RE teachers. *Im* makes reference to this during the group discussion. There is reason to surmise that in this school too, smaller churches and religious communities are coming up against their limits, when it comes to the provision of RE.

- For 6.4% of pupils in this school RE is not a compulsory subject. They do not attend RE, which would be a voluntary subject for them.

4.3 Group – RE Teachers (RET/HASCH/HAK)

4.3.1 Making Contact

The author of this study found out who was teaching RE in this school via the school's website. He then called the Roman Catholic RE teacher *Hm* and told him about his research project. *Hm* was willing to participate in the study and promised to tell his colleague, the Islamic RE teacher *Jm* about the project. The Protestant RE teacher, who did not take part in the discussion in the end, and the Oriental Orthodox RE teacher were contacted via the school's administrator. The author of this study called them both and they agreed to the project. Once these telephone calls had been made, the author informed the school's Head about his research, told her that the RE teachers had already agreed to participate, and ask her permission to conduct his research in this school. She too was very supportive. Dates were arranged via email. The first group discussion took place a month and a half after this author initially made contact. *Hm* booked a room in the school for the discussion.

4.3.2 The Setup of the Group Discussion

The author of this study arrived at the school about three quarters of an hour before the discussion was scheduled to start. Once he had signed in at the school's administrative office he wanted to go to the room that had been booked for the group discussion to set up the technical equipment, but it was occupied by pupils. The author then waited for *Hm*. While the author waited he had a brief conversation with the school's Head, who once again promised her support. Once *Im* arrived in the administrative office, he and the author sat down in the school's foyer and talked. *Im* suggested that there was no need to wait for the group discussion and that the author could ask him questions straight away. The author declined this suggestion. Once *Hm* arrived they went to a different room than originally planned (a meeting room), where the author set up his technical equipment. *Jm* arrived a little later. He wore his arm in a sling and had decided to take part in this group discussion despite the fact that he was on sick leave. The Protestant RE teacher did not turn up. She did not inform anybody of the reason for her absence.*Im* left the room twice during the group discussions to speak on the telephone. In both cased they were incoming calls, which he initially picked up in the meeting room. *Hm* and *Jm* continued the discussion while *Im* was not in the room. After the group discussion,

which lasted about 50 minutes, *Hm* had to teach a class. *Im* and *Jm* did not. While *Im* left the school soon after the discussion had ended, *Jm* stayed behind with the author while he took down the technical equipment. They left the school and walked to the tram stop together while engaging in small talk.

4.3.3 Additional Information about Discussion Participants

During the academic year of 2011/12 four people taught RE in this school (Islamic, Oriental Orthodox, Protestant, Roman Catholic).The Islamic RE teacher was approximately 30 years old. He had been working as an RE teacher for 3 years, but it was his first year at this school. He was working full-time with his teaching obligations split between two different schools. He has about the same number of hours in both schools. The Roman Catholic RE teacher had spent his entire 25 years in the job at this school. He was about 50 years old. He also teaches a second subject, works full-time and is only active in this school. The Oriental Orthodox RE teacher had been working at this school for a number of years. He teaches at 6 schools in total.

4.3.4 A Description of the Discourse

Religious Services

Once the group has dealt with the introductory question and *Im* has, in the modality of a ritualistic conclusion, encouraged the interviewer to ask more questions, the interviewer introduces a new subject and encourages narrative responses. He asks the group to tell him about a situation when the religious diversity in this school became an issue. That narrative has been encouraged becomes clear in *Jm's* reaction. He has an example ready and waiting. He briefly apologises for starting to talk so quickly and then begins to tell his story (Religious Services, 125–143):

125 Y1: please tell me about a situation when the religious diversity in this school has
126 become an issue.
127 Jm: I can think of something straight away, sorry @(.)@ it's about that,
128 Professor XXX ((name of the Catholic RE teacher)) organised with his pupils
129 ahm ahm in our ceremonial hall;, is that right
130 Hm: ⌊ In the ceremonial hall (.) yes, they are liturgies of the
131 Word, ecumenical, (.) well quite open
132 Jm: religious services? (.) ye, mhm, well quite open (.) exactly and when I met with
133 my pupils, they came to me and they said
134 Professor, why can't we do that too? and ahm my first
135 reaction was ahm we can certainly do that, that's what you want.
136 yes, well they thought that ahm that Catholic pupils and their
137 professor had a certain privilege and that we Muslims aren't allowed to do
138 the same thing, that was the feeling in the room and I corrected it
139 by saying that if they want to Muslims can most certainly also hold a religious event just for
140 themselves here. It's their right. It is in our hands,
141 that was so to speak the first point, because I came to this school
142 this year t- well I came to t:his new school school here, where I made this
143 experience with the other religious communities.

Jm immediately thinks of the religious services. As a new RE teacher at this school, he relates them to religious diversity in this school ("the first point", 141). Religious services, which his colleague *Hm* held "with his pupils" (128) and which in turn caused *Jm's* pupils to ask him questions, are the trigger for and the subject of his story. A divide among pupils in this school along denominational and religious lines can be reconstructed from the way *Jm* talks about religious services, since he juxtaposes groups of pupils from different religions and denominations against one another. He clearly localises this division to this particular school ("in our ceremonial hall", 129). He uses possessive pronouns to assign groups of pupils from different denominational backgrounds to their respective RE teachers; he assigns one group of pupils to the Roman Catholic RE teacher and another one to himself ("with his pupils", 128; "my pupils", 133). Due to this segregation, pupils and their RE teachers form distinct groups, which are clearly separate from all other confessions and religions. The denominational and religious segregation of pupils is also clearly noticeable when *Jm* checks with *Hm* that what he is saying is correct (is that right, religious services? ", 129–132), since *Hm* validates and substantiates *Jm's* statements so far. *Hm* initially defines the religious services as "liturgies of the Word" (130–131) and then as "ecumenical, (.) well quite open" (131). This indicates that pupils are not only assigned to particular groups, but that the type of religious service itself is a means for separation, because it limits who can participate to certain groups of pupils ("quite open", 131).

Alongside the restrictions on who can participate in liturgies of the Word mentioned by *Hm, Jm's* story clearly shows that pupils are divided into separate groups. *Jm's* pupils turned to him to talk about religious services. They address the subject on two levels. His pupils ask him if they too could organise a religious services. They also suspect that Catholic pupils and their RE teachers are receiving preferential treatment, as they have "certain privileges" (137). *Jm's* pupils believe that in contrast they are less privileged. *Jm* countered this suspicion by telling them that they too can hold their own religious service. *Jm* believes that this is "most certainly" (135) the case. While both religious groups have the option to organise their own religious services, meaning that in this respect there is no difference between them, a juxtaposition of the two RE groups can nonetheless be reconstructed. This option only serves to underline the division of the two groups once again, since Islamic religious services are also intended for Muslim pupils, so that they can have "a religious event just for themselves" (139–140). The Islamic RE group is both the organiser ("it is in our hands", 140) and the target audience for these religious services. It is thus once again viewed as separate and independent from the Roman Catholic RE group. At the same time there are similarities between this type of religious service and *Hm's* "quite open" (131) ecumenical liturgies of the Word, as they are equally exclusively aimed at a particular RE group.

Throughout this section *Jm* consistently talks and argues within the reconstructed attitudinal framework that all three participants have distinct horizons of experiences, which creates an incongruence of the frame of this discussion. *Jm* understands himself primarily as an Islamic RE teacher, who is responsible for his RE group. In accordance with his horizon of experience he consistently focuses on his own RE group while distinguishing it from and juxtaposing it against other RE groups.

Im too shows that pupils are divided into groups according to denomination. While he picks up on *Jm's* theme his statements are based on a different horizon of experience. It is noticeable that he first and foremost makes reference to his religious community and not to his RE group (Religious Services, 144–157):

144 Im: With us it's like this, I have 3, 4 pupils here ah, I have given permission
145 for pupils to also attend Roman Catholic RE rather than staying outside,
146 when there are religious services, they can go to, because we don't have any
147 differences above all we work together ecumenically. Ahm but because
148 the group here is so small, yes, we don't have any specific religious services ah for us
149 there is a collection point in my office in church is the collection point. That means
150 that to form the group 2,3 come from one school and 3,4 from another
151 from another school and so on they come from different schools, that's why we can't
152 ahm hold such an ecumenical religious service, but we do it twice a year
153 for all pupils together in the church a religious service, twice at and at the end
154 and when it happens here on your side I'm very happy that you take our pupils
155 too, that you take them along, they are very capable of helping to organise them.
156 and if that's desired of my community , I a:s an Orthodox am also prepared to
157 come.

As he presents the situation of RE, *Im* speaks in the name of his religious community right from the start ("With us it's like this", 144). RE has little or no connection to the school. It is likened to the parish. *Im* allocates the pupils to his own person ("I have 3, 4 pupils here", 144). The connection between him and the pupils is also illustrated by the fact that he is the one who gives his pupils permission to attend Roman Catholic RE under certain circumstances and to take part in Roman Catholic religious services. This permission also shows the connection between his denomination and the Roman Catholic Church. A distinction between the two denominations nonetheless remains. *Im* explains his reasons for granting this permission in several ways. On the one hand, he would rather allow his pupils to attend Roman Catholic RE than risk them not going to any RE classes at all ("rather than staying outside", 145). On the other hand there are no differences between his denomination and Roman Catholicism, instead there are commonalities in their ecumenical work ("we don't have any differences above all we work together ecumenically", 146–147). This shows that *Im* is bringing his argument from the position of a member of his religious community and less, as becomes apparent with *Jm*, from his role as an RE teacher. By once again stressing the number of his pupils and by defining this as "small" (148) he justifies why his RE is so detached from the school. This detachment manifests in two ways; firstly, there are no "specific religious services" (148) for his pupils in this school and secondly, RE takes place on the premises of the denomination's building. In this context *Im* describes his "office" (149) and the "church" (149) as a "collection point" (149) for pupils from different schools. Geographically RE is clearly separate from the school. Through this fact he establishes a connection between RE and the religious community, thus viewing RE primarily from the perspective of the religious community.

To him the size of his RE groups in various schools is the reason why no ecumenical religious services are being organised. His explanation is based on organisational circumstance ("that's why we can't ahm hold such an ecumenical religious service", 151–152). Religious services for his pupils are nonetheless held twice a year ("for all pupils together in the church", 153).This also shows a separation of the pupil body. The reasons for this are, however, based on a different horizon of experience than *Jm's*.

By repeatedly allowing his pupils to take part in religious services organised by *Hm, Im* expresses his close and trusting relationship with the Roman Catholic RE teacher ("I'm very happy that you take our pupils too, that you take them along", 154–155). This relationship is also the reason why *Im* is willing to celebrate ecumenical religious services, as long as "that's desired" (156). In saying this he casts himself in a passive role and places the ball in *Hm*'s court.

To him the size of his RE groups in various schools is the reason why no ecumenical religious services are being organised. His explanation is based on organisational circumstances ("that's why we can't ahm hold such an ecumenical religious service", 151–152). Religious services for his pupils are nonetheless held twice a year ("for all pupils together in the church", 153).This also shows a separation of the pupil body. The reasons for this are, however, based on a different horizon of experience than *Jm*'s. By repeatedly allowing his pupils to take part in religious services organised by *Hm, Im* expresses his close and trusting relationship with the Roman Catholic RE teacher ("I'm very happy that you take our pupilstoo, that you take them along", 154–155). This relationship is also the reason why *Im* is willing to celebrate ecumenical religious services, as long as "that's desired" (156). In saying this he casts himself in a passive role and places the ball in *Hm*'s court.

It is interesting that throughout this section *Im* repeatedly uses (possessive-)pronouns in the plural, which show his close connection to his religious community (144, 146–148, 152). Contrary to *Jm*, who speaks from the horizon of this RE group, *Im*'s statements originate from within the horizon of his religious community.

Im is open to the idea of organising an ecumenical religious service together with the Roman Catholic RE teacher *Hm*, even though this would be unusual for this school. *Hm* talks about a previous ecumenical religious serviceand in doing so shows how special this kind of religious service can be (Religious Services, 158–179):

158 Hm: We did hold an ecumenical religious service once, that was back when
159 we also had a Catholic priest with us and it was very very impressive.
160 Im: ⌊ Yes (.) ( ) yes, yes ⌊ I remember
161 Hm: You wore a really really beautiful colourful outfit and you brought a cantor
162 Im: ⌊ Yes ⌊ Dressed up @(.)@ (.) priest- priestly, right, yes.
163 Hm: with you and she sang the Our Father in Aramaic and that was,
164 Im: ⌊ Yes, yes ( )
165 Hm: I was very curious how others would react and it was very very
166 Im: ⌊ Yes, I am prepared to do it again, if you.
167 Hm: impressive. I'm happy to do it again sometime. Yes, of course it takes
168 longer planning.
169 Im: ⌊ ( ) Time (.) You know, for me, time, I am
170 the subject inspector for the Syrian-Orthodox community, the Coptic-Orthodox community,
171 for Syro-Maralkans from India, for the Armenian-Apostolic church, all my responsibility.
172 and ahm of course pastoral care too, but as the subject inspector I travel all the time and
173 all over Austria. Especially the Copts have pupils in Carinthia, in Graz, in Linz and
174 like everywhere, there are always problems and ahm if I get a call and I
175 have to be there, but most of the time it's in Vienna, in the area of Vienna, in
176 Lower Austria too. That's why time is a little limited, but nonetheless we
177 Hm: ⌊ Yes, one's got to count on
178 Im: Must have time for a religious service. That is very important. I am open to it,
179 yes?

Hm reminisces about an ecumenical religious service, which he organised together with *Im* ("We did", 158). He presents this as a one-off experience ("once", 158). The unique-

ness of this experience also comes through when*m* lists the people who took part in it. The fact that a Catholic priest, *Im* and a female cantor took part in it made this religious service special. It was also special because of *Im*'sclothes ("a really really beautiful colourful outfit", 161) and the cantor's singing ("the Our Father in Aramaic", 163). This uniqueness is emphasised several times ("very, very impressive", 159; "really really beautiful colourful outfit", 161; "very very impressive", 165–167). During this religious service *Hm* was curious "how others would react" (165). *Im* declares his willingness in principle to organise ecumenical services, but ultimately leaves the responsibility with *Hm* ("Yes, I am prepared to do it again, if you.", 166). *Hm* has to take the initiative. *Hm* is also positively inclined towards another joint religious service. At the same time this type of ecumenical religious service is also unique in the amount of time it takes to plan. *Hm* validates this (167–168). *Im* continues on the subject of time. He explains in several steps why time is a problem for him. As the subject inspector he is responsible for several denominations while he is also active in pastoral care. This is why he feels his time is "a little limited" (176). His explanations show both his horizon of experience and his role in the school. He sees himself primarily in the roles of religious school inspector and pastoral carer. This shows that his denomination is his frame of reference. In school he takes a passive role, as he believes a jointly organised religious service to be primarily *Hm*'s responsibility. Despite the fact that his duties outside of school leave him with limited time to spare he is prepared to be part of organising a joint religious service, because it is "very important" (178) to him. How highly he values religious services also shows his focus on pastoral care.

Hm now changes the discussion as he brings in another horizon of experience that is not shared by the other group members (Religious Services, 180–120):

180 Hm: Yes, well as far as the diversity of religions is concerned ahm @(on the one and)@ you
181 notice that in RE, because there are always, because because therejust a whole number of
182 different denominations, which makes it difficult to organise the timetable,
183 that's the one thing, on the other hand you also notice it in daily life, because because
184 ahm it just makes it more difficult to organise school events, because you must be considerate
185 of different people of course ahm or because there are people who think that because
186 of their faith they must not take part in certain things, or they
187 don't dare to or something, these are things, yes and and ah, and what I what we what I did
188 years ago now, well before you were here at this school with us. We once held a
189 joint prayers session, Christian and Muslim together and it was quite
190 exciting to see, what can be done together, but also where the limits are.
191 We worked that out pretty well. And then a year ago or 2 years ago there was a a a
192 Im: ⌊ ((coughs))
193 Hm: school project that that also involved religion and RE
194 and where there was also an encounter between Christianityon the one hand and
195 Islam on the other, where we got to know each other a bit better and
196 sometimes we were surprised about all the things we don't know about @each other@.
197 Jm: ⌊ Do you mean
198 the one earlier this year,Jesus and Mary?
199 Hm: ⌊ No, I didn't even mean that now, we also organised one class together
200 this year, before Christmas
201 Jm: ⌊ Mhm
202 Im: ⌊ Mhm
203 Hm: that was about Jesus andMary in both religions, but could you also noticed it there,
204 you're right.
205 Jm: ⌊ Yes
206 Im: We also have difficulties ahm getting classrooms, because,
207 because it i- it is 5 ah we have 5-day-school, no more Saturday. In the past I would have
208 held RE classes on Saturday, and pupils from other schools would come, that

209 isn't possible anymore, that's why I do it Saturday morning in the pastoral rooms,
210 so that pupils from other schools can come too. (2)

Hm associates religious diversity with organisational difficulties in this school. To him religious diversity is omnipresent ("because there are always, because because there just a whole number of different denominations", 181–182). Dealing with this diversity is a challenge. He expresses this in the comparative form ("it just makes it more difficult to plan", 184). *Hm* names organising the timetable and planning "school events" (184) as two areas, which exemplify why increased religious diversity poses difficulties in this school. By giving these two examples he makes a distinction between a narrow, educational context ("timetable", 182) and the wider context of everyday school life (school events", 184). He associates the first area with RE. In this context he "always" (181) perceives religious diversity, withits "whole number of denominations" (181–182), as a nuisance. Even aside from timetabling issues, religious diversity is a perpetually present challenge ("you also notice it in daily life", 183). The reason for this is how it is dealt with. This problematizes different religious convictions in and of themselves. *Hm* feels that in the planning of "school events" (184) it is necessary to be "considerate of different people of course" (184–185). He identifies a further difficulty when he mentions that some persons – he refers to them simply as "people" (185) – do not take part in "school events" (184) for religious reasons or due to religious restrictions. He hints at further reasons without naming them directly ("or something",187). Throughout hisargument, *Hm* talks from the horizon of the school. Religious diversity is a negative counter horizon in this school. It is seen as a nuisance.

Then *Hm* changes direction. Initially he brings an argument in which he problematises religious diversity from the school's perspective, he then switches to a narrative, which also associates religious diversity with difficulties ("where the limits are", 190). The start of a story about a joint Christian and Muslim prayer session once again shows an organisational and school-focused horizon of experience. *Hm* puts this prayer session into a temporal context in several ways. On the one hand he states that this prayer session took place "years ago now" (187) and on the other hand he says that it happened before *Jm* joined this school ("well before you were here at this school with us", 188). In saying this he stresses their different horizons of experience. The uniqueness of such a joint prayer session with different religions present, also shines through here ("once held a joint prayer session" 188–189).*Hm* describes this collaboration as "quite interesting", (189–190), but sees the "limits" (190) of what is possible together, which he feels had been "worked out pretty well" (191). In this way he positively connotes cross-religious cooperation on the face of difference. *Hm* mentions a further meeting of the two religions during a "school project" (193), and puts this project into a temporal context as well ("a year ago or two years ago", 191). His second example differs from his first one, insofar as *Hm* did not initiate this encounter ("what I what we what I did years ago now", 187–188). RE was merely "involved" (193) in this school project. A hint of his school-focused and organisational horizon of experience comesthrough once again. This encounter with Islam was once again marked by ignorance, as both sides "were sometimes […] surprised about all the things we don't know about @each other@." (196). The joint prayer session and the encounter of the two religions during

the school project were the vehicles for getting to know each other, which was able to bridge mutual ignorance. In this way, outside of the school's organisational difficulties, religious diversity can be experienced as "exciting" (190). *Hm* has similar experiences with *Im*'s religion: during the joint ecumenical religious service in school there was a sense of ignorance towards *Im*'s confession, but the encounter was nonetheless experienced as enriching (159–167). Ecumenical religious services with *Im* take a long time to plan (167–168) and religious diversity causes difficulties when it comes to organising the timetable and "school events'. Despite all these organisational problems encounters with other denominations are worthwhile for *Hm.*

*Jm*asks *Hm* if he means the project they organised together about Jesus and Mary earlier that year. *Hm* tells him that it is not. This clearly shows that the story *Hm* recounted earlier lies outside of *Jm*'s horizon of experience. Following this a third example is mentioned. This example, which shares its structure with the other two, reveals shared experience with *Jm*. In *Hm*'s mind these shared experiences are comparable to the other examples, as they are equally unique ("one class together", 199). It can also be assigned a specific time ("before Christmas", 200) and shares the ignorance about the respectively other religion, which was overcome by the encounter ("you could also notice it there, you're right", 203–204).

Without going into details about religious diversity, *Im* picks up on the organisational difficulties this school experiences. This shows once again that he comes from a different horizon of experience. He describes how difficult it is to organise RE classes for his denomination. He explains that this is because Saturday is no longer a school day, otherwise he would be teaching RE then. Because Saturday is no longer a school day, RE classes had to be moved to the "pastoral rooms" (209) of his parish, so that pupils from other schools can take part too. His argument repeatedly shows *Im*'s focus on his denomination and its close connection to the delivery of RE. It is disconnected from the school's premises, and takes place on the premises belonging to *Im*'s denomination.

RE I

Once the interviewer has passed around a graph illustrating how many pupils proportionally belong to which religion, and once the group discussion has been disrupted by a telephone call for *Im*, which he has answered in his mother tongue and then taken outside the room, *Hm* starts to describe the graph and what he thinks stands out about it (RE I, 238–277):

238 Hm: Well, what stands out for me, is ahm on the one hand the low numbers of people without
239 any religious affiliation, yes, I mean, I did know that, but in this graph it's really
240 Jm: ⌊ Mhm
241 noticeable ahm, because for a while that seemed to be the biggest threat
242 to RE, that there are so many people, who don't have any
243 faith at all anymore and I am also noticing that the third largest group with
244 Jm: ⌊ Mhm
245 Hm: 16% is Serbian Orthodox, who don't have their own RE
246 in-house, that really seems to waste a bit of a chance a chance, (.) ahm
247 Jm: ⌊ Mhm ⌊ Shame, really
248 and by now there are almost as many Muslims as there are Roman Catholic Christians
249 Jm: ⌊ Well but there are differences between

HAK and HASCH
Hm: ⌊ That's true of course, yes, well this is for the school overall, and I am sure this
Jm: ⌊ Mhm
Hm: is even more pronounced in the HASCH than in the HAK branch, although there are
HAK-classes with more Muslim than Roman Catholic pupils in them and
if you think that Islamic RE too has only been available in house for the past
6 yearsI think, and before, well it really has only been a few years, before and I
Jm: ⌊ Really, I didn't know that, mhm, mhm
Hm: mean, of course numbers were increasing, but before
both groups must have been without RE, even if they were smaller,
that's certainly regrettable.
Jm: ⌊ Mhm ⌊ Maybe I could add that,
as I said, it would be interesting to differentiate between the two school
branches for us too, because as said in the HASCH branch there are more than in the
HAK, when it comes to Islamic, Muslim pupils and also ahm yes, they are
over 34%, 34% ahm, it would also be interesting to know how many opt out,
I'd imagine for your study too, because at a guess, I currently have, I have
up to 50%opt-outs in Islamic RE. yes, and of course also for us,
well for me that's a bit of a shame, because I think, yes this hour
or two hours, that we spend in a classroom with them, ahm where pupils
simplyopt out and can't take part in this hour ahm they won't get
much out of this hour, but if they came I think
ahm they would benefit be it in terms of information or just ahm from the atmosphere
of RE and I do try to mobilise and motivate these people so to speak
to give coming to Islamic RE a try
in the next academic year, yes. I think this is a common concern for all staff,
for other teachers too. I don't know,
how you think about this.

To start with *Hm* points out the proportion of pupils who do not have any religious affiliation at all. He refers to them with the general term "people" (238) and describes their numbers as comparatively low, without mentioning in comparison to what. While *Hm* points out that he is aware of this situation, it nonetheless draws his attention ("what stands out for me", 238). *Hm* changes from the modality of a description to the modality of an argument. As part of his reasoning he mentions "people" (238) who have no religious affiliation to be the factor, which for a long time he has suspected to be "the biggest threat to RE" (241–142). Consequently pupils without any religious affiliation represent the negative counter horizon in so far as they endanger RE in schools. This also shows *Hm*'s orientation towards securing/enabling RE in an organisational sense. According to this RE is an organisationally endangered subject that can at least be rocked by the changes in the religious constellation of pupils. This possible threat has, however, never become a reality for *Hm*.

Hm continues his description of the graph in a further step. He now states that Serbian Orthodox pupils are "the third largest group" (243). The fact that this school does not offer RE for this group, constitutes a loss for *Hm* ("it really seems to waste a bit of a chance a chance", 246). This perception of a restriction is shared and validated by *Jm* (347). *Hm*'s orientation towards organisational issues within school as well as his regard for RE becomes apparent once again. *Hm* states that there is no in-house (246) RE for Serbian Orthodox pupils. In doing so he uses this school as a point of reference.

While *Hm* describes the progress of "Muslims" (248) in this school in terms of numbers and chooses to use Roman Catholic Christians as a point of comparison, in so far as "by now' there are as many Muslims as there are Catholics in this school, *Jm* wants to concretise this statement in relation to the two branches this school offers. According to him the proportion of Muslims versus Catholics varies depending on the

branch in this school.*Hm*initially validates *Jm*'s statement as he also believes there to be a larger number of "Muslims" (248) in the HASCH than in the HAK branch, but then he relativizes hisagreement, because, he claims, there are some HAK classes comprised of more Muslims than Catholics. In *Hm'*s of *Jm*'s differentiation cannot be generalised. In making this statement *Hm* shows that he sees changes in the religious affiliations of the pupil body as a phenomenon that stretches across the whole school. At the same time he does also see some differences between the two branches in this school.

Hm also mentions changes in relation to Islamic RE, which have happened rapidly. This becomes particularly clear when he twice points out the fact that Islamic RE has only been taking place in this school for a short time ("if you think that Islamic RE too has only been available in house for the past 6 years, I think, and before, well it really has only been a few years", 255–256). While *Hm* is able to talk about the development of Islamic RE in this school, *Jm*does not know how it was implemented ("Really, I didn't know that", 257). This once again illustrates the incongruence of the frame in this discourse. *Hm* speaks from a horizon of experience that *Jm* has not lived. *Hm* describes how Islamic RE was established with a focus on organisational issues. The point of reference for Islamic RE is once again the "house" (255), by which he means the school/ the school-house. *Hm* makes a connection between Muslim pupils and Serbian Orthodox pupils and expresses his regret thatnot so long ago there was no RE provision for either group. Regardless of the size of the group, "even if they were smaller" (259) than today, it is "certainly regrettable" (260) to *Hm* that back then the school did not offer any RE provision for these two groups. This regret shows that *Hm* values RE in school highly. This importance placed on RE for other denominations or religions – in a similar way to jointly organised religious school services, prayer sessions and projects – shows that religious diversity in school is perceived as enriching, even though it causes difficulties from an organisational perspective. Religious diversity does therefore not represent a negative counter horizon in and of itself. This negative counter horizon is rather the feared disappearance of RE from schools due to increasing numbers of pupils who do not have any religious affiliation at all.

Jm addresses the differences between the two branches in this school once more. He believes that higher numbers of Muslim pupils attend the HASCH rather than the HAK branch. Ensuing from the talk about pupil's religious affiliation he starts to speak on the subject of pupils who opt out of RE. He points to the study the interviewer is conducting and suspects that the opt-out numbers would be "interesting" (265) for him too. He then mentions "50%" (267) as the maximum percentage value of pupils opting out of Islamic RE. Again a connection between RE teacher and the corresponding RE is apparent, as he establishes a link between himself and Islamic RE ("I currently have, I have […] in Islamic RE", 266–267). He considerspupils opting out to be "a bit of a shame" (268). He says this collectively as well as for himself personally ("of course also for us, well for me that's a bit of a shame", 267–268).This makes it clear that *Jm* also places high value on RE. He too regrets that pupils who opt out are absent from RE. Yet, while *Hm* describes the lack of an RE provision for other religions and denominations across the whole school as "regrettable" (260), *Jm focuses* on his own Islamic RE and explains his regret with the fact that RE has something to offer pupils. In saying this he gives a didactic reason and focuses on the advantages and benefits RE offers its pupils

("benefit", 272). These benefits are multi-layered: "be it in terms of information or just ahm from the atmosphere" (272). As *Jm* believes that RE is meaningful to his pupils, his aim is to expand Islamic RE in the coming academic year. He wants to "mobilise and motivate" (274) pupils to participate in Islamic RE on a relational level. This shows his orientation towards pupils. While he feels that the expansion of Islamic RE is his task, because he believes it benefits pupils, he also deems Islamic RE to be an endeavour that the school is keen on, as he understands it to be a "common concern for all staff, for other teachers too" (275–276). As *Jm* gives an organisational explanation and locates the significance of RE clearly with pupils, he definitely shows an orientation towards pupils.

The discourse that follows further illustrates the incongruence of the frame amongst participants. *Jm* explicitly reveals that he is not familiar with *Hm*'s assessment (276–277), which evokes just such an assessment in *Hm* (RE I, 278–307):

278 Hm: Yes, well theopt-out numbers are similar with me from class to class very very
279 Jm: ⌊ Mhm
280 Hm: different and of course it hurts and you miss people ahm I've
281 by now made the experience, that there are so many factors, that I can't influence
282 that I try, yes, not to take it to heart too much, which I
283 don't really manage, I have to admit, ahm, well the alternative between going to a lesson
284 or having a free period is a very unhappy one, well back to the first question on
285 the dream for school, it's just a small dream, that's absolutely clear, that ah
286 Jm: ⌊ Mhm
287 Hm: RE is simply a compulsory subject, that belongs, it would probably have to
288 look different. It could not be quite as denominationally organised, because otherwise we will
289 keep tripping over the question of conscience issue, but, that it, but I mean, the alternative
290 I was a pupil once, I know the alternative of one, 2 lessons fewer per week
291 is tempting, no lesson can be that good, that intense, that interesting
292 and all this is amplified when it slips into the afternoon, to a lesson at the end of the day
293 and other similar things
294 Jm: ⌊ Ahm, yes, that's the reality, that many pupils just
295 have to wait for their RE lesson, because it is towards the end of the day and I am in this
296 school 3 days aweek, because I'm just not busy enough with pupils (.) ah with the numbers
297 of Muslim pupils, and that's why I am just here at particular ahm times
298 especially from noon onwards, from the lunch period onward and then it happens every now
299 and again that pu:pils have to wait ahm in their classrooms for at least an hour if not 2. In the
300 other school where I teach I have pupils who wait 3 hours
301 and that ahm robs them of their time enormously and is also not motivational for the pupils and
302 ultimately, yes. And but nonetheless they come motivated and we try
303 to enjoy the lesson and to do lots while we are together accordingly,
304 yes. But I think, self-promotion is really important here, because pupils who do come
305 ahm tell their classmates what they learn, what they learn and about
306 RE and that way numbers can only increase, I think over
307 the coming years and I also hope, that there will be more, yes.

Hm continues on the subject of opt-outs and notes a similarity in opt-outnumbers between *Jm* and himself. He substantiates this by noticing differences in opt-out rates between individual classes ("very very different", 278–280). He also picks up on the subject of regret about opt-outs. For him there is a self-evident link between opt-out rates and the regret they cause ("of course it hurts and you miss people", 280). *Hm* is aware of various, but not specifically defined "factors" (281) which lead to pupils opting out and which are not directly related to him as a person. They nonetheless cause him consternation ("that I try, yes, not to take it to heart too much, which I don't really manage", 282–283). This entanglement of opt-out numbers and personal consternation shows an emotional connection between RE and the person that is the RE teacher, which

cannot be eliminated despite various attempts of rational explanation. In a further step *Hm* names the "free period" (284) as a factor in pupils opting out of RE, so that an organisational frame of reference remains visible. He views the organisational position of RE in school as a "very unhappy one" (284). In this context he relates back to one of his statements right at the beginning of the discourse. Once he has mentioned "the dream for school" (285) he specifies that his wish is a small part of this dream ("it's just a small dream", 285). The dream expresses his focus on organisational aspects in school, in as far as it does not put the position of RE in this school into question ("that's absolutely clear", 285) but wants to see it located as one equal subject amongst many in school ("a compulsory subject, that belongs", 287). Such a wish has conceptual and organisational consequences for RE ("it could not be quite as denominationally organised", 288). In saying this he hints at a change in how RE could be organised, since RE organised by the denominations poses an obstacle to placing it in an equal position alongside all other school subjects. When *Hm* puts himself in the position of the pupils and explains that from their point of view opting out is "tempting" (291), RE's unequal standing as compared to other subjects becomes clear. For *Hm* this inequality is part of the negative counter horizon. In addition, by juxtaposing going to a lesson against having more free time due to opting out ofRE, *Hm* shows his focus on organisational questions within school. According to*Hm* RE draws the shorter straw because of this inequality, since RE cannot compete with free time. This disadvantage is not specific to RE. It would be the same for all teaching subjects if pupils couldopt out of them ("no lesson can be that good, that intense, that interesting", 291).This clearly shows that *Hm* does not mean RE in and of itself, but its organisational position within school, which is created by the possibility to opt out of the subject. The consequences are inevitable to *Hm*. The possibility to opt out, "amplifies" (292) RE's unequal organisational position in school. *Hm* reasons that this is because of how RE is positioned in the timetable, as it "slips into the afternoon, to a lesson at the end of the day and other similar things" (292–293). These consequences amplify RE's fragile organisational position in school.

Jm's focus on pupils as opposed to *Hm*'s focus on organisational aspects is illustrated during the discourse on the above-mentioned subject. *Jm* picks up the issue of the position of RE within the timetable, calls it a fact ("that is reality", 294) and describes the marginalised position of RE, but this time from the perspective of the pupils. This is initially noticeable when *Jm* uses a pronoun to create a connection between pupils and RE ("that many pupils just have to wait for their RE lesson", 294–295). *Jm* substantiates the organisationally marginalised position of RE with his own position in school, since his part-time role in this school is the reason for how RE is positioned within the timetable and for pupils having to wait for "their RE lesson", 292). *Jm* compares waiting times in this school to those at another school, where he also teaches RE. While pupils in this school wait for one to two hours the others wait longer. In contrast to *Hm*, the way *Jm* talks about the issue shows that his focus is on pupils. He explains that from the perspective of his pupils, RE's organisational position in school, "robs them of their time enormously" (301) andis "not motivational" (301). He thus marks the negative counter horizon: the organisational position of RE in school, in combination with his own position at this school, has a negative impact on his pupils. Likewise the positive opposite horizon becomes visible. RE lessons are of great significance to his pupils

("nonetheless they come motivated", 302). Together in the religious group with his pupils ("we", 302) – once again he underscores the connection between RE teachers and pupils – he tries "to enjoy the lesson and to do lots while […] are together accordingly" (303). In addition to this connection between *Jm* as the RE teacher and his pupils, *Jm* holds a sense of responsibility towards Islamic RE and towards his pupils. He sees it as his duty to expand the RE provision ("self-promotion is really important here", 304). With the help of "self-promotion" (304) an expansion of RE is inevitable in the future. ("that way numbers can only increase", 306; "and I also hope, that there will be more, yes.", 307). This once again clearly shows his focus on his RE group.

RE II

In the meantime, having finished his telephone conversation, *Im* has come back into the room. The interviewer initiates a new subject and asks about the significance of RE in this school, using a scale of 1–10 (RE II, 359–406):

359 Y1: Mhm here you have a scale of 1 to 10. 1 being not significant at all and 10
360 being extremely significant, how significant would you say is RE in your
361 school? (3)
362 Hm: The now question is, how everybody see this themselves. How important do I believe
363 my subject to be? or how important is the subject believed to be by the school?
364 Jm: ((breathes out through his nose))
365 Y1: Maybe both. (3)
366 Hm: Yes, I yeah.
367 Im: Well it's, I don't know about. With us attendance has been over 90% in the past 3 years. all
368 Y1: ⌊ Mhm
369 Im:very very few and those for practical reasons. the time isn't right for them, not
370 because, also well school but also in grammar school, it's true everywhere. Among the
371 Copts too, even more so, all without exception. Less so for the Armenians they only have one
372 Y1: ⌊ Mhm
373 Im: teacher. Well there were some church-internal problems, that played a role too.
374 with the Armenian-Apostolics and only one teacher is not enough anymore, because one
375 teacher is. He only has 3 groups and there are many pupils, who don't have a teacher yet.
376 The Syro-Malabars from India all attend RE. that's the situation.
377 Hm: Ok we are now talking about um um ahm RE at XXX ((name
378 this school)),
379 Im: ⌊ I see
380 Hm: Yes, but this is here now at XXX ((name of this school)),
381 Im: ⌊ XXX ((name of this school)), it's a small group here, I have 3 pupils
382 Hm: ⌊ And it's now not about
383 Im: ⌊ They are put together
384 with others (.) ahm at a collection point
385 Hm: We are now not differentiating ahm between denominations, but the question is only,
386 Im: ⌊ Aha
387 Hm: if somebody attends any RE classes at all or not.
388 Im: ⌊ Aha, you know more about that than I do
389 Hm: ⌊ Even people without any religious
390 affiliation for example, yes, fall under the umbrella area, does not attend. All of them
391 Im: ⌊ Yes
392: Hm: Opt-out are also part of this group and the 16% of Ortho- ahm Serbian
393 Orthodox pupils of whom hardly any attend RE, because it's not in the building
394 that's to explain the graph. Well I think, for for me
395 Im: ⌊ Yes
396 Hm: myself RE is very significant, well I
397 would give it at least a 9, one does not want to be immodest
398 Im: ⌊ Have you, have you

399 spoken to the Serbian Orthodox colleague or the priest about this?
400 Hm: No
401 Im: They should know about it, because the way I see it, they are probably understaffed
402 and don't know, they don't concern themselves, maybe they can be told,
403 HM: ⌊ Certainly
404 Im: so that they also ask their ahm pupils and so on, would be good. Ok, I will
405 do that also at the Ecumenical Council of Churches during the ahm meeting, I will
406 do that, okay.

Following the interviewer's introduction to a new topic, *Hm* asks a clarifying question. It is not clear to him how significant RE is supposed to be according to whom. In his question he offers the interviewer two options: Does he mean how significant RE is to him, which shows a connection between him and the subject ("my subject", 363), or to the school ("the subject", 363)? While the first option expresses a personal connection, which exists between him and the subject, the second shows a neutral stance. He remains open as to whom the subject might be significant for ("how important is the subject believed to be by the school? ", 363). Both options fit into *Hm*'s already reconstructed attitudinal framework. On the one hand they show *Hm*'s relatedness to the teaching subject RE, on the other hand he takes the school, and not like *Jm* the pupils, into consideration. The interviewer does, however, not specify one option, but leaves the question open.

Im enters into the discourse and points out how high the minimum participation rates are among his group ("attendance has been over 90%", 367). This high rate is further underlined by putting it into a timeframe, which shows that the rate is not a single occurrence ("in the past 3 years", 367). Once he has established the relative proportion, he starts to talk about absolute participation in RE in a further step ("all", 367). His mention of both minimum participation rates and absolute participation in RE forms a counterpart to the few non-participants. By using these contrasts *Im*establishes contrast. To *Im* participation in RE is self-evident; in contrast, not participating in RE is a rare occurrence. *Im* substantiates the latter with an organisational argument ("for practical reasons. The time isn't right for them", 369). These high, or even absolute participation rates for RE, can be observed across school types ("also well school but also grammar school", 370) and across several denominations which he supervises. *Im* names various denominations as proof. In contrast, high or absolute participation rates cannot be observed among Armenians. He explains the lower numbers of participants among this group with "some church-internal problems" (373) and a shortage of staff. At the end of describing the situation he names yet another denomination, which has absolute participation in RE. As he points out high or absolute attendance of RE on a number of levels (school type and denomination), while describing non-participation with the words "very few" (369) and for one specific denomination as "Less" (371), it becomes clear that this is the exception to the rule for *Im*. He believes this exception to be basedon organisational grounds. His focus on his own denomination, which he supervises as its inspector for schools, is apparent throughout the entire passage.

Since *Im* only speaks about participation in RE amongst members of the denomination which he supervises, *Hm* reminds him of the graph, which illustrates participation in RE at the entire school (377–378). *Hm* refers to this specific school several times (377–378 and 380). This shows his focus on school-internal organisational issues.

His focus is on this particular school and thus differs from *Im*'s orientation, which is dominated by RE for his own denomination, which he supervises as its inspector for schools. Looked at from this perspective, it is understandable that *Im* talks about high or absolute participation in RE in general terms, while *Hm* refers to this particular school, and does not identify a more general discussion about participation in RE as the issue for debate (380).

Im reacts to *Hm*'s interjection and mentions the number of pupils whom he teaches. This once again lends expression to *Im*'s focus on his own RE, independent from this particular school. Once again *Hm* refers *Im* to the graph, which illustrates participation in RE for this entire school and which does not differentiate between different denominations within it. *Im*'s focus on his own RE becomes apparent when *Hm* explains the graph to him and puts limitations on it in the above-mentioned way ("the question is only, if somebody attends any RE classes at all or not", 385–387). According to *Im, Hm* is able to talk competently about participation in RE at this school. This in essence reveals the incongruence of the frame. *Im*'s attitude is dominated by his focus on his own denomination, which he supervises as its inspector for schools, while *Hm*'s focus lies with this particular school itself. His horizon of experience is defined by the school. The fact that *Hm* thinks within the framework of this particular school, always gives consideration to this school and views RE from this angle is also clear from his further elaborations on the graph, as he ascribes opt-outs from Serbian Orthodox RE to where classes are held ("because it's not in the building", 393). *Hm*'s focus on the "house' (393), meaning the school building can be reconstructed from this, since he repeatedly uses it as his frame of reference.

Once *Hm* has explained the graph he starts to talk about the significance RE holds for him ("for for me myself'", 394–395). He now looks at RE from the perspective of what relevance it has to him. For him RE is highly significant. He states this in a minimum value ("at least a 9", 397). While *Hm* describes the significance of RE from his own perspective, *Im* asks *Hm* whether he has made contact with the Serbian Orthodox colleague, which derails *Hm* from what he was talking about. *Hm* answers *Im*'s question if he has made contact with the "Serbian Orthodox colleague or the priest" (399) to talk about RE, in the negative. *Im* consequently describes RE from a Serbian Orthodox perspective in the modality of a speculation. His description and his intent to seek out a dialogue ("I will that also at the Ecumenical Council of Churches during the ahm meeting, I will do that, okay." 404–406) show his concern about how RE is organised. His speculation that the Orthodox community has no knowledge and no concern about the situation of RE in this school and experiences a shortage of staff to boot (401–402) in combination with his aim to initiate a conversation about this during a meeting of the Ecumenical Council of Churches" (405), show *Im*'s intention to organise a RE provision for his own as well as related denominations. *Im* speaks against the background of his ecclesiastical supervisory position in schools once again. This background distinguishes him from *Hm* and his attitudinal framework, which also considers RE from an organisational perspective, but focuses on this particular school. This is also very clear when *Im* expresses the intention to seek a dialogue with the Serbian Orthodox church. This is not to happen on the level which primarily involves this school, but on a level with those

who are responsible for organising RE. ("I will do that also at the Ecumenical Council of Churches during the ahm meeting, I will do that, okay. ", 404–406).

The difference between the two attitudinal frameworks is illustrated by how *Hm* reacts to *Im*'s initiative. *Hm* considers it to be a positive idea and thanks him for it. In doing so he briefly picks up on *Im's* theme, but does not continue it. During the following section he considers the significance of RE in school from the perspective of the school (RE II, 407–429):

407 Hm: ⌊ That's a good idea,
408 yes @(.)@ thank you. ahm as as far as the significance in school is concernedit is ahm
409 traditionally a so called red school, just that this doesn't really mean much, ( ). ahm
410 from the perspective of the school's Head, that I've experienced so far, it's now the 3r Head-
411 mistress now, there has always been a certain appreciation for it. The 1st Head, I experienced
412 called me in straight away and told me, how I had to teach, to her
413 it was very important, that people know a lot, so rather very traditional. ahm
414 I think appreciation for RE does exists in principle, ahm but at the end
415 of the day it's still somewhat a little bit on the margins, well, there simply are important subjects
416 and less important subjects and then there is RE. yeah, well I would not give it more than 3 or
417 4 on the scale from this perspective ( )
418 Jm: ⌊ Mhm, well in my estimation in my private
419 opinion it's without doubt in my personal opinion a clear 10, because religion influences
420 us all across the world all of humanity and ah I think that you draw strength for life ah
421 from religion and for me in particular it is the source of strength
422 and that is why I give it the highest value ahm I am also a
423 ahm voluntary youth ahm youth group leader, so that I am by the side of young people ahm
424 also during weekends and have the privilege to also get an insight into their private lives
425 and I think, if we did live according to the religious principles and it's recommendations
426 then life together would look very different
427 namely much much more positive than now and we'd betogether ahm much much more
428 harmoniously, than ahm at the moment and that's why I think, that religion
429 does have ah very great significance in school but also in private life hm.

Hm looks at the significance of RE from the school's perspective. He talks about how RE is viewed by the school's administration on the one hand and how significant it is compared to other subjects on the other. He defines the school's administration by its party-political affiliation ("it is ahm traditionally a so called red school", 408–409), while at the same time putting this classification into perspective ("just that this doesn't really mean much", 409). This affiliation does not offer any clues as to how RE is perceived in this school. *Hm* is able to talk about his experience in this school over many years, and thus makes reference to the number of headmistesses he has worked under so far. The headmistresses have always shown a "certain appreciation" (411). *Hm* substantiates this appreciation for RE with an example. During a conversation with the first Headmistress she told *Hm* about her expectations of how he "had to teach" (412). The imparting of knowledge was central to her expectation. Although *Hm* does not agree with the first Headmistresses expectations and calls them "rather very traditional" (414), he nonetheless feels that they expressed appreciation for RE. To *Hm* any awareness of RE indicates appreciation, even if the awareness is fairly limited ("certain appreciation", 411; "ahm I think appreciation for RE exists in principle", 413–414). In a second step *Hm* describes the position of RE as compared to other teaching subjects on the curriculum. Initially he describes RE's marginalised position in an understated way ("ahm but at the end of the day it's still somewhat a little bit on the margins", 414–415). He then views this fact as massive after all, as RE is not even as important as the less important teaching subjects ("well, there simply are important subjects and less important subjects and then there

is RE.", 415–416). This clearly shows the absolutely marginalised position of RE. It cannot even be classified into categories along with the other subjects on the curriculum. Its marginalised position is also expressed in the maximum value of "3 or 4" (416–417) on the scale out of 10, which Hm attributes to RE from the perspective of the school.

While *Hm* describes how RE is viewed in this school and where its organisational limits are, *Jm* explains what religion has to offer. He thus brings an argument in favour of RE in school. He also underlines the high level of significance religion has in society ("Influences us all across the world all of humanity", 419–420) and to himself as a person ("strength for life", 420; "source of strength", 421). In his own life religion has the highest significance of all ("a clear 10", 419). He bases this evaluation on both his "personal opinion" (419) and on his experience as a "voluntary youth ahm youth group leader" (423), which offers him an insight into the "private lives" (424) of young people. Once *Jm* has explained the personal significance of religion, he also attributes it with societal pertinence. In his view religion has the potential to change life in society for the better. This shows itself in a different way of living "together" (426). He repeatedly stresses this potential, which is currently not able to come into its own ("much much more positive than now and we'd be together ahm much much more harmoniously, than ahm at the moment", 427–428). Within the context of this dual argument religion holds "very great significance" (429), both in schools and in everybody's personal life. *Jm*'s argument is thus based on religion's relevance to life, which represents the justification to teach RE in schools. Since religion is very significant to *Jm*, RE in school is important to him too.

Differences between *Hm* and *Jm* are becoming clearer. *Hm* has a different focus when it comes to RE. He looks at it from the school's perspective, understands the school administration's awareness of RE as "a certain appreciation" (411) and sees RE's limitations and its marginalised position in the context of other subjects on the curriculum. This further elucidated the incongruence of the frame. While *Hm*'s main focus of attention lies with problematic organisational aspects of RE, *Jm* places religion's relevance to life in the foreground, which gives RE "very great significance" (429) in school.

'RE for all'

The interviewer starts a new subject by asking an exmanent question. The question aims to start a discourse about RE for all, which is jointly organised by the churches and religious communities. He asks what advantages this type of RE would bring for this school. *Jm*'s clarifying question, which is focused on teaching classes, once again shows his orientation towards teaching RE (RE for all, 430–489):

430 Y1: What could your school gain from RE classes for all that is jointly organised by
431 the churches and religious communities?
432 (4)
433 Jm: What RE classes could gain?
434 Y1: The school, what the school could gain from this type of RE.
435 Jm: Mhm
436 Im: Well, ahm the first thesis I have got, these moral values,

437 we do do as I said, my group here is small, but sometimes it is like, that
438 my pupils really have these disciplinary, these moral values,
439 I must honestly say, the Heads tell me in writing and sometimes
440 face to face, they are such well-behaved pupils, they are so
441 good. many go outside to smoke during break time , they, they don't smoke. And
442 also the way they dress is different. I assume that is a good thing for the
443 school.
444 Y1: ⌊ Mhm (2)
445 Hm: Well if this is about a joint one, it would of course have to be very very
446 different. I mean you would probably first of all need to look at the
447 organisation and the syllabus et cetera and think whether it can be done, because
448 after all this is also about religious identity. the big advantage would of course be, that not
449 only some, but all pupils would be in RE and that
450 classes would not be split up. that means that they
451 would be together during RE lessons. it would also be much
452 easier to find out about different faiths. ahm, why do you believe
453 or you? or why do you notbelieve?I mean, after all we have everything here from passionate
454 believers to atheists ahm and I also think, that in principle
455 ahm the school could benefit as far as values are concerned both in the narrow and in the
456 wider sense of the word. but only if this this does not only happen during
457 RE classes. well it would need to be something, that, were religion
458 gains a different kind of significance, because everybody attends this subject and all are
459 part of it and it is both about the imparting of knowledge and about attitudes and values. well it:
460 in my opinion the lesson would be valued a lot more and consequently
461 Im: ⌊ Mhm, You know, it is an enrichment.
462 sometimes we have church law and church history church history. it is
463 helpful for some pupils, who are also learning the history, if there are
464 supplementations
465 Hm: ⌊ Many many points of contact with other teaching subjects.
466 Im: ⌊ There are very many in it
467 Hm: ⌊ That's true, well
468 Jm: ⌊ Mhm
469 Hm: Interdisciplinary is also much easier this way, if you if you
470 Im: ⌊ ( )
471 Hm: can say, yes I have done this with the whole class and not just with 5 or
472 10 people, well, yes that's true, yes
473 Jm: ⌊ Well, I can only talk about my teaching experience ahm yes
474 integration is after allalso an issue that is often discussed in politics but
475 also in public life everywhere and I try to address such ahm topical issues like integration
476 with my pupils too, how to deal with social ah cases,
477 so that they learn for themselves from these ahm life stories or these
478 practical examples, yes. if for example we look at
479 reality, at the world of work, yes, I say to my pupils, they will have a very difficult time in the
480 jobm- in the job market especially as somebody as a person with
481 mi- as young people with a migration background you must accordingly also be able to show
482 ahm differently qualifying competences, ahm demonstrate competences,
483 so that they are able to gain a foothold in life and you just can't
484 keep your eyes closed to this reality, you have to be
485 prepared and it's best to do that with examples
486 from real life, yes, by bringing in newspaper articles every now and again and well discussing
487 them and the issues they bring up with the young people. the
488 the question is, does this have anything to do with religion. In my opinion it does, yes, because
489 it influences all of life, this person.

While *Jm*'s clarifying question focuses on RE classes, the interviewer asks once again what advantage RE organised in this way could have for the school. Once *Jm* has asked his clarifying question *Im* reminds the group of what he has already said. In this context he picks up on the "moral values" (436) practiced by his RE group, which he believes to be in contrast to the mainstream. By referring to the size of his group, which he calls "small" (437) and nonetheless attributing it with "sometimes" (437) practiced morality ("these disciplinary, these moral values", 438), he singles his group out as special. This singularisation further occurs when he sees this practiced moralityalso confirmed from

the outside, as the school's administration compliment him on the conduct of his pupils ("they are such well-behaved pupils, they are so good", 440–441). He substantiates this by naming the fact they do not smoke and how they dress as examples ("they, they don't smoke. And also the way they dress is different.", 441–442). *Im* feels that his pupils' conduct has a positive effect on the school as a whole. This reveals his attitudinal framework one again. *Im'*s horizon of experience is dominated by his denomination. The whole school can benefit from his RE group's practiced morality. Despite its "small" (437) size, his group thus enriches the school.

The incongruence of the frame, which has been noticeable throughout the discourse, also comes through in this section. *Hm* mostly talks in the conjunctive and his style of argument is conditional. He refers to joint RE as "of course […] very very different" (445–446), which underlines its contrast to the existing model of RE. *Hm* points out that changes would have to be made to how RE is organised and that it would be necessary to grapple with changes not only to the organisation but also the content; this would be necessary because of RE's primary goal ("because after all this is also about religious identity", 447–448). This and a change to its contextual content are where the difficulties of this kind of RE lie for him. *Hm* consistently remains on the level of how RE is organised. In a first step he addresses the possible improvements this type of RE could bring. The number of people attending RE, changes how significant *Hm* feels it is. He emphasises complete attendance of the whole class and not splitting it up for RE a number of times. He estimates both to be positive. *Hm* can also see an advantage on a contextual level. This shows his understanding of what RE is. To him the purpose of RE is for pupils to examine faith. He foregroundsboth the information RE can convey ("find out about different faith", 452) and pupils' discourse with each other's different faiths. According to *Hm*, RE, which puts pupils' different religious affiliations and the rationale behind them at its centre, would make teaching RE easier, as all religious beliefs, "from passionate believers to atheists, would come together" (453–454). *Hm* thus picks up on the issue of values, which *Im* had once again brought into the discourse. He does, however link it to his own orientation and interlocks it in the modality of a condition. The contextual orientation of RE is not limited to the issue of values, although the school would benefit from that. According to him the issue of values affects the whole school, including but "not only" (456) RE. *Hm* paints an even clearer picture when he talks about how people who attend RE would change. When "everybody attends this subject and all are part of it" (458–459), the "significance" (458) of RE also changes, because the subject would be "valued a lot more" (460). "Imparting of knowledge" (459) as well as "attitudes and values" (459) are part of this model of RE, but that's not all there is to it.

Im also addresses the relationship between RE and other teaching subjects. As he says that joint RE would be "valued a lot more" (460) *Hm* expresses that he feels the current organisational model of RE ranks below other teaching subjects in terms of significance. A different attitude towards this relationship can be observed in *Im*'s statements. This becomes apparent when he refers to theological disciplines of church law and to church history. *Im* make references between these theological subjects and RE. As these references can be found within RE, there is a reciprocal relationship between RE and other subjects.History is a "helpful subject to some pupils" (463) as some of the

material it covers either overlaps with or compliments RE ("supplementations", 463). *Hm* and *Im* share the view that RE shares certain commonalities with other subjects. They do, however, estimate its significance very differently. According to *Im* other teaching subjects and RE are equal, while *Hm* thinks that RE is subordinate to other subjects. In *Hm*'s view a change of the organisational format to 'RE for all', would positively affect the subject's significance in school. A change to the organisational format would also be necessary in order to cooperate with other subjects. Once again *Hm* brings the argument of participant numbers: increased numbers would improve RE's status amongst other subjects on the curriculum. In *Hm*'s mind, how equal RE can be depends on the number of pupils who participate in it. This is because it is then "much easier" (469) to make cooperation with other subjects possible. RE would be lifted out of its current marginalised position amongst other subjects on the curriculum ("yes I have done this with the whole class and not just with 5 or 10 people", 471–472).

Jm describes his RE teaching. He cannot comment on any cooperation with other teaching subjects ("Well, I can only talk about my teaching experience", 473). In saying this he does pick up on the issue of cooperation but does not continue with it. He describes his lessons through the necessity to address the issue of integration. Integration is a very important current issue both in politics and in public debate and thus needs to be addressed in RE. He sees a connection between integration and cases of hardship ("social ah cases", 476). The way he deals with this subject is influenced by his focus on conveying issues in his RE classes that are relevant and practical to his pupils' lives. RE is thus significant to the lives of his pupils. By discussing examples from these subject areas he wants to help his pupils to get on in their own lives ("they learn for themselves", 477). Aside from the fact that integration is a very important issue in political and public debate, *Jm* gives another reason why he feels it is important to discuss it. Addressing this issue during RE classes makes it possible to talk about the comparatively difficult position people with a background of migration are faced with in the job market. As young people with a background of migration, his pupils are faced with many difficult challenges ("in the job market especially as somebody as a person with mi- as young people with a migration background", 480–481). His pupils have to recognise this situation, accept it and get the qualifications they need. An excellent education is the proper way to confront "this reality" (484). According to *Jm* it is the task of RE to prepare young people for this difficult situation. He believes that this kind of preparation has the best chance for success if "examples from real life" (485–486) are brought and discussed. He asks the rhetorical question if there is room for this kind of issue-baseddebate in RE. He himself does not doubt the answer as to him religion "influences all of life' (489).

Im interjects again. His already reconstructed orientation comes through once again and gets differentiated further, not least through his view of moral-religious values positions (RE for all, 490–541):

490 Im: But there are also some things, where we stand against the laws
491 homosexuality or euthanasia for example in other counties in western countries.
492 pupils hear about this, I am talking about our understanding of faith, about
493 our pupils, yes, I am against these laws, homosexuality does not exist with us. marriage
494 is between a man and a woman. this is the divine heavenly order. everything else is
495 null and void for us, and pupils accept that, but social justice,

Christian justice, Christian social teaching, that is a wonderful thing and that
is what we teach. we are not against the laws and so on, no. but in these
respects I must honestly say, we are against them. our teachings do not agree
with the state, but if somebody does something according to the law. a man marries a man,
we will not exclude him, we will not banish him, we follow the law,
but we teach our law of course. we want to educate pupils
differently. I must say that quite openly. (2)
Hm: that will of course be even more difficult in an RE provision that is jointly
organised by all religious communities.
Im: Yes
Hm: Yes, that, that, would mean, everybody would have to be really well informed, well or
you do it together, and one day this teacher goes into the class another day that teacher
Im: ⌊ Yes
Hm: in order to show the different points of view, that would of course also be
exciting, hm.
Jm: ⌊ I think to present RE that's completely joined up
would be somewhat utopian, yes. You could every once in a while swap professors,
so that professor XXX ((name of the Catholic RE teacher)) comes into my
class to present a particular issue, a Christian issue in front of my class
and that I am somehow ahm a guest with you, but totally joint RE is
in my opinion somehow almost
impossible.
Im: ⌊ It's impossible, I think so too, yes. ah above all above all with Islam, it's not ( )
but you know, they have different teachings. With Christians, with the Catholics, with
with the Orthodox we certainly could. I don't see any differences, small
differences, that the man in the street does not want to hear, that don't interest him. but
with Islam or with there are others ahm like Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and so on
with them we cannot work. we have our basic teachings, the divinity of Christ. anybody
who does not accept that I cannot do RE with, it's impossible. (3)
Y1: Do you have any questions for me before we finish? (3) is there anything else
you want to know? (2)
Hm: Will there be an outcome. the outcome would interest us very much.
Y1: ⌊ Yes ⌊ Yes ( ) yes
Im: ⌊ I think that, we are happy,
that in the state of Austria we have the possibility, that we still have t:his right,
hopefully this will not be changed by some other @law@ or even abolished.
there is after all talk about another teaching subject, what do you call it ethical and
Hm: ⌊ Yes, yes
Im: so on. we are against it. religion is religion. eligion is the life of every
person. not just now, but already at the beginning, from the earliest societies onward there was
religion. that's why it has to remain. religion is in history, in social life, in ethics
it's in so many things,
Y1: ⌊ Mhm
Im: It is the reason for life. (3)
Jm: Great, I can only agree.
Y1: Many thanks, I believe, you have to return to your classes.

Im's focus on his religion and its teachings becomes apparent. That he identifies with it is clear from his use of the reflexive pronoun "us" and "our" (492–493 and 495). For him religion and its teachings stand in clear contrast to western society ("in western counties", 491) and its laws. There is an abyss between them; they are clearly separate. *Im* follows religious moral principles. He roots the difference between religious moral principles and western society in the laws of "western countries" (491). In this context he mentions "homosexuality or euthanasia" (491) as proof. *Im*'s focus on religious moral principles also dominates his RE classes, where he clearly represents them. He does not believe that his pupils reject these moral principles. With regard to homosexuality, *Im* explains how he differs from western laws, based on theology ("Marriage is between a man and a woman. This is the divine heavenly order. Everything else is null and void for us, and pupils accept that", 493–495). The fact that *Im*'s statements are influenced by his focus on the moral principles of his religious tradition, is also made

clear by what he thinks should be taught in RE. He values "Christian social teaching" (496) highly. *Im* emphasises that he is not, in principle, against the laws of the land, but when it comes to moral principles he opposes them ("but in these respects I must honestly say, we are against them. our teachings do not agree with the state", 497–499). It can be surmised that *Im* is fundamentally guided by rules and regulations, although the moral principles of his religion take precedence over the laws of the land. If somebody acts in accordance with the laws of the land but violates religious moral principles, there are no radical consequences within his religion ("we will not exclude him, we will not banish him, we follow the law", 499–500). His preference is, however also noticeable through his work in schools, as he conducts education based on religious moral principles as opposed to the prevalent laws ("but we teach our law of course. We want to educate pupils differently.", 501–502).

*Hm*does not share *Im*'s attitudinal framework. This becomes clear when he points out the difficulties of delivering RE together. In doing this *Hm* shows his focus on organisational issues within the school (503–510). He explains the difficulty he sees in establishing a joint RE provision from this perspective. *Hm* names some possible solutions of how joint RE could work from the perspective of the teachers. His argument concerns teachers. Extensive knowledge of other religions and teachers teaching either together or alternatingly are two of his suggestions.

Once *Jm* starts to speak his attitudinal framework comes into the foreground once again. Without giving any reason, he calls joint RE unfeasible. The fact that in his opinion this type of RE has no chance to ever be realised is made clear when he calls such an endeavour "somewhat utopian" (512). By using a possessive pronoun once again in order to assign particular classes to particular RE teachers ("my class", 514), he shows that he supports segregated RE provision. *Jm*'s differentiations make joint RE impossible. He does not exclude the possibility for occasional teacher swaps. *Jm* believes such an exchange of teachers to be possible under certain circumstances. It can happen every now and again and would be thematically led by the other RE teacher ("comes into my class to present a particular issue, a Christian issue in front of my class", 513–514). In each case the other RE teacher is cast in the role of expert and is thus temporarily present in the others' RE class ("a guest", 515).

Im too believes joint RE to be "Impossible" (518) and substantially agrees with *Jm*. His position is, however, supported by a different attitudinal framework. According to *Im* shared religious beliefs are essential for joint RE. As his attitude was earlier informed by the moral principles of his religion, it is now guided by the theological-contextual dimension. Both arguments share the focus on his religion. Because of this focus, joint RE is impossible for him, "above all with Islam", (518). Whereas there is no unbridgeable distance between the Catholic and the Orthodox denomination due to their largely shared religious beliefs; differences in religious belief are minimal. In contrast he points to the differences between the religious teachings of his own religion and Islam and other denominations. The fundamental condition for a joint RE provision is religious doctrine – *Im* defines this as "the divinity of Christ' (523), which is not central to the religious denominations he names ("but with Islam or with there are others ahm like Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and so on with them we cannot work.", 521–513).

As time has run out (541) the interviewer ends the discussion with a ritualistic conclusion. He offers the group a final chance to ask him any questions. At the same time he indicates that for him the group discussion has come to an end ("before we finish", 525). *Hm* thinks ahead to when this study will be finished, and expresses an interest in the outcomes on behalf of the whole group ("would interest us very much", 527). The interviewer comments in the affirmative.

Im starts to speak again. His remarks once again show his focus on rules and regulations. This time he positively underlines the legal scope that is given to denominational RE in Austria, which he questions ("hopefully this will not be changed by some other @law@ or even abolished", 531). In this context *Im* feels that RE is being threatened by ethics education. He distances himself from this subject. He explains his distanced stance in a generalised way, on the one hand with the nature of religion ("religion is religion", 534) and on the other hand with an anthropological argument and an argument based on the history of mankind. His explanation of religion also shows his focus on religious moral principles ("Religion is in history, in social life, in ethics it's in so many things", 336–337). A ritualistic conclusion by *Jm* follows as he agrees ("I can only agree", 540). The interviewer finishes with a ritualistic conclusion. He reminds the group members that they have to go back to their classes.

4.4 Group – School Community Commitee (SCC/HASCH/HAK)

4.4.1 Making Contact

The SCC was contacted via the school leadership. Following his telephone conversation with *Hm* the author of this study called the headmistress, told her about this research project and asked her to take part. The Headmistresspromised her support both during the first telephone conversation with the author and when they spoke face to face immediately before the group discussion with the RE teachers of this school. She then informed the SCC. One and a halfweeks after the group discussion with the RE teachers of this school, the school's secretary called the author to tell him the date when the SCC could participate in a group discussion immediately followingan SCC meeting. The group discussion took place three days after this phone call.

4.4.2 The Setup of the Group Discussion

The author arrived at the school in the late afternoon at the time that had been agreed. He took a seat outside the room where the SCC meeting was taking place, and where the group discussion would be held afterwards. While the author of this study was waiting for the group discussion and was unpacking his technical equipment, he could hear voices and laughter coming from the SCC meeting. He also chatted to a caretaker for about half an hour. The SCC meeting overran, meaning that the group discussion started about one and a half hours later than planned. After the SCC meeting four people left the room. They did not take part in the group discussion. The Headmistressdid not

participate in the group discussion either, although she was present for almost its entire duration.

Once the author had shared some information about the research project and once the teacher representative *Nm* had asked who had commissioned the study, the group discussion began.

After the discussion – by then it was evening – members of the SCC asked the author questions about his project and how it was progressing. After that they left the room. Once the author had finished packing up all his equipment the Headmistressaccompanied him to the school gate and said goodbye.

4.4.3 Additional Information about Discussion Participants

Out of the 10 members of the SCC 5 agreed to take part in the discussion: two parents, one pupil and two teachers. The Headmistress*(Pf)* was present during the discussion, but did not contribute. Both parents (*Mf* and *Of*) were about 45 years old and had been members of the SCC for one year. Both teachers *Kf*, in her mid 50s and *Nm*, in his late 30s were employed full time with some overtime. They only teach in this one school. Both had been members of the SCC for one year, had been working in this school for about 15 years and teach mathematics and physics and business studies and business information systems respectively. The 18-year-old pupil (*Lm*) was attending the 12th form and had been a member of the SCC for one year.

No reasons were given as towhy the other members of the SCC did not take part in the group discussion, and nobody asked about this either. The principle of voluntary participation in this study was strictly adhered to.

4.4.4 A Description of the Discourse

A Subject of Denomination and Conviction

Once the introductory question has been dealt with the interviewer introduces a new subject. He asks the group todescribe a particular situation where religionhas become an issue in this school. It is an open question and has a narrative character. Once *Of* has asked a clarifying question and *Kf* has answered in the affirmative, *Mf* starts to describe the situation of RE from the point of view of her daughter. Religion is immediately related back to RE (A Subject of Denomination and Conviction, 295–340):

295 Y1: Ahm, please tellme about a particular situation when religion became an issue in your
296 school.
297 Of: In this school?
298 Kf: Mhm
299 Mf: I can't really say anything about this. (2) @we are Protestants@ and my daughter does not
300 attend RE classes, because it happens at impossible hours and because she much prefers to
301 do @all her free time stuff@, because she @has so much on@ that we already find it difficult
302 to find time for anything.
303 Y1: Mhm
304 Mf: I think she went to religion classes in the first form.
305 Lm: ⌊ °Religion?°
306 Mf: That too,

Lm: ºAn issue in schoolº
Of: Yes, but that's exactly it, well, that was the issue for us. I don't want to go to
RE anymore, because it's an extra hour, where like the others I can
either have a free period or go home an hour earlier, or come to school an hour
later. That was our issue with religion. and I am personally of the opinion,
?m: ⌊ Yes
Of: from a certain age onwards the child has to decide for themselves, I can
nudge them a bit, yes, ahm, well, when my children had their confirmations, or now that
my youngest is having her confirmation, it wasn't an issue at all; yes, that they don't
attend RE and after confirmation XXX ((male first name)) said
hey mum, we should
?f: ⌊ ( )
Of: talk about it now, XXX (female first name)) also did it like that; that she has
an extra hour gained and I said, you know my opinion, in my opinion, it is
Y1: ⌊ Mhm
Of: not an hour gained, you could just as well go to RE,
but I will certainly not force you, to go, well that would our issue with religion;
and at ours, but in our household we don't go to church every weekend
but on the high holidays, or now when the little sister, little. has her confirmation
then we have family Sundays, when we all go to church. Yes, well, but I
would never force him, to continue going. Well there are some
schools, ah; like where my youngest is going, where ethics education is compulsory
that would of course be, yes; the alternative, if you don't attend RE you must
attend ethics, although I don't know; if that's the solution, here in this school it's not offered,
because XXX ((male first name)) does not attend ethics; you can just
Y1: ⌊ Mhm
Of: opt out of religion, and then really have a free period, and that really was the
issue of religion in this school for us; yes,
Mf: Well my daughter still went in the first year; because the RE teacher was so lovely,
and really askedher personally, to give it one more
go; yeah, but, yes; I don't want to force her to do anything either, and ahm when
you are a Protestant, it's well usually like you have1, 2 hours in-between, and
then you have RE really late, or something and how do I put this, you have to make a
decision, yeah, what is more important to me? @(.)@

Mf feels excluded from this part of the discussion ("I can't really say anything about this", 299). She gives two reasons for this. She mentions that she is a Protestant ("@ we are Protestants", 299) and talks about her daughter who does not attend RE for time reasons ("already find it difficult to find time for anything", 301–302). To her daughter RE is competing with her free time activities. The choice is made according to personal preference, consequently *Mf*'s daughter "much prefers" (300) to pursueher free time activities, than to attend RE. RE is an unattractive option and is left standing, because it takes place at "impossible hours" (300). Participation in RE is freely chosen and down to personal preference. *Mf*'s daughter's free time activities are more important in comparison.

While *Mf* and *Lm* then become very vague with regards to RE (304–307), *Of* identifies with *Mf*'s statement ("that's exactly it", 308). She recognises a shared horizon of experience and joins the discourse with a narrative. In direct speech, she takes on the role of one of her children and talks from their perspective in the first person. *Of*'s narrative also asks the question of personal preference when it comes to RE ("I don't want to […] anymore", 308–309). Her son rejects RE, because he gains time that way and because this "extra hour" (309) is useful in many ways. *Of*'s own view differs from that of her children. She compares it as equally valid ("and", 311) with the view of the child. This shows the clear position she holds towards RE, without wanting to force it upon her children. From a certain age onwards the child's freedom to choose is of primary importance. Whether a child attends RE or not depends on the child's personal

preference. There is no room for force. In this context she mentions confirmation as a particularly relevant and important time for her children in general and at the moment her youngest daughter in particular. There is no question at all ("it wasn't an issue at all", 317–319) that children attend RE while they are preparing for their confirmation, but once *Of*'s older son had completed his confirmation he did address the subject and questioned it ("we should talk about it now", 317–319).Confirmation is the turning point.

The element of time is brought into play once again. In *Of*'s opinion RE is not very attractive as you gain time if you opt out of it, although she herself does not condone this attitude. Instead of forcing her child to attend RE – which is the negative counter horizon – she gently suggests it ("you could just as well go to RE", 322). By distancing herself from the idea of forcing her children to attend RE ("but I will certainly not force them", 323), she takes their self-determination seriously in this matter. She leaves the decision whether or not to attend RE to them. It also shows her understanding of RE, which she shares with *Mf* and *Lm*. Attendance of RE is down to personal preference, it has to be chosen freely and can therefore not be forced upon anybody. "From a certain age" (313) a child is free to make up their own mind. *Of* then switches from talking about her children's attendance of RE, to a description of what form church attendance takes in her family ("our household", 324). During this description, she uses the conjunction "but" (324–325) twice. This shows clearly that the family does not go to church on a weekly basis. They do however all go together on special occasions, such as for biographically relevant important moments ("when we all go to church", 326). RE is different from this family tradition of self-evident and unquestioned church attendance by the whole family. *Of* "would never force" her son "to continue going" (327). This once again shows her opposition to forced participation in RE. *Of* takes a further step and addresses ethics education. She knows of schools where RE is compulsory rather than non-binding. In order to demonstrate this with a specific example, she names her daughter's school, where ethics was introduced and made "compulsory" (328) as an alternative to RE ("if you don't attend RE you must attend ethics", 329–330). It is possible to compare the RE provisions of the two different schools her children attend. In her son's school attendance of RE is characterised by its freely chosen and non-binding nature as well as by its competitive status with free time and is thus dependant on personal preference. In her daughter's school the situation RE finds itself in is characterised by the compulsory need to attend either RE or ethics education. *Of* feels somewhere between unsure and sceptical towards this model ("I don't know; if that's the solution", 330), because it means that the school exercises force in the area of RE, which would be completely out of the question for her. The introduction of ethics education lends RE a compulsory character. At the same time she views the situation in this school, her son's school, as problematic. She mentions the possibility to opt out again and states that this can be made use of without any obstacles ("just", 331), which then "really" brings about "a free period" (333).

Mf starts to talk about her daughter again, who "still" (335) attended RE during her first year at this school. Participation in RE is considered if it is felt to be personally relevant – she too does not believe the use of force to be any kind of solution. Such relevance can for instance come about through the character ("was so lovely", 335) and

the commitment of the RE teacher, who asked pupils "personally" (336) to come and participate in RE. RE has acquired meaning through (the relationship to) the RE teacher. Nonetheless the RE teacher and her commitment were not enough of a reason to keep attending RE.

During the explanation that follows *Mf*mentions once again that she is Protestant ("When you are a Protestant", 337–338). This leads to RE lessons under particular organisational circumstances, meaning that it gets slotted into the timetable "really late, or something", (339). Such circumstances make attending RE an unattractive proposition and lead pupils to weigh up their preferences ("you have to make a decision, yeah, what is more important to me? @(.)@", 339–340) and RE draws the shorter straw.

The competition between "free time" (310) and RE, as well as its status as a subject of denomination and conviction, already become apparent during this section. As an organisationally fragile subject within school it draws the shorter straw compared to "free time" (310). Whether it feels personally relevant to them or not is an important factor in whether people attend (confirmation, personal relationship to the RE teacher). At the same time any form of compulsion is rejected.

Up to this point hardly anybody had spoken apart from the two parent representatives. *Lm* now joins the discussion. It can be reconstructed that he too sees RE as a subject of denomination and conviction (A Subject of Denomination and Conviction, 341–366):

341 Lm: Well I also think that the fact that you can opt out is quite problematic, well my
342 gut tells me that there are certain other subjects too, where pupils,
343 would be prepared to opt out of lessons, if they could (.) ahm
344 Kf: ⌊ @(.)@ For sure @(.)@
345 Lm: yes, yes it's like that, I know it I know it from my own class, it, everybody, who
346 Of: ⌊ Of course
347 Mf: ⌊ Yes you can't really dispute that,
348 Lm: opted out, apart from one of my classmates, have really said, that they are
349 opting out, because they just prefer to spend an extra hour in bed. Ahm one
350 Mf: ⌊ Yes
351 Lm: classmate of mine actually said, he just can't handle the attitude of
352 of the church anymore, he is also leaving the church and that is why he no longer
353 comes to RE lessons, to that I say, I accept that, that is like, yes, yes, I have to admit
354 I am pretty rooted in the church and that is also why I attend RE.
355 Mf: ⌊ That's food for thought; yes, if you really belong to a
356 religious affiliation; regardless of which one; yes, then you should really do that; that
357 is true; yes,
358 Lm: Well, I think so, and that's also the reason why I go to RE lessons, because I
359 Mf: ⌊ @But@ yes, really should do it
360 Lm: think; on the one hand; I am part of the church ahm and I am more or less
361 strongly rooted in it, why wouldn't I attend RE? I would really have a problem
362 if RE was structured in such a way, that it, that I really
363 just can't deal with it and if it asked things of me; that I simply
364 can't offer or don't want to offer for personal reasons; then I would
365 opt out too. but to simply say, I don't need religion and at the same time I'm still
366 part of the church; yes, I don't know.

Lm agrees with everything that has been said so far and views the possibility to opt out as "quite problematic" (341). His statement shows that this problem does not lie with the subject in and of itself, but with its organisational framework that makes opt-outs possible. If it was possible to opt out of other subjects as well, pupils would do it. This view is shared by other members of the group and gets validated with the words "For

sure" (344) and "Of course" (346). *Lm* is absolutely certain of what he just said and knows exactly why others, who opt out of RE, do so. All pupils in his class who have opted out, bar one, prefer an extra free hour to RE, "because they just prefer to spend an extra hour in bed" (349). The possibility to opt out bears the consequence that RE is in competition with free time and free time largely wins out. He names one pupil in his class as an exception. He has not opted out for this very common reason. He has a different motive, which in *Lm*'s eyes is valid ("I accept that, that is like, yes, yes", 353). This pupil's motive is his rejection of church doctrine ("the attitude of the church", 351–352), which also has the consequence that he no longer wants to be a member of the church either. When there is incongruence between church doctrine and personal conviction, opting out of RE is legitimate. This particular motive for opting out differs greatly from the reason why, according to *Lm*, most other pupils who do not attend RE have opted out. They do not reject the subject or the church as such, but prefer to have more free time. Consequently, there is a connection between belonging to a church and attending RE, and rejecting the church and opting out of RE. A deep connection to the church is the reason why people attend RE. *Lm* names himself as an example for this. He twice explains his attendance of RE with the fact that he feels at home in the church ("pretty rooted", 354; "I am more or less strongly rooted in it", 360–361). *Mf* agrees that there is a connection between belonging to a religious community and attending RE. She goes as far as saying that in this case RE attendance should be required ("you should really do that", 356; "really should do it, " 359), as it would represent congruent behaviour. *Mf* extends the expectation of congruence between connection to the church and attendance of RE to all denominations and religions, which generalises this particular attitudinal framework. Although his participation in RE is self-evident to *Lm*due to his attachment to the church, it is not without limits. This means that he too would "opt out" (365), if material taught in RE was in total contradiction with his own convictions ("that I really just can't deal with it", 362–363) and if it "asked things" (363) of him he does not agree with. By giving this example, he names a reason for opting out of RE that is legitimate to him, which is comparable to the motive of one of his classmates. In contrast to this he considers the incongruent behaviour of non-attendance of RE while "at the same time […] still [being] part of the church" (365–366) to be questionable and lacking sufficient justification.

His and in *Mf*'s commonreasoning that attendance of RE is dependent on one's agreement and congruence with the "attitude of the church" (351–352) shows their understanding of RE.RE is a legitimate subject for people who are members of a church, who are religious insiders ("pretty rooted in the church," 354). A substantive focus on one's faith is the primary reason to attend RE. This has an impact on *Lm*'s understanding of RE, insofar as it is only relevant as a place of faith and conviction for those people who are substantively committed to their church or religious community

Educational Relevance

Nm now joins in with the discussion and draws conclusions from what has already been said. He also sees RE in its current form as a subject of denomination and conviction. RE does, however, require change (Educational Relevance, 367–420):

Nm: Well looked at from the point of view of the school (.) ahm I dare to say that I think, that our RE teachers, deliver very good, very good lessons. I have really only heard positive things; but I also have to say; that I haven't heard very much about RE altogether. but ahm both the Catholic and the Islamic RE teacher are really very happy in their classes, pupils seem really happy ahm the Protestant RE teacher, I talked to her once on the phone, but she is in the building so rarely, that I, that I don't really have much contact with her. the second thing is, I think from an organisational perspective it is a hurdle, because pupils can opt out a lot depends on units and the timetable ahm well; yeah and the third thing, I think of course that it is a great great pity , that there is a subject, that you can opt out of, I don't understand, why the religious communities, haven't yet managed to find a sensible solution to this; because, I mean in principle at any time, but especially now, I think it would be really important, to have a subject religions, and not just individual separate religion subjects, ahm; I think that much of the

Lm: ⌊ Yes

Nm: material covered would be the same, it's a shame, I mean there simpöyis the concordat, yes, we as a school won't have a chance, but the gentlemen in charge, are I think usually, well capable of considering, whether there could not be some kind of reform

Mf: ⌊ @(.)@

Nm: a compulsory subject, across all classes and across all years; religions and ethics because in principle I don't learn anything about Islamic; about the Islamic religion, if I if I don't go to Religion classes;

Of: Yes you do

Nm: If I don't go to religion classes.

Of: If you don't attend RE, that's true.

Nm: ⌊ Yes; that means we have and with with us the opt-out numbers are relatively high we have very many; who, I mean yeah; in the lower forms you can't after all opt out; or is that not the case?

Lm: Ahm from the age of 14 you can opt out yourself, until 14 you need a signature from

Mf: ⌊ Yes you can, think ºI thinkº

Lm: a parent or legal guardian.

Nm: ⌊ Okay

Lm: Or from the age of 16, or something I think there is a

Nm: ⌊ Well I think, that for a

Mf: ⌊ But in the lower forms you can opt out too?

Nm: Hm

Lm: Yes, you can opt out, but only with the legal guardia-, but then there is aperiod,

Of: ⌊Yes, but only with parents.

Mf: ⌊ Yes, yes

Lm: when pupils all realise, that while they are not 18, but from 14 or 16

Of: ⌊ But I think, it's only from 16.

Mf ⌊ Really from the age of 14 you can already opt out yourself?

Lm: you can, I don't know if it's 14 or 16.

Of: ⌊ No, I think it's from the age of 16, I know (.) from 16, right?

Lm: There is a regulation, that they can then opt out themselves and pupils then realise that, they don't even have to defend their opinion in front of their parents, which would really be quite interesting, why they don't trust themselves to do it so to speak; because if I really don't want to go to RE; then I am able to talk it throughregardless with whom, or give reasons, but there is a certain age, when pupils realise, they don't have to explain anything to anyone, only have to sign the paper and gain 2 extra hours;

Nm: ⌊ Mhm

Nm comments "from the point of view of the school" (367). His elaboration should be understood from this perspective. This also becomes clear in the way he talks about the great job RE teachers do. His use of possessive pronouns "our" (367), clearly expresses that the RE teachers belong to the school. As he continues it remains clear that what he is saying should be seen from the perspective of the school. In the modality of a speculation he judges the work RE teachers do to be outstanding. He is aware of the vagueness of his valuation, as he has not heard that much that he can base his judgement on ("that I

haven't heard very much about RE altogether", 369–370). Aside from what he has heard he also mentions observations, which he wants to use to ground the vagueness of what he has heard ("but", 370). Initially he mentions the Catholic and the Islamic RE teacher, in whom he seems to recognise contentment with their work ("in their classes", 371). He gets the same impression of the pupils. He excludes the ProtestantRE teacher from this impression, because he has hardly any contact with her ("I don't really have much contact with her", 473).The rareness of their encounters is expressed through the mention of a single phone conversation between *Nm* and the Protestant RE teacher, and is also explained by how rarely sheis present in this school. In a systematic way, he now mentions a second point related to RE. RE presents a problem ("a hurdle", 74) for the school from an organisational perspective ("units and the timetable", 375). In his third point he talks about his regret on the possibility to opt out and expresses his incredulity about the religious communities and their unwillingness ("haven't yet managed", 377–378) to "find a sensible solution", (378) for this. In saying this he criticises RE in its current organisational form, which presents the negative counter horizon. His call for urgent reform to RE is kairologically based, it is "really important" (379) "in principle at any time, but especially now" (378–379). Following his kairological assessment he offers "a subject on religions' (379–380) as a possible solution, which he delineates from RE that is separated out by denominations and religions ("individual separate religion subjects", 380). He justifies his suggestion with the great congruence among these subjects in terms of the material they cover. While he feels it is a shame that in this respect there is no potential for change, he puts responsibility on the representatives of the religious communities ("the gentlemen in charge", 383) with regard to "whether there could not be some kind of reform" (384). His desire for change leads to his suggestion to create "a compulsory subject, across all classes and across all years; religions and ethics" (386). He sees the relevance of RE to education in, for instance, the fact that a person who does not attend RE would not have any way of learning about Islam.*Of* initially questions this ("Yes you do", 389), but then validates his statement (391).

At this point a positive counter horizon can already be made out to some extent, in as far as *Nm* strives towards finding commonalities and views the teaching subject of religion as one that is relevant in the education of all pupils. In its current organisational format, RE is unable to live up to this demand. *Nm* starts to talk about consequences ("that means", 392), but then continues to mention another problem. He points out that the opt-out rates in this school are high in his opinion. He does, however, not give a point of comparison. The group is largely confused as to when pupils are allowed to opt out of RE by themselves (394–412). It does, however, become clear that the regulation, which allows pupils to opt out of RE themselves, ensuresthat they do not need to justify their decision to their parents. *Lm* speculates further that pupils are not up to presenting their parents with a solid argument for why they are opting out. If in contrast somebody "really [doesn't] want to go to RE" (416) he or she should have no problem in arguing their point. He does thus feel that the current practice of only having to "sign the paper" (418) to gain extra free time, is lax. His demand for solid arguments for opting out as well as his earlier elaborations on RE, in which he names personal conviction as the criterion for attendance, confirm his view that RE is a subject of denomination and conviction.

Once *Lm* has finished speaking, *Kf* refers back to *Nm*'s statement ("cause you say", 421). She does not believe that religious learning processes only take place during lessons, but that they can also be achieved as part of ecumenical religious services. Experiencing difference forms the foundation to learning from each other (Learning Together, 421–454):

421 Kf: I must briefly mention, cause you say, you don't get to know other religions, with
422 us at our school there are often religious services; in the ceremonial hall before Christmas
423 and; well in the past it was 4 times, it's reduced now, because not that many pupils take
424 part in it ah and once there was also ah an ecumenical one ah Catholic and Islamic; and not
425 @very many@ took part in that either, but we learnt quite a lot from each other through
426 this ah, the Muslims ah on the Islamic side, there is no singing during a
427 service, they were all wide eyed that we sing so many songs, and we were
428 wide eyed because because well there is more more speech and that, how do I put this,
429 it's a while ago hm, but this this this guilt there, well I felt, that it's really
430 pretty strict there; yes, well, again and again one's own guilt, which is of course also
431 often very present in the Catholic faith, but our religious services in school are more cheerful
432 and motivational, that's how I have always experienced it; yes and that was well ah rather
433 all back to the strict rules and sticking to them and; well they don't sing; well as much as I
434 now know about the Islamic part; yes through this ecumenical religious service;
435 Of: ⌊ Religious service
436 Lm: Well, I would also really wish that you get at least one hour,
437 where you are together as a whole class or maybe even several classes come together and
438 an RE teacher from each religion is in the class and just deliberately
439 seeks a dialogue maybe through confrontation with the other religions, because
440 I just think, that if you somehow learn from an early age so to speak, that there are people who
441 have a different religion; but they are people just like us, I think that
442 a lot of potential conflict could be cleared up and I would be
443 extremely interested to just talk to other religions and just to maybe
444 understand better how they see things, maybe I would even find out
445 that I like another faith better, as a Catholic, that could happen too, that is of course
446 sort of a danger ahm, from the point of view of the people who make these decisions:, ahm but
447 Of: ⌊ @(.)@
448 Nm: ⌊ @(.)@
449 Kf: ⌊ @(.)@
450 Lm: that I would I would find very quest-
451 Nm: ⌊ Well that is, that is the point, is that right? that nobody steals anybody
452 from anybody else?
453 Y1: At the moment it is; yes,
454 Nm: ⌊ ( )

Kf wants to comment on something that has been said. She refers to a statement by *Nm* and then elaborates on the issue of getting to know other religions outside of RE lessons, but in the context of religious services in school. Initially she describes them in general terms of how often they have happened ("often", 422), where ("the ceremonial hall", 422) and for what occasions ("before Christmas and", 422–423).Nowadays a smaller number of pupils are impacted by these services, as compared to "in the past" (423) there are fewer of them, because fewer pupils attend. Following this general description she starts to talk about an'ecumenical" (424), Catholic and Islamicreligious service, which was also not very well attended. Regardless of the small number of participants, it was an opportunity for much learning experience, which took place through the encounter with one another. These learning experiences occurred by means of the differences in how the two groups conduct religious services. These caused astonishment both among Muslims and among Catholics ("they were all wide eyed", 427 and "and we were wide

eyed", 427–428). Aside from the differences in conducting religious services, the two religious groups also placed different emphases in terms of content. *Kf* describes this in a number of ways ("guilt", 429; "pretty strict", 430; "again and again one's own guilt", 430). With this area of content she draws a parallel between Islam and the "Catholic faith" (431). She recognises that there are similarities, even if differences remain. In this way she builds a bridge between the "Catholic faith" (431), where the subject of guilt also arises frequently and how "our religious services in school" (431) are conducted. Catholic religious services in school are generally "more cheerful and motivational" (431–432),while the Islamic part of this one religious service was "rather all back to the strict rules and sticking to them" (432–433). It is worth noting that she changes tenseduring this comparison. She describes the religious services in school in the present tense ("are", 431), while she switches to the past tense ("was", 432) when she talks "about the Islamic part" (434). This expresses a different intensity of experience. While she offers a general description of Catholic religious services in school, her account of the "ecumenical" (424) service is based on a single experience. With this example,*Kf* points out a learning experience outside of the classroom, where Catholics and Muslims learned from each other. This learning experience is based on an experience of difference, as something unfamiliar was learned but not shared.

Lm is also of the opinion that difference ("through confrontation with other religions", 439) can facilitate opportunities for learning, and that such opportunities should be created "deliberately" (438). *Lm* would like to see "at least one hour" (436) dedicated to learning about religion together as "a whole class or maybe even several classes […] together. " (437).This would require several RE teachers, one "from each religion" (438) to come into a class at the same time. In *Lm*'s opinion this type of RE would be meaningful to everyone. He makes this clear through his repeated use of the pronoun "you' (in the sense of "one", 436, 437 and 440) and by talking about the learning potential on a societal level. This type of RE would teach pupils "from an early age" (440) to respect each other as human beings ("they are people just like us", 441) and could lead to a less conflict-laden life together. As well as pointing out the societal significance, *Lm* also shows a personal interest, thus addressing an individual meaning level. His interest is not just focused on how RE teachers from different religious backgrounds would start talking to each other ("a dialogue", 439). He is also keen to "talk to other religions" (443) himself. He is interested in understanding others better. He wants to develop an understanding and an appreciation of "how they see things" (444). *Lm* is open and unreserved towards all these learning processes, and does not even exclude that he might adopt another religion. He is guided by personal preference ("that I like another faith better", 445), which once again shows that RE can be reconstructed as a subject of denomination and conviction. His understanding of this kind of shared learning also comes across. What is central to this process is not just the mere cognitive intake of information about various religions, but the personal felt experience of what has been learned. This emphasis, which he is "extremely' interested in" (443), also presents "a danger" (446), as it is possible that pupils would convert to another religion. This possibility would be dangerous in the eyes of "the people who make these decisions" (446). He thus creates a negative opposite horizon, which in contrast to his own attitude towards joined up learning, is marked by fear or a lack of openness. Some

other members of the group confirm this fear or lack of openness attributed to the people in charge of religion with laughter. *Lm* considers this attitude to be very questionable ("very quest-", 450), which reveals a shared horizon of experience. It is clearly apparent that the group does not understand and rejects this attitude. *Nm* also recognises this shared negative opposite horizon ("Well that is, that is the point", 451). He then asks the interviewer if there really is a concern that the various religions might attempt to convert each other ("that nobody steals anybody from anybody else", 451–452). The interviewer confirms this to currently be the case.

As *Lm* has finishedtelling the group about how he would ideally like RE to be structured, *Mf* starts talking about her daughter again (Learning Together, 455–492):

Mf: Well it was like this; ah in primary school, or in the lower forms, I can't remember now; ah
we really had problems then; with the timetable and with RE; and so I asked
if my daughter could not maybe attend @Catholic@ RE classes,
when at the end of the day, anyway, I have no fear of contact, I used to be
Catholic, yes; I also don't think that the difference is that great, yes but she was not
allowed to for legal reasons.
Y1: ⌊ Mhm
Nm: I think, you are allowed to participate anywhere if you are without religious affiliation, yes,
Of: ⌊ Yes, participate
Mf: ⌊ Yes, yes, yes
Nm: voluntarily, but not if you have another faith.
Lm: AlthoughI have got to say
Nm: ⌊ I think that is backward, well really, it's insane. I
Kf: ⌊ @(.)@
Lm: ⌊ Although
Nm: think it's insane, absolutely ridiculous
Mf: ⌊ Yes, it was purely because of the timetable ahm it was, yes, so she
would get to take part in 2 hours of RE and a bit of a religious education doesn't do any harm,
Lm: ⌊ Yes
Mf: because you can't make a decision if you don't have anything to base it on; yes, @(.)@
Lm: ⌊ Yes, yes (.) and and
Nm: ⌊ Mhm
Mf: Well, that isn't it yet, you can only decide for something when, not from
baptism onward, you know, @(.)@
Nm: ⌊ And what I certainly also think is a shame of course, that of course quite
a lot of money goes into these RE classes, and then often; because it just is, that's great
Mf: ⌊ ( )
Nm: of course for those, who attend, they are very small groups, but it's a shame, that
those who, can opt out; they are funded all the same, ahm, that
they then don't sit in a lesson that's been paid for, the RE teacher gets paid after all,
that they can't acquire this knowledge, well yes, one could,
we as a vocational HAK, could of course benefit greatly,
our pupils need every lesson they can get; yes and especially in this area one could;
Lm: ⌊ yes
Nm: I think they already do that a lot, talk about the area of culture, ahm reduce
prejudices; ethics, morality, values, well I can't really address this in the subject I teach; there
you have a subject, where it is even funded and pupils are allowed to
opt out of it; well I don't see why. (2)

Even though she is unsure of when exactly this took place ("in primary school, or in the lower forms", 455), *Mf* talks about the organisational difficulties she experienced with her daughter's Protestant RE lessons. Because Protestant RE lessons were timetabled inconveniently *Mf* wanted her daughter to take part in Catholic RE, which was taking place at the more convenient time. She asked if that was possible. In this statement *Mf* shows that she too belongs to the attitudinal framework, which is open-minded towards other religions and denominations. *Mf* likes the idea of learning together and she seesno

reason why it should not be possible, either from a biographical or from a contextual perspective. This is because she neither has any "fear of contact" (458) with Catholic RE, because she used to be Catholic herself, nor does she see any great differences between Catholic and Protestant RE. *Mf*'s enquiry was, however, unsuccessful, as her daughter was not allowed to participate in Catholic RE "for legal reasons" (460). "Legal reasons" (460) deny *Mf*'s wishfor her daughter to participate in Catholic RE and thus be able to learn together with others. She consequently shares the negative opposite horizon with other members of the group, because she herself has "no fear of contact" (458) towards Catholic RE, and thus sees no, as *Lm* calls it "danger" (446) that pupils will potentially be converted by attending differently organised RE.

The current rules, which regulate RE participation, are met with incomprehension and are firmly rejected by *Nm*. In his view they are out-dated and totally irrational ("absolutely ridiculous", 470). His statement is confirmed with a short outburst of laughter by *Kf*. *Nm* himself calls these regulations "insane" (467). *Mf* also makes it clear once again that she feels totally unsympathetic towards them. She describes her reasons for requesting to allow her daughter to attend Catholic RE one more time and stresses that these reasons were purely organisational. She wanted to get around organisational difficulties, "so she would get to take part in 2 hours of RE" (471–472), showing yet again that there is a desire for joined-up learning. *Mf* is open-minded about RE in and of itself and feels that it is valuable as part of her daughter's education. *Lm* agrees that it has value in education. In addition *Mf* gives her reason why "a bit of religious education" (472) is necessary. According to her, a minimum standard of religious education is necessary in order to be able to make decisions. In this context she mentions baptism in a contrasting way. At the time of baptism a person cannot decide for themselves, because the person does not have anything to "base" (474) a decision on. The fact that RE is seen as a subject of denomination and conviction comes through yet again. It has value in education, insofar as it helps people to make their own decisions with regard to their attitude towards denomination/religion, so that they are able to decide "for something" (477).A connection is thus once again made between RE and personal preference.

Furthermore *Nm*deplores RE's current situation. He gives financial reasons for this. RE is an expensive affair, because'of course quite a lot of money goes into it" (479–480). His regret is, however, not only of a financial nature, he is also generally concerned that pupils who are opting out are missing an opportunity, although this has a positive effect on pupils who do attend, as they are being taught in small groups. However, students who opt out miss an educational opportunity, because "they can't acquire this knowledge" (485). *Nm* argues that this type of knowledge is relevant and necessary for both this type of school ("we as a vocational HAK", 486)and for the pupils who attend this type of school ("our pupils need every lesson they can get", 487). He also talks about the areas he would like this subject to cover, as he assumes that a lot of it already gets addressed by RE in its current format. Among these areas are "culture, ahm reduce prejudices, ethics, morality, values" (489–490). He regrets that he cannot "address" (490) these areas in the subject he teaches and that a subject that has room to cover them, and that is already financed, remains unused, because pupils can opt out of it.

While *Mf* views RE as a subject of denomination and conviction that has an educational value for individuals, as it helps people to reach personal decisions, *Nm* sees its general value to education and feels that it is a necessary subject for all pupils. *Lm* believes that there is a specific consequence of such a didactically oriented RE (Learning Together, 493–523):

493 Lm: But then you would effectively have to take a broader approach and not say, I teach
494 Mf: ⌊ Mhm
495 Lm: Roman Catholic, Protestant, but I teach religions and then this is
496 Ow: ⌊ Yes, but
497 Nm: ⌊ Just as you said it ⌊ Yes
498 Mf: ⌊ Yes
499 Lm: part of it and that is part of it and that is part of it too and then just effectively, so that
500 Nm: ⌊ Mhm
501 Lm: I sense it would also simply foster better togetherness and yes °yes°
502 Of: ⌊ Simply an understanding
503 Mf: I mean, I don't know anyone who attends ethics education; or where ethics education is
504 offered, but was that not the principal idea behind ethics education, just religions, morality
505 Nm: You should ( ) religion free values
506 Of: ⌊ Free, mhm
507 Mf: ⌊ Ahm yes morality and the off- and (.) som-
508 Lm: ⌊ Although the question
509 is effectively, if you say, you teach ethics as values free from religion, if that
510 is even possible.if not every person with his experiences, with his religion is not
511 only able to pass on values, which are coloured by his experience, religion and circumstances.
512 so maybe from this perspective it would be more interesting, to consciously say, let's bring
513 all religionsinto one boat and lets then effectively say, well I don't know, you watch a
514 Mf: ⌊ Religions
515 Lm: a film and then you discuss it according to your religion, the points of view of your religion
516 and then you look at other religions' perspectives.
517 Well that would definitely only be a model for the upper forms.
518 Of: ⌊ Mhm
519 Kf: Because during the lower forms you have to get to know your own religion, no
520 Mf: ⌊ Yes
521 Of: ⌊ Mhm ⌊ Yes (.) and in the upper forms
522 you can build on that
523 Lm: ⌊ Yes

By agreeing with *Lm*'s opinion that this conception of RE will have particular consequences, the group shows that they share it. In order to adequately respond to the positive horizon, that isopening up RE, "you would effectively have to take a broader approach" (493).This conception of RE would no longer teach about individual denominations, but about "religions" (495). This shows itself in the fact that a wider range of subject areas would be covered ("and then this is part of it and that is part of it and this is part of it too", 495–499). According to *Lm*, this approach is justified, as it is consistent with fostering "better togetherness" (501). An RE provision with a widened conceptual scope – from denomination to "religions" (495) – that covers a broader range of issues, corresponds with the group's positive horizon and is considered desirable. There would be greater value in this type of RE when it comes to social output, as it would foster "better togetherness" (501) and "understanding" (502). Yet again, this underlines the social significance of the subject.

*Mf*now starts to talk about ethic education. She is not quite sure about what she is saying, as she is not able to give any references. She neither knows any pupils who attend this subject, nor is she aware of any schools that offer ethics education. She now attempts to describe the subject's contextual profile, "the principle idea behind ethics

education" (504) and connects this to "religions and morality" (504). She can't give any more detail, which shows itself in how the discourse continues ("som-", 507; presumably in the sense of "something"). *Nm* immediately mentions "religion free values" (505) as a required trademark of ethics education ("You should", 505). *Of* validates this. This once again shows that the members of this group desire openness. *Lm* is sceptical towards the contextual profile of ethics education as a subject of "religion free values" (505). In his explanation he points out the facticity of every human being; everybody is shaped by "experience, religion and circumstances" (501). It is consequently impossible for anybody to distance themselves completely from their religion while teaching. As this approach seems impossible to him, he suggests another option. Religious facticity/characteristics should be "deliberately" (512) used against all eventualities, as a teaching opportunity and a chance to learn together about all religions. Learning together is of primary importance to *Lm* ("let's bring all religions into one boat", 512–513). *Lm* substantiates this opportunity for learning with an example. Learning together with all religions could, for instance, consist of analysing a film together. Each religion will have its own take on it, which mean that a common subject will be addressed from a variety of viewpoints. It is *Lm*'s objective to work together on controversial ("discuss", 515) issues and to bring various religious perspectives into the debate. *Kf* names one condition for this approach to joint learning. In her eyes this is a model "for the upper forms" (517), as during the lower forms pupils need to experience religious socialisation first. This shows that RE during the lower forms is understood as a subject of denomination and conviction, which must serve to help pupils familiarise themselves with their own religion. Familiarity with one's own religion is a prerequisite for being able to discursively engage with other religions, because then "you can build on that" (522).

Nm now asks the interviewer a question. This brings up a related but new issue within the context of what has already been discussed. He wants to know in percentage terms how many 10-year-olds are currently without any religious affiliation (Learning Together, 524–550):

524 Nm: And how many percent of, today's, I don't know, 10-year-olds, are without
525 any religious affiliation?
526 Y1: I don't know about 10-year-olds, but I do know it about your school and I have
527 brought a graph to illustrate it,
528 Kf: ⌊ Oh
529 Mf: With no @(.)@ @(now we have)@
530 Y1: ⌊ These are the religious affiliations in your school. (2)
531 Mf: ( ) (3)
532 Kf: Mhm
533: Mf: It's funny, all the religions out there, (2) serbian-orthodox didn't know,
534 that existed.
535 Kf: What?
536 Mf: Serbian Orthodox
537 Kf: Really? Yes, it does
538 Nm: Yes
539 Kf: They have their own their own holidays too,
540 Nm: Well, they are, we have a lot of people from the former Yugoslavia and among them there
541 there just are many Catholics and Serbian Orthodox people;
542 Mf: Mhm
543 Lm: And I could really imagine RE lessons together with at least the 3 biggest
544 religions. because I especially see Islam and Serbian Orthodok
545 Kf: ⌊ Yes ⌊ Ahm Protestants ( )
546 Lm: I have, I don't know 3 lessons a year in the subject RE; where you hear something about

547 other religions, but even then it's mostly only theoretical, and I'd say; yes, that's all very nice
548 but I would effectively prefer to chat to somebody and to discuss religious
549 questions with them.
550 (7)

The interviewer addresses *Nm*'s question, he repeats its important parts and then states that he does not know the answer. He is, however, able to give the group information about religious affiliation in percentage terms for this school. He has prepared a graph on that. *Kf* and *Mf* are astonished when they see the graph and *Mf* laughs. She then explains her bewilderment. The unfamiliarity of the religions and denominations is funny to her ("It's funny, all the religions out there", 533). She calls the unfamiliarity of religions "funny" (533) and exemplifies this with a Christian denomination ("serbian-orthodok", 533; "Serbian Orthodox", 536). This denomination is not unfamiliar to *Kf* and *Nm* ("Really? Yes, it does", 537), in as far as she is able to inform her that "they have their own holidays" (539), which shows that she has some knowledge about this denomination. This is also apparent in *Nm*'s statement, as he points out a connection between "former Yugoslavia" (540) and the religious constellation of pupils in this school. This religious makeup leads *Lm*, in cooperation with *Kf*, to come to a conclusion ("And I could really imagine", 543). The attitudinal framework of the group can be reconstructed at this point. The group is in favour of opening up RE lessons, as this would enable pupils to learn together in a way that is personally relevant to them.

Again *Lm* expresses his preference ("really", 543) for joined up RE lessons "at least with the 3 biggest religions" (543–544). He names Islam and the Serbian Orthodox as the two religions/denominations that should be given particular ("especially", 544) consideration for this kind of RE. *Kf* adds "Protestants" (545) to the list. *Lm* explains that his own experience with RE is the reason why he is in favour of RE lessons together with everybody. In his view RE as it stands does not give enough time to addressing other religions and not enough material is covered. Other religions are discussed in a distant and passive way ("when you hear something about other religions", 546–547). "But even then' this way of engaging with religions is "mostly only theoretical" (547) and has little personal relevance to pupils ("mostly only theoretical", 547; that's all very nice, but", 457). In *Lm*'s opinion learning "about other religions" (548–549) does not compare to personal encounters ("chat to somebody", 548) and discursive debates with various religions and their worldviews ("discuss religious questions", 548–549).

'RE for all'

When the interviewer asks an exmanent question about 'RE for all', the group understands this to be synonymous to their desire for a more open RE provision. The interviewer's question focuses possible opposition to this subject within this school (RE for all, 731–785):

731 Y1: What kind of opposition would RE for all have to expect in yours lesso- ah
732 school?
733 Lm: Well, organisational @(.)@

734 Mf: ⌊ Organisationally, or in terms of participation? which (.)
735 Nm: Well organisationally I honestly think (.) I think organisationally it would be easier.
736 Mf: ⌊ Would be @easier@
737 Of: ⌊Is it very
738 Kf: ⌊ ( ) Yes
739 Lm: I think that it would be very difficult for teacher, if we only have one teacher in
740 the classroom, (.) because effectively you have to somehow teach several religions at once,
741 or you don't have to, or, well, if you effectively say, you you teach the subject religions
742 and there is only one professor in the classroom, then I think it would be
743 damned, it would be difficult, to teach in a believable way,
744 Nm: ⌊ Mhm
745 Of: ⌊ And above all to remain objective
746 Lm: And and objective
747 Mf: ⌊ Yes
748 Nm: No I don't believe that to be honest. I believe, I'm just guessing, that they get to know all
749 religions during their degree; I do, think so, yes, because otherwise you can't
750 discuss it, if you don't know the religions and how lessons are struc- you,
751 Lm: ⌊ But on a, ah, okay
752 Mf: ⌊ But I think, you could also have a rota
753 Nm: of course you could also organise a rota, so that in every class, well, so that every time
754 Mf: ⌊ For ex- (.) yes
755 Nm: someone else takes the class, but the fundamental questions remain the same;
756 Lm: ⌊ Yes
757 Mf: And I also don't know, if marks are absolutely necessary (.) in religion
758 Lm: ⌊ Well I:::
759 Nm: It can by all means be cognitively challenging too.
760 Of: ⌊ Well I think, that not every RE teacher would represent all religions that objectively.
761 Nm: No not yet.
762 Lm: well I think
763 Of: ⌊ I think, this will also be very difficult with some religions, that he could really get behind
764 that, well I don't believe that anymore. I believe, that
765 Lm: ⌊ I I
766 Mf: ⌊ No, it
767 yes it also maybe depend on the personal attitude of the teacher
768 every RE teacher is bias in some way, and this will not change in future.
769 Lm: I think, that basic view or basic, or basic knowledge,
770 or theories in RE, that one person can easily teach that for all
771 Res, ah for all religions. What I would find extremely
772 exciting ahm, when you effectively start to philosophise about questions of be belief,
773 exchange opinions, when sometimes opinions differ even within
774 the same religion, and I think that, that then one RE teacher is no
775 longer able to teach all religions. the the basics, specialist knowledge (.) what do Catholics
776 believe in, what do Protestants believe in, or something like that, you can, you can effectively,
777 Mf: ⌊ ( )
778 Lm: Protes-, what?
779 Mf: Yeah, yeah, al right.
780 Of: ⌊ Yes, but
781 Mf: @(.)@
782 Lm: Well effectively that, things like theory, that you can that you can explain
783 Of: ⌊ That's simply a taught lesson, that's what a lesson is.
784 Mf: ⌊ Yes yes
785 Lm: and that's okay and that's like that, but for me personally that would not be enough.

While *Lm* and *Mf* initially anticipate organisational difficulties or difficulties with participation, *Nm* has a different view. To him this type of RE would make things easier from an organisational perspective. Other group members, including *Mf*, validate this view. *Lm* turns his attention to an organisational issue concerned with the subject's content and starts to compare the numbers of teachers and religions. In his opinion the conceptual design of this subject poses the greatest difficulties, as one teacher (singular) would have to teach a number of religions (plural). The teacher must meet the challenge of "somehow teach[ing] several religions at once" (740). *Lm* is concerned that because

of this, the quality of teaching would suffer, given that lessons are intended to address several religions. *Of* talks about another problem – the need to remain objective ("And above all to remain objective", 745). *Lm* feels understood and validates *Of*'s statement. This shows their wish for religions to be taught in a non-biased way. In response,*Nm* argues from a contextual-organisational perspective and speculates that RE teachers would have learned about all religions during their studies. He therefore does not anticipate any difficulties on the part of the teachers. This assumption is ultimately validated by *Lm* ("But on a, ah, okay", 751). While *Nm* and *Mf* come up with various other organisational possibilities (a rota system for RE teachers, how to grade the subject), *Of* turns her attention back to the teaching staff. She suspects that some RE teachers are biased against other religions. Not all RE teachers represent "all religions that objectively" (760). *Nm* agrees, by pointing out that this need not always be the case ("No not yet. ", 761). *Of* does not just ascribe this difficulty to a few individual RE teachers, but also to "some religions" (763). She does, however, not name any particular ones. She believes that it is out of the question that an RE teacher from one of these religions "would really get behind that" (764). With this statement she points to the objective, non-biased attitude she desires ("And above all to remain objective", 745). This can, however, not come into being, because of the supposedly subjective attitude of some teachers from some religions ("personal attitude", 767). This is because all RE teachers belonging to these religions are "biased in some way" (768), and this will continue to be the case in the future. In this section, the strong formative powers of "some religions" (763) and the consequent religious socialisation can be reconstructed as an obstacle to maintaining a non-biased attitudetowards all religions. There is therefore a perceived connection between RE in its current denominational form and the problematic fact that RE teachers are shaped by their own denomination. Hence RE teachers are therefore not primarily viewed through the lens of their profession as teachers, but as members of a particular denomination. Furthermore, some RE teachers, or all RE teachers belonging to some religions, would always teach in a denominational way, because of their "personal attitude" (767) and their religious socialisation. It cannot be guaranteed that these RE teachers would maintain the desired objective attitude towards all religions, which would make it difficult to put the teaching subject Religions into practice.

Lm also locates the difficulty with RE teachers and shares *Of"*s attitudinal framework. When it comes to the teaching subject religions *Lm* distinguishes between theoretical and reflexive-discursive elements. Theoretical material, which is comprised of "the basics, specialist knowledge" (775) about various religions and denominations, can be taught to everybody by a single teacher ("that you can explain", 782). *Of* and *Mf* believe only this part to be an actual taught lesson (783–784). *Lm* distinguishes this theoretical content from an area he calls "questions of belief" (772),which is to be explored in a reflexive-discursive way, as it is an area of debate, and there is disagreement on some issues even within individual religions ("sometimes opinions differ even within the same religion", 773–774). If lessons are to deal with this area as well, it is possible that one single RE teacher is not "able to teach all religions" (775). *Lm* nonetheless feels that addressing this area is worthwhile, as he finds it "extremely exciting" (771–772). Once again he distinguishes this area from "the basics, specialist knowledge" (775), which only deals with beliefs in a theoretical way. This has its legitimacy and can be

presented during lessons ("and that's okay", 785), although *Lm* himself prefers the reflexive-discursive element, as "for him personally" the theoretical part "would not be enough" (785).

Nm throws another difficulty into the discourse. He thinks this might come from the parents (RE for all, 786–862):

786 Nm: Well one problem could definitely come up, I don't know if strict religious parents
787 might not like it, that other religions are now being taught as well,
788 Lm: ⌊Yes
789 Kf: ⌊ Mhm, mhm
790 Mf: ⌊ Yes, of course
791 Nm: Although maybe with them
792 Lm: ⌊ But in that case it would be particularly important. @(.)@
793 Mf: @Yes, yes that's true, that is true, yes@
794 Nm: ⌊ Hm?
795 Lm: ⌊ It would be particularly important in that case.
796 Nm: Well, it is maybe also a question of communication what you call the subject,
797 Kf: ⌊ I was just going to say
798 Nm: or, or of course also how it is taught, whether it is really,
799 well whether, the school, the RE teacher, the RE teachers are able to get it
800 across, that it isn't ahm a subject for religious indoctrination, because that
801 happens on Sunday, or on the weekend anyway ahm, but that it is rather about
802 values, ethics and ah religions.
803 Lm: ⌊ Exactly
804 Kf: I would like to give an example, we our RE classes well our
805 religious services are like, that teachers can also take part, if the whole class goes;
806 and I told my class, that I would like them to come along and in this class
807 I don't think there is anybody, who is Catholic; and ahm, some Serbian Orthodox;
808 and there actually were Muslim pupils who came up to me and said, my parents don't allow
809 it.
810 Lm: Yes (.) yes
811 Of: ⌊ I can believe that.
812 Kf: And ah but I do think you can get around this, I said, well I don't want to force
813 you to do anything ah, but tell your parents, you don't have to do anything there, that you
814 don't want to do, you will just hear some things and in the end they allowed it, yes, but
815 Lm: ⌊ Yes
816 Kf: then there was a basis for conversation, but to begin with it certainly is like that,
817 that these pupils, whether they would be allowed to go to these lessons, that's the question?
818 Of: ⌊ Mhm
819 Kf: Although we think it would be a good thing.
820 Lm: ⌊ Although I think it would be extremely important especially for them
821 Mf: ⌊ Although I would then make it compulsory, well
822 compulsory precisely because.
823 Kf: ⌊ Yes, but then again that's patronising
824 Lm: and and extremely extremely exciting;
825 Kf: Yes, we think it's exciting. (3)
826 Lm: °would it would it be patronising?°
827 Nm: ⌊ Well, on the other hand, I think, if it's taken very strictly there are certain
828 rules in Islam like the prohibition of interest or something; then you wouldn't be allowed
829 to teach them that in accounting classes either.
830 Kf: ⌊ Mhm
831 Lm: That would be the question;
832 Nm: Well I don't know; of course there are strict religious parents, but by living in Vienna
833 They are also choosing on open world-view, and from this perspective
834 Kf: ⌊ Mhm

Up until this point in the discourse, any possible difficulties were located with various religions and their RE teachers, who, due to their subjective attitude and formative religious background, might not represent all religions in a non-biased way. Now another difficulty is established within families. "Strict religious parents" (786) are believed to be opposed to lessons on other religions. Both difficulties with teachers and with parents

are based in the fact that these classes would address other religions. *Nm* suspects that strict religious parents would not want RE classes to be opened up to other religions. His argument is validated by other members of the group. *Nm* starts to make a mitigating statement ("although", 791), but does not continue. At the same time *Lm* points out the enormous importance of this subject, precisely because of these difficulties ("But in that case it would be particularly important. @(.)@" 792). *Mf* agrees. At this point a negative counter horizon becomes apparent. This can be observed in the attitude of "strict religious parents" (786) towards this subject, an attitude, which is closed off towards other religions. A contrasting positive horizon, which goes hand in hand with a conceptually more and more open approach to RE, is also revealed. It is worth noting that the previously mentioned difficulty with RE teachers was brought up by the two parent representatives in the group. Now *Nm*, a teacher in this school, talks about difficulties related to parents. *Nm* starts to make a suggestion of how these potential difficulties with the subject could be mitigated. He mentions two ideas; the name of the subject and the didactic design of lessons themselves. In this context he sees a challenge for both the school and for RE teachers to be open and honest about the concept of this subject. In order to do so, *Nm* believes it necessary to distance oneself from the denominationalist and indoctrinating concept of RE, as this is a private matter ("that happens on Sunday, or on the weekend anyway", 800–801). By contrast, a teaching subject about religion in school needs to be broad in scope, in the sense that "it is rather about values, ethics and ah religions" (801–802). *Nm* thus speaks out against RE being a narrow, denominationally confined subject of conviction, which in his opinion does not belong in school, but is a private matter ("that happens on Sunday, or on the weekend anyway", 800–801). By way of contrast a contextually broad approach to RE, which turns its back on denominational confines, does belong in school. This comparison between a "subject for religious indoctrination" (800) and a subject for "values, ethics and ah religions" (801–802) illustrates the negative and the positive (counter-)horizon. An aversion towards insular religious attitudes, which lead people to either misrepresent other religions ("that not every RE teacher would represent all religions that objectively. ", 760), or to not want to address them in lessons ("might not like it, that other religions are now being taught as well", 787), is apparent. These insular religious attitudes are apparently a result of the religious socialisation of RE teachers belonging to certain religions. These RE teachers are supposedly not able to represent all religions in a non-biased way. Any representation of other religions would therefore always be coloured by RE teachers' subjective attitudes. Under such conditions the teaching subject religions would face immense difficulties as it opens up towards other religions. This negative counter horizon also finds expression through "strict religious parents" (786). Their desire not to address other religions during lessons, becomes part of the negative counter horizon. They too reject the idea of opening up RE towards other religions. In this context a didactic-conceptual focus on "values, ethics and ah religions" (801–802) stands out. While different members of the group suspect different groups of people (teachers, parents) of causing difficulties, there are clear commonalities. All of them believe an insular denominational attitude to be the fundamental difficulty, which represents the negative counter horizon. This fundamental difficulty is contrasted by the positive horizon, which was

established earlier on in the discussion, namely the opening up of the RE provision and its non-biased attitude towards all religions.

Kf is familiar with a difficulty that lies with the parents. She illustrates this difficulty with an example: As a teacher she can only attend religious school services, if she takes the whole class along. There are, however, no Catholic pupils in her class. Religious diversity makes *Kf*'s own religious expression more difficult, which means that she experiences religious diversity as interference. In her view, being Catholic is the norm, and thus the point of comparison when she describes the denominational affiliation of her pupils ("I don't think there is anybody, who is Catholic; and ahm, some Serbian Orthodox; ", 807). *Kf* was surprised when the parents of Muslim pupils did not allow them to attend the religious service. She makes a particular effort to point out that this event really happened ("there actually were", 808). *Lm* and *Of* find it easy to believe. Their expressions of agreement express a shared attitude. The reaction *Kf* received from Muslim parents is also part of *Lm*'s and *Of*'s (810–811) horizon of experience. This puts a distance between them and Muslims. As Muslim pupils were initially not able to participate in the religious service, because their parents wouldn't allow it, *Kf*'s participation was also affected. *Kf* intervened and promised parents that their children's' participation would be purely passive, which caused parents to reverse their decision ("you don't have to do anything there that you don't want to do, you will just hear some things", 813–814). There is a clear discrepancy between the group's attitude of praising religious openness as a supreme asset on the one hand, and Muslim parents, who do not allow their children to participate in religious services on the other. This is clarified further by how pupils are referred to; they are subsumed by the demonstrative pronoun "these" (817). To *Kf* a lack of religious openness makes Muslim pupils and their parents stand out. This makes it very questionable for her, whether they would be prepared to participate in RE lessons for everybody, although the group believes their participation to be important ("Although we think it would be a good thing", 819). In *Kf*'s view, this religiously open attitude that the group desires cannot be taken for granted or encountered everywhere. Consequently the group believes that certain groups of people and certain religions have reservations about other religions. These reservations are, however, not written in stone. *Nm* and *Kf* believe that the presenting difficulties can be overcome, if the didactic concepts of both RE provisions, allparticipation in religious services as well as the intentions behind them, are talked about in an open manner. In light of this narrative, the extremely high significance attributed to 'RE for all', becomes clear yet again. *Lm* believes an involvement with other religions to be both "extremely important" (820) and "extremely extremely exciting" (824). The fact that *Mf* would like the subject to be "compulsory" (822), is met with agreement from *Kf* ("Yes, but", 823), she does, however also feel that this could be "patronising" (823). This illustrates the tension inherent within religion as a teaching subject. On the one hand religions are viewed as an important part of the education schools provide, on the other hand something about religions remains inherently private. Religious education is seen as a duty for publicly run schools, whereas religions are conversely seen as part of private life. Religious education within the state education system is consequently experienced as "patronising" (823), although *Lm* questions this.

Nm once again returns to the issue of strict religious parents – it can be inferred from context that he means Muslim parents. He relates Islam to religious strictness (Strict Religious Parents, 835–862):

835 Nm: you can easily argue, that it is important, that if you live in Austria
836 you get to know certain cultures and religion is simply part of that; but;
837 Kf: ⌊ I think it would also be important to
838 Lm: ⌊ Above all the question also is, what the what the children will do in their future,
839 if they get such an extremely strict; religious view from home. How will they
840 deal with the world of work.
841 Kf: ⌊ Mhm
842 Nm: I suspect, well I don't know, it's not that strict, because I have never seen
843 anybody pray in school, for instance, yes, I think there are very strict rules
844 Kf: ⌊ True
845 Mf: ⌊ Strictly speaking they'd have to
846 or no?
847 Nm: for Muslims as far as I am aware.
848 Lm: ⌊ Yes
849 Kf: I thought it was really funny, that I had to ask my pupils, if I am allowed to
850 attend the religious service. I find that funny, no, ah, yeah. @(.)@
851 Nm: ⌊ @(.)@
852 Lm: What all of them?
853 Kf: Hm? (.) that I so to speak, yes, I may ask permission of the pupils, have to, so that
854 I can take part in the religious service
855 Lm: The religious service in school or what?
856 Kw: Yes, when I have a class, when I have a free period, I don't have to ask, no, but
857 Lm: ⌊ I see
858 Kf: well that's obvious, I can't leave the class on their own, it's ( ) yes, and I have to
859 Of: ⌊ That they all come along, because they must all come along.
860 Lm: ⌊ Yes , yes, yes, yes, because they because they must all come along, yes
861 Kf: ask for permission, no.
862: Lm: Yes (2)

Religious strictness does not present itself as an obstacle to 'RE for all' in *Nm*'s mind. He argues this point in a number of ways. Consistently lived Islam is connected to strictness, which would mean that a strict interpretation of Islamic law would also impact on education in other ways, as it would limit what can be taught. *Nm* illustrates this with the prohibition of financial interest. A strict interpretation of this prohibition would therefore result in Muslim pupils no longer being taught certain related things in accountancy classes. Such a limitation to teaching is, however, out of the question for him, as he associates Austria with an open-minded worldview. Muslim parents supposedly choose this worldview, simply by choosing life in Austria. Reversing *Nm*'s argument offers an insight into his idea of strict religious parents. Because of where they come from and world views that dominate in those places, they differ from Austria, which is defined by an "open worldview" (833). By making this comparison, *Nm*establishes a distinction between Austria and other countries, where he suspects less open world views to prevail. In order to elucidate the limits to religious strictness further, *Nm* brings a cultural, integration-political argument. Living in Austria has to go hand in hand with appropriate knowledge and understanding. People who want to live in Austria have to acquire an understanding of Austrian culture. *Nm* includes religion in this, thus viewing it as part of Austrian culture as well as part of public education. At the same time *Kf* wants to add something. She tries to speak, but does not get a chance. *Lm* starts to speak again

instead. He too sees a discrepancy between the strict religious attitudes of Muslims and life in Austria. This discrepancy leads to difficulties. He consequently suspects that children who experience a strict religious upbringing will encounter difficulties in their later working lives. If parents raise their children in a strict religious way, this will affect how these children "deal with the world of work" (840) later on. It is questionable if such formative religious experiences will ever be compatible with working life. *Nm* picks up on this question. He mitigates *Lm*'s concerns about religious strictness. He does not see it as being that pronounced with Muslims ("it's not that strict", 842). For *Nm* an indicator of lived religious strictness would be public prayer in school, which he has never observed himself. Other group members also feel that public prayer is a sign of strict religious rules.

Kf returns to the issue of religious services once more. Her personal convictions turned into a problem for her in school. She wants to practice her own religion by attending religious school services, but whether she can do so or not depends on the decision of other people, her pupils. The usual hierarchy within school is put out of action. All of a sudden pupils are in charge and decide how *Kf* practices her religion in school. This astonishes her ("I find that funny", 849).

Islam is related to religious strictness and thus viewed as interference at several points throughout this passage. The group suspects that Muslims would have a problem with 'RE for all', as they are supposedly not capable of pluralism and would not allow other religions in. This suspicion comprises the supposed facts that Muslim pupils would not be allowed to attend these kinds of lessons as they were not allowed to attend a religious service, and that a number of things in these lessons would have to be changed or omitted for them to participate. At the same time the group reject lived religious strictness in Austria in general and in school in particular, since on the one hand living in Austria means "choosing an open worldview" (833), and on the other hand public prayer by Muslims, which is a symbol of religious strictness does not take place in this school. While the group views religious strictness within Islam as problematic (participation in religious services by other religious groups, 'RE for all'), the group does not believe that this kind of strictness exists in Austria or in this school.

Further Opposition

The discussion so far has already addressed potential areas of conflict, which could cause difficulties for 'RE for all'. *Nm* now remembers the initial question and wants to name further "obstacles" (863) (Further Opposition, 863–894):

863 Nm: But to get back to the question, where there are obstacles,
864 there are probably pupils, who think, well I don't actually want this as a
865 compulsory subject. and that's also an hour extra, or two hours extra, there will
866 possibly be arguments (.) from pupils as well, that, or pupils, who say I don't
867 actually want that.
868 Of: I'm sure that will be the case. they will say I'm not actually interested. I don't actually
869 want that.
870 Lm: ⌊ Yes, but
871 you could apply this kind of argument to so many subjects,
872 Kf: @(yeah)@ @(3)@
873 Mf: ⌊ Yes @(2)@ @math@

874 Lm: ⌊ You @can't let them get away with it@ @(2)@
875 Mf: ⌊ @physi::cs@
876 @(4)@
877 Of: ⌊ But, as it is already the case now, that you can freely decide, it
878 Kf: ⌊ Yes
879 Of: will be incredibly difficult, to reverse that. that's the problem. I think,
880 it should never have been made voluntary
881 Lm: ⌊ Yes
882 Mf: ⌊ Although religion simply is voluntary, yes,
883 Kw: But it exists in all cultures and and humans have a need for it and it's just
884 Of: ⌊ That's why it should be called something else
885 Lm: ⌊ Because
886 Mf: ⌊ Yes, yes
887 Kf: expressed in different ways. andI think, everybody will at some point be in a their lives
888 Mf: ⌊ Yes
889 Kf: find themselves in a situation, when they aren't well and when it's very nice, if there is
890 something to hold on to, until you can carry on on your own again and religion offers this
891 in my opinion; and if go are like I don't even want to know right from the start,
892 because I can save two hours, you are cheating yourself, because you might need it
893 later in life.
894 Ow: ⌊ Yes

Both *Nm* and *Of* think that there are pupils who would be opposed to this kind of subject, because they do not want RE lessons to be compulsory. *Lm* does not accept this argument, and points out that "you could apply this […] to so many subjects" (871). Other members of the group agree (872–876) with him, as they laugh for several seconds, and name other subjects pupils might want to opt out of. *Mf* mentions both subjects that *Kf* teaches.

*Of*feels that the problem lies with the current practice. As RE is associated with voluntary participation, it would be very difficult to reverse this practice. The way *Of* describes this problem shows the great importance she attributes to religious education, as "it should never have been made voluntary' (880). At the same time *Mf* reminds the group of the inseparable connection between religion and voluntariness, which she already referred to earlier in the discussion ("patronising", 823). Yet again the tensions that adhere to this subject are revealed. On the one hand the importance of religion is emphasised and regarded as a compulsory element of education in school, on the other hand religion is associated with voluntariness. Considering religion in a school setting means concerning oneself with personal conviction and voluntariness.

K*f* also makes a point that illustrates the significance of religious education. She uses an anthropological argument to show that her point is universally valid. She substantiates the importance of religion in two ways. For one thing she states that religion exists in "all cultures" (883), for another thing she attributes a "need" (883) for religion to all human beings. This anthropological dimension is particularly apparent during difficult situations in a person's life ("when they aren't well", 889). In these situations religion can help to provide stability and support, until the situation has been overcome and the person can cope on their own again. *Kf* deduces how significant religion should be as a teaching subject in schools, from how significant religion is to mankind as a whole. In her mind, religion has something to offer, it promises personal gain, especially during times of uncertainty. *Kf* feeds the anthropological argument back into her thoughts on RE. Consequently, the decision to reject RE in order to save time is short-sighted. ("you are cheating yourself, because you might need it later in life", 892–893). The reason why RE is important to *Kf* is because it has a function that is relevant to life.

Nm asks the interviewer if there are actually any plans on the table to change RE that would affect the name of the subject or how it was organised. The group makes suggestions for both the organisational structure and the name of the subject, which show their desire for amore broad and open RE provision (Further Oppositions, 895–917):

895 Nm: Are there any plans, to structure it differently, that it would be, I don't know, that there
896 would be more philosophy for example or that it would be called philosophy and culture?
897 Of: That you simply change its name.
898 Y1: ⌊ Yes, Yes, well in the Lit-, it is absolutely being discussed
899 in the field of religious education studies.
900 Lm: I think that the religions themselves would put up really strong resistance,
901 that they will want to say, that they don't want that, because they might lose people
902 to other religions, which could happen.
903 Kf: ⌊ Yes
904 Nm: Well, but on the other hand (.) but if more than half opt out now anyway
905 Kf: ⌊ they would gain more
906 Mf: ⌊ But I think, this is a receding trend, it
907 won't stay like this in my opinion. ( )
908 Lm: ⌊ Well, but I think I think, that many people who
909 opt out of RE, are still members of the church. I think,
910 most pupils only opt out because they know,
911 Mf: ⌊ I think so too. (.)
912 Lm: they can opt out, they gain 2 hours. I think, it is really only a
915 very very small number, of people who say, they just can't deal with the attitude of the
916 church, and therefore leave the church and opt out of RE.
917 Mf: I think so too.

Of would also like RE to be given a different name. It is apparent once again that members of the group feel removed from RE in its current form. They do, however, agree that RE should be part of education in school. Their alienation from RE in its current form is due to its denominationalist concept. The interviewer confirms that a controversial discussion on this issue is currently taking place ("it is absolutely being discussed in the field of religious education studies", 898–899). *Lm* then mentions a further possible opposition. He expects enormous resistance from the religions (900). They would reject any changes to RE that would lead to greater openness, because they would fear that they might lose members to other religions. *Nm* and *Kf* disagree, and argue that the religious communities have more to gain than they have to lose (904–905). *Lm*'s argument reflects the group's understanding of RE as subject of denomination and conviction, which he elaborates on further later on in the discourse and gets validated by other members of the group.

While *Mf* mentions a suspicion of hers, without explaining it in clear detail (906–907), again pointing out that there is a discrepancy among most pupils, between attending RE and being a member of a church. Other group members agree (911 and 913–914). Many pupils, who opt out of RE continue to be members of their church, because the main reason why they opt out of RE is to gain time and not because they disagree with the teachings of the church. *Lm* explains that a very small number of pupils do not agree with the teachings of the church and therefore leave the church and opt out of RE. It is clear once again that the group suspects that pupils mainly opt out in order to gain extra time, and not because of an incongruence between "the attitude of the church" (915–916) and their own. Therefore the group does not believe any kind of contextual incongruence to be the deciding reason why pupils opt out of RE, but the subject's organisational structure, which makes it possible to opt out. This shows how

Lm understands RE. He connects RE to the church and to either the agreement with or the rejection of its teachings. This connection is nonetheless not the reason why people opt out. When he makes this connection and when he states that be believes opting out of RE because of disagreements with the church's teachings to be legitimate, RE is portrayed as a subject of denomination and conviction.

Opting Out Among Muslim Pupils

Of continues on the topic of opt-outs from RE and connects it to Muslim pupils, which makes Muslim pupils the subject of the discussion (Opting Out Among Muslim Pupils, 918–981):

Of: And I also think, that very few pupils opt out of Islamic RE
few, very few, in my school not a single child has opted out of
Mf: ⌊ Far fewer (.) than than
Lm: ⌊ It would be interesting to
find out.
Of: RE from Islamic RE. in my school all Catholic pupils have opted out
of RE; but among Muslims there is so much pressure from home,
they would never sign this. I don't know what it's like here, but, yes (.) but
Kf: ⌊ But they
will just sign it themselves later ( )
Nm: ⌊ You know, don't you?
Y1: Well, yes.
Nm: Are you allowed to tell us?
Y1: Yes, I'm allowed to tell you, @yes@ well about 50% of Muslim pupils attend
Pf: ⌊ Of course
Y1: Islamic RE, about 60% of Catholic pupils attend theirs.
Mf: I would never nave thought that.
Of: ⌊ Oh more after all
Kf: Well that's a surprise.
Mf: Yes, that really is a surprise, yes, I'd never have
Nm: ⌊ Oh (.) yes, I would
Kf: Well I think lots of Protestant opt out, precisely because, there is plenty of time which is
Lm: ⌊ You would have known that. @(.)@
Kf: really stupid, yes, because one person is responsible for God knows how many schools
Lm: ⌊ Because I, I wanted to say, I would
not have ( ) but I
Mf: ⌊ Well that is that is really, that is really stupid, yes and ah I
don't want to tell my daughter what to do, I and we have already tried once with
Catholic and we aren't allowed in, but not not in school, but it's just not possible for legal
reasons, that's just how it is.
Kf: Well I think. Professor XXX ((surname of the Catholic RE teacher)) wouldn't
mind
Lm: ⌊ But this shows us now that we did have a somewhat biased opinion
of of the Islamic religion and would really be the sense and purpose, that's why
Mf: ⌊ Yes, yes, they have far more in common
Kf: ⌊ Yes
Lm: I would like there to be, I think if you had the subject religions, then you would
realise; okay ((slaps the table)) there are just as many Muslims
Mf: ⌊ I'd never have thought that 50% have opted out
Lm: who opt out, as there are Catholics.
Nm: Well, but I think the argument is a similar one, yes. you can opt out
and you get 2 hours off.
Lm: ⌊ Yes, of course, yes
Of: ⌊ But, because they themselves, only because they can do it themselves. By then
they are 16 and don't have to explain themselves at home; yes,
Kf: ⌊ Yes, yes
Mf: ⌊ Yes and the pressure from their re- ah from
their parents, and also the pressure of how they've grown up, how they grow up religiously.

966 Nm: Well to be honest, I think, that is a
967 cliché, I::
968 Mf: ⌊ Well, yes apparently, look, I could @apparently do with these religions classes
969 right@? because I believe in a cliché and I don't really know, yes.
970 Nm: ⌊ Because I
971 Lm: ⌊ Yes (.) I think, everybody could do with that.
972 Nm: ⌊ Well
973 maybe that's just another cliché, but I suspect, that they just are really strict
974 Mf: ⌊ Yes
975 Nm: ahm Muslim believers would not be likely to allow girls to get a
976 higher education or generally to stay in education for longer, that the really strict ones
977 Mf: ⌊ You mean that they wouldn't even come here
978 Nm: especially the girls I don't think (.) they could not get this kind of education.
979 Mf: ⌊ that they wouldn't be allowed to come
980 Nm: But I don't know that either, I would have to refer to your colleagues.
981 Kf: @(.)@

Of suspects that there is an enormous differencein opt-out rates between Islamic and Catholic RE. She suspects it to be much lower among Muslims. She compares opt-outs from Islamic RE to those from Catholic RE. She uses contrasts in her argument, which clearly shows her attitudinal framework. In order to prove her suspicion that very few pupils opt out of Islamic RE, she talks about her own school.[4] In her school Islamic opt-out rates are not only low, but nobody has opted out at all ("not a single child", 919). By contrast she offers another insight into the situation at her school, which shows the complete opposite for the opt-out rates among Catholic pupils, which is 100% ("in my school all Catholic pupils have opted out of RE", 923–924). According to *Of*, the reason why every single Muslim pupil attends Islamic RE classes, lies with the parents. Opting out of Islamic RE is out of the question for Muslim parents. This is due to the situation in Muslim families, which are dominated by heteronomy ("there is so much pressure from home, they would never sign this", 924–925). At the same time she makes it clear that her statements might only apply to her school. *Kf* does not believe that the autonomy of these pupils is completely restricted, as they can opt out by themselves later on ("later", 927). This shows that up to a certain point in time, parents' heteronomy is an issue when it comes to opting out of Islamic RE. Later on pupils can, however, act autonomously. *Of* connects the extremely low number of pupils who opt-out of Islamic RE, which she is familiar with from her school, to the strictness of Muslim families, which is expressed through heteronomy.

Nm turns to the interviewer to ask him about opt-out rates in this school. After checking with the headmistress *Pf*, who only speaks this one time during the whole discussion, the interviewer reveals the opt-out figures to the group. He does not mention the exact number of students who opted out, as *Nm* asked, but reveals in percentage terms how many pupils attend Islamic RE and how many Catholic RE. The group is astonished (934–937). *Kf* sums up the collective atmosphere of bewilderment with her statement; "well that's a surprise" (936). In contrast to the others, *Nm* is not surprised. He hints that the figures are roughly in line with what he had expected ("Oh (.) yes, I would", 938). Now the situation Protestant RE finds itself in at this school enters the discussion once again. *Kf* suspects that opt-out numbers among Protestant pupils would be particularly high. She gives two reasons for this. On the one hand time is an

4 *Of* is a parent representative in this SCC. She is also a teacher in another school.

issue ("precisely because, there is plenty of time", 939), a situation, which she refers to as "really stupid" (941). On the other hand, she mentions the RE teacher, who is responsible for providing Protestant RE in a large number of schools all by herself. *Kf*'s explanation shows how difficult it is to organise RE provisions, both in terms of time ("there is plenty of time which is really stupid, yes", 939–941) and in terms of staffing ("because one person is responsible for God knows how many schools", 941). *Mf* confirms this difficulty, especially as far as time is concerned and also calls it "really stupid' (944), which shows that she has something in common with *Kf*. *Mf* mentions her daughter in this context. She points out yet again that she does not want to make her daughter take part in RE, which underlines the voluntary nature of participation in RE. Nonetheless, RE is believed to be very important. This shows in the fact that *M*f tried to choose Catholic RE as an alternative for her daughter in order toget around the practical difficulties Protestant RE poses. This option was, however, denied to her ("we aren't allowed in", 946). *Mf*'s story shows how important religious education is to this group. It is nonetheless not taken up at all costs. *Mf* assumes that the school itself would definitely offer her daughter the chance to attend Catholic RE lessons (948–949). The fact that she was not allowed to take up this option has nothing to do with the school. The obstacles are rather imposed by the religious communities.

Lm uses the fact that the group has just been given the participation numbers for Islamic and Catholic RE as an opportunity to underline the important role 'RE for all' would have to play. The current situation has made him aware of something he was not aware of before ("but this shows us now", 950). According to *Lm*, and *Mw*as she agrees with him, the group was preoccupied with prejudiced ("biased opinion", 950) views about Islamic RE. *Lm* believes the significance and function of 'RE for all' would lie in its ability to expose prejudices and to learn the unexpected ("then you would realise", 954–955). In this context *Lm* gives the almost equal opt-out rates among Muslim and Catholic pupils as an example. This also expresses a certain view of Islam, which gets elaborated on further as the discourse continues.

While *Nm* and *Lm*suspect that the reasons why pupils opt out of RE are the same amongst Muslims and Catholics, *Of* holds on to her view on parental education in Muslim families. She adjusts her argument to the figures she has just heard. In *Of*'s mind the almost equal opt-out rates can be explained with the fact that Muslim pupils can opt out themselves, once they reach a certain age. *Kf* and *Mf* validate this. Opting out is contingent on pupils no longer having to justify their decision to their parents. She feels that the religious education pupils receive from their parents puts "pressure" (964) on them. The group's understanding of religious education by Muslim parents can be reconstructed from that. It is marked by heteronomy. As far as religion is concerned children are put under "pressure" (964). Muslim pupils only take up the opportunity to opt out of RE once they have reached a certain age, when they are no longer exposed to this "pressure" (964). This autonomous act is only possible, because they "don't have to explain themselves at home" (962). From a certain age onwards there is a perceived shift from parental heteronomy to personal autonomy. By contrast *Nm* calls this argument a "cliché" (967). While *Mf* agrees with *Of*, she also refers to her ideas "cliché[s] " (967), but knows that she is stuck in them. At the same time she talks about the importance of 'RE for all', as it would be able to dissolve these clichés. She herself could benefit from

these kinds of lessons. Thinking of the significance *Mf* has attributed to this subject for her personally, *Lm* generalises and widens the circle of people to whom this subject would be meaningful. He thus gives it general significance ("everybody could do with that", 971).

Once *Mf* has recognised that she holds certain clichés, *Nm* suspects that his own statement might also be a cliché. He feels on uncertain ground ("But I don't know that either", 980). Even though it might be a cliché he sticks to his assumption about how children are educated in extremely religious Muslim families. They are heteronomous when it comes to the education of girls. This heteronomy shows itself in the type and length of education girls can enjoy. Girls are supposedly mostly not allowed to get a higher level of education or to stay in education for longer, which he believes goes hand in hand with the shielding of girls.

The group's horizon of experiences can be reconstructed from this section. The group connects Islam with strict parenting and heteronomy. They discover prejudices about Muslims and about Islam within themselves, but largely do not change their line of argument. On the one hand they moderate their existing patterns according to new insight, such as when *Of* finds an explanation for why the opt-out numbers are roughly the same amongst Muslims and Catholics; Muslim pupils break away from parental strictness and heteronomy, once they reach the required age and can legally do so. On the other hand they continue to present arguments that fit into their horizon of experience, even if they clearly suspect that these arguments might be clichés. *Nm* for instance argues that a heteronomous family situation is responsible for denying girls an education.

Religious Diversity

Mf asks *Nm* a question to find out if this heteronomous treatment of girls in strict religious Muslim families has an impact on the gender ratio among Muslim pupils in this school (Religious Diversity, 982–1002):

982 Mf: Do you have more Muslim boys in this school than girls, or?
983 Nm: On the whole we have more girls in this school (.) no, I don't really think so, or?
984 Mf: ⌊ Yes (.) @all these questions, no@
985 Kf: ⌊ Well you
986 recognise the girls, you can't recognise Arabic boys, no, well strict
987 Mf: ⌊ Ah, yes, yes, that is true, yes, yes, yes
988 that's @also w@
989 Nm: Well, if you assume, that the majority of Turkish pupils
990 are Muslims (.) then we generally have more Muslim
991 girls than boys probably, because we generally have more girls.
992 Mf: ⌊ Mhm
993 Kf: Hm (3)
994 Nm: On the other hand I also don't think, that this is particularly important, I must
995 admit. In my class in the XXX ((name of a class)) for instance,
996 half the pupils are Muslim and half Catholic or other; ah I don't have the
997 impression, that religion is a big issue. (3) well, just today for instance
998 I saw my class out walking with the Islamic RE teacher, and I was surprised to see,
1000 2 girls with them, of whom I wouldn't have thought, I wouldn't have guessed
1001 from the way they look, that they are Muslims.
1002 (6)

To start with *Mf* asks *Nm* how many of the Muslim pupils who attend this school are boys as opposed to girls. *Nm* initially informs *Mf* about the gender ratio for the school as a whole, and then for Muslim pupils in particular. Firstly he points out that "on the whole" (983) more girls go to this school than boys, and secondly he addresses *Mf*"s specific question. He speculatively answers *Mf"*s closed question in the negative. He does not believe that there are more Muslim boys at this school than girls. In this context *Kf*points out that it is difficult to recognise "strict" (986) Muslim boys. By contrast it is easier to identify the girls, because strict adherence to Islam is obvious and visible with them. It is worth noting, that both *Kf* and *Nm* make a connection between ethnicity and Islam ("Arabic", 986; "Turkish pupils", 989). According to *Kf"*s statement it is not possible to clearly identify boys as Muslims. *Mf* agrees (987–988). *Nm* bases his argument on a conclusion he has drawn. He also uses ethnicity as the starting point. Provided it can be assumed that most Turkish pupils are Muslims, more Muslim girls attend this school than Muslim boys. Therefore it is clear, that the group believes that one can tell aperson's religious affiliation, purely based on what they look like. On the one hand, it is easier to tell a girl's religious affiliation than a boy's, on the other hand it is possible to guess pupils' religious affiliations based on ethnicity, in as far as Arabic and Turkish pupils are assumed to be Muslim.

Nm then talks about the religious constellation of pupils in this school. In *Nm*'s view, it is not particularly significant. In this context, he mentions his own class as an example and describes its religious constellation. He splits the class into two parts. One part consists of Muslim pupils, who in his opinion represent at least half of the class, the other part is "Catholic or other" (996). He thus specifically mentions Muslim and Catholic religious affiliation and juxtaposes them against each other. He does not name any other religions or denominations. *Nm* does not believe that this religious constellation in his class is particularly significant. This shows that while religious constellation gets noticed, it is not believed to be conspicuous or "a big issue" (997). *Nm* also demonstrates this with a specific example. Up until earlier this day, he was not aware that two female pupils in his class were "Muslims" (1001). He would not "have guessed" (1000) that based on their appearance. This once again underlines the perceived connection between ethnicity, external appearance and religious affiliation. *Nm* was not able to assign the two above mentioned pupils to any particular religion based on their appearance. This means that *Nm* was surprised when he found out that they were Muslims. He was only able to work this out, when he saw the two girls with the Islamic RE teacher.

Mf picks up on the religious constellation in *Nm*'s class. She asks if, given the religious mix in this school, there are any problems with cohesion in everyday life ("difficulties with integration", 2003; re:lational conflicts", 1004) (Religious Diversity, 1003–1049):

1003 Mf: Are there any difficulties with integration in this school between, that it's I'd say fifty fifty,
1004 right ( ) class, do you notice anything? Are there any re:lational conflicts, or something? yes?
1005 Nm: ⌊ Ah
1006 Kf: ⌊ Well
1007 sometimes.
1008 Lm: Well I think, the biggest problems are with the skiing course and sports week, well I only
1009 Nm: ⌊ Between
1010 Lm: know this from my dad's school. There, he says, they have cases from time to time,

where girls aren't allowed to come along for religious reasons. To the skiing course, sports week and other things
Kf: ⌊ Yes, yes (.) that happens here too.
Nm: ⌊ Well but the skiing course, that has, but that's not inter religious, it's just the parents saying, you can't go.
Mf: ⌊ If, if, but now well, if a class is half and half?
Nm: ⌊ Do you mean ethical conflicts, or something like that?
Mf: ⌊ Ethical one, yes, exactly
Nm: Well I've never noticed anything, they just all really mix.
Mf: ⌊ You have a
Kf: ⌊ Yes there are
Mf: ⌊ Do they mix, or are they separate, which?
Kf: Well in my class, who did their A-Levels last year, there were huge problems during the first year. I only took the class over in the second year and they were slowly getting, how should I say this, more tolerant towards each other, and then they were really quite close, but in the first year there were massive problems because of if some of them took too many liberties verbally, and others misunderstood and things like like that and over the years they somehow learned what the other one means @if they said this or that@ that it wasn't completely over the top and so on, well. (3)
Nm: Yes, but that was, how many were there?
Kf: Yeah back then they were 30, now at the end
Nm: ⌊ No, the ones who made trouble, or was the whole class?
Kf: ⌊ I see, I don't know, because I didn't have them then, but one mother told me in the second, third year
Mf: ⌊ Well there is also
Kf: now she likes it, now she likes going to school again. there really seem to have been massive problems before then
Mf: ⌊ Really, seems to have been bad, pretty bad.
Of: ⌊ Mhm
Kf: But I can't give you any figures and I only know this about this one class, well, yes.
Nm: ⌊ Mhm
(6)

In her question to *Nm Mf* makes a connection between the religious constellation in his class, and potential problems they might have. She mentions two types of problems and describes them as "difficulties with integration" (1003) on the one hand and "re:lational conflicts" (1004)on the other. Both are concerned with life together at the school. *Kf* agrees that these problems exist by indicating their frequency ("Well sometimes", 1006–1007). *Lm* mentions the "skiing course [and] sports week" (1008) as examples for the sort of events in school, which according to him, bring up the "biggest problems" (1008). He knows about these examples from his father's school. Consequently his experience is hearsay. In this context the group once again starts to talk about parents not allowing girls to do certain things for religious reasons. There are cases were parents do not permit their daughters to part in school sports events for religious reasons. These are not isolated incidents, but they happen again and again ("from time to time", 1010). *Kf* shares *Lm*'s experience and is able to locate it in her school as well. The cases *Lm* mentions, are thus being generalised, as they apply to another school as well.

Nm narrows the issue down, and points out that there is a difference between problems between religions, and problems caused by how parents bring up their children. He feels that the cases mentioned by *Lm* relate to how parents bring up their children. The

root of this problem is not to be found with religions, but with parents who do not allow their daughters to take part in certain school events. *Mf* picks up on this distinction *Nm* makes and asks him another question. She wants to know if the fact that his class is split into two parts in religious terms, leads to any problems. ("if a class is half and half", 1018). By asking *Mf* if she means "ethical conflicts" (1018), by which he presumably means ethnical ones, *Nm* again equates religion with ethnicity. Religious difference is insignificant to *Nm* ("I've never noticed anything", 1021), and does not pose an obstacle to a homogenous class ("they just all really mix", 1021). *Kf* objects to this statement and starts to talk about experiences of her own class, which she knows about mostly through hearsay, as she herself only experienced part of her class's process ("I only took the class over in the second year", 1028). She has, however, been told that in the beginning this class had "huge problems" (1026) because of religion and miscommunication. These problems decreased over time, as the children started to get to know each other better ("years they somehow learned what the other one means @if they said this or that@ that it wasn't completely over the top and so on, well", 1031–1033). The relationship pupils had to one another changed gradually ("and then they were really quite close"). *Nm* interjects ("but", 1034). He wants to know how many of the pupils in the class were responsible for the problems *Kf* mentioned. The aim of his question is to find out whether the whole class was responsible. This shows once again that he does not want to see the problems that have been described, as affecting the school as a whole. *Kf* is unable to answer *Nm*'s question, as she does not have any first-hand experience of the problems as they happened in the class ("because I didn't have them then", 1039). She was only told about them by other people.

Both *Nm*'s question and *Kf"*s answer show that problems based on religious difference are not evident to the group, as on the one hand they are not perceived at all, since they are talked about in ethnic terms, and on the other hand they are no more than hearsay.

This passage clearly shows that some members of the group connect religious affiliation to problems. *Mf* explicitly asks about such problems and defines them as "difficulties with integration", (1003) and "re:lational conflicts", (1004) Religion is therefore seen as a problem that impacts the ability to live together. Some members of the group are able to talk about specific problems, which they have heard about through other people. *Lm* knows about problems at his father's school, which affect school events ("skiing course, sports week", 1008) that parents do not allow their daughters to take part in. The problems with religion are once again located with parents, and how the bring up their children. At the same time ethnicity is equated with religion. This is already apparent, when *Mf* defines the problems as "difficulties with integration" (1003). *Nm* does not view the problems *Lm* mentions as problems between different religions, but as arising from how parents bring up their children. *Mf*"s question then equates religion with ethnicity. She still only talks about stories that she has heard from others. Both *Lm* and *Kf* can talk about a number of problems, but their stories are hearsay.

4.5 Case Collation School B

As the descriptions of the discourse show that in areas relevant to this study, different attitudinal frameworks could be reconstructed in the two groups. While shared attitudinal frameworks could be detected within the SCC-group, the RET-group exhibits an incongruence of the frame. Admittedly they do take note of one another, but they conduct the discussion from different horizons of experience. Based on these different attitudinal frameworks, a pooling of this case can nonetheless take place. As with *School A*, this collation does not homogenise different thematic approaches with their attitudinal frameworks. It rather collates similarities and differences within the group discussions that arise from the epistemological interest of the research study.

4.5.1 On the Perception and Assessment of Religion and Religious Diversity in this School

Denomination and Religion Segregate Pupils

The two groups who held group discussions in *School B*, have different perceptions of religion and religious diversity. This is not least down to the fact that the RET-group exhibited an incongruence of the frame. Two out of three RE teachers assume that denomination and religion divide pupils. For these two teachers, denominationally segregated RE groups form their own separate groups together with their respective RE teacher. In this context, religious services in school are one example that is brought up in order to illustrate this separation. Each of these religious services is tailored to a particular group of pupils based on their religion or denomination. Due to the geographical separateness of RE groups (Oriental Orthodox) from the main school building, an additional separation of pupils takes place. This is because this RE group is so small that its lessons take place in a building belonging to the denomination's parish. From his horizon of experience as the supervisor for schools and as a Chaplain, it is clear that he cares about the organization of RE and thus holds it in rooms within the parish.

Religious Diversity Enriches and Disrupts – Difficulties with Islam and Muslim Pupils

It can be observed that religious diversity is perceived as enriching in this school. This perception can be determined among RE teachers as well as in the SCC-group. Even though religious diversity is seen to present organisational difficulties in school (timetabling, school events), it nonetheless has positive connotations, as it makes encounters with other denominations and religions, during ecumenical religious school services and joint prayer sessions, possible. At the same time religious diversity is also perceived as a disruption. It causes organisational difficulties for the school and poses an obstacle when it comes to personal religious expressions. It has for instance been difficult for one teacher to take part in (Roman Catholic) religious school services, because her participation depended on her whole class also taking part. In addition it can be observed that the SCC-group distances itself from Islam and Muslims. A lived observance of Islam

gets connected with religious strictness and deviates from Austria's open worldview. Consequently strict adherence to Islam would also lead to difficulties in school and in later working life. The group is, however, of the opinion that this type of Islam does not exist in this school or in Austria in general. The group also displays a perception that an Islamic upbringing is marked by a heteronomous relationship between parents and their children generally and between parents and daughters in particular (opting out of RE is not allowed; higher access to education is prohibited). Even though the SCC-group understandsthese perceptions to be clichés, they nonetheless continue to argue along these lines. Perceptions of what impact denomination and religion have on pupils' interactions with each other in school, vary among members of the SCC-group. On the one hand the religious constellation of pupils is deemed to have no impact on how pupils interact with each other. On the other hand it gets connected to "difficulties with integration", (2003) and "re:lational conflicts", (1004), which the group has, however,only heard about though hearsay. In addition, the SCC-group is aware of the pluralistic religious constellation of pupils, but connects the Islamic faith to certain ethnicities, and stipulates Being-Catholic as the norm.

4.5.2 On the Perception and Assessment of RE in this School

From an Organisational Perspective RE is a Fragile Subject in School

Both groups discuss the organisational position of RE in school. Even though there is a lot of respect for RE, one of the RE teachers in the RET-group believes that RE is a fragile teaching subject. Its already fragile and marginalised position is made worse by the changes to pupils' denominational and religious affiliations (increase in pupils without religious affiliation) and by pupils opting out of RE. While there is a perception that the head of school values RE in principle, it is nonetheless marginalised compared to all other subjects. This perception is not shared by all members of the RET-group. One does not recognise this marginalised position, as most or all pupils from a certain denomination take part, another expresses the opinion that RE in schools is by no means self-evident, as it is threatened by the introduction of ethics education. The fortification of RE in school is also a concern. There has been an on-going struggle to establish Orthodox RE lesson in this school, which has not happened to date.

The marginalised position of RE can also be ascertained from the SCC-group discussion. This group feels that RE has to compete against pupils' free time, which they can increase by opting out. Since RE is in a marginalised position on the timetable personal preference is the deciding factor for whether pupils attend RE or not. Consequently RE can be reconstructed as a subject of denomination and conviction within the SCC-group. Participation in RE is not questioned during times of personal biographical importance (Confirmation) and it also has contextual legitimacy for "religious insiders'. Opting out of RE is justified if a pupil's personal view is incongruent with the teachings of the church. According to this group, participation in RE also increases pupils' competency to make religious decisions for themselves.

Both groups express a desire to broaden the scope of RE lessons. Due to the incongruence of the frame in the RET-group, perceptions also diverge when it comes to the RE provision. On the one hand the subject's organisationally marginalised position means that RE is not equal to other subjects in school. RE's position in school is thus viewed from an adverse position. On the other hand the group observes that RE benefits its pupils. RE does have something to offer, since religion has a positive impact both on a societal (better cooperation) and on a personal level (strength for one's own life). The marginalised position of RE is also discussed from the perspective of the pupils. RE being taught during the afternoon is "not motivational' (301) for pupils, as they have to put up with long waits. Although the marginalised position of RE is discussed in this context as well, RE is generally seen in a positive light. The enriching experience of time spent together during lessons gets highlighted. At the same time the group see potential for broadening the scope of RE lessons in the future. This can be achieved, as RE lessons are meaningful for pupils, and word about this fact spreads amongst them.

The SCC-group also sees possibilities for broadening RE. Unlike the RET-group, they, however, talk about a more general and not a denomination specific form of RE. As they are aware of RE's relevance to education – the tension between ideas of general compulsory and voluntary participation is palpable – members of the RET-group plead for a broadening of the material covered, namely that all religions should be contained within it ("subject […] religions", 379–380). There is thus a desire to open up the subject and turn it into an RE provision that enables collaborative learning that is personally relevant to pupils. It should do this by teaching pupils different approaches to questions of belief in a discursive-reflexive way. The possibility that pupils might change their faith because of these lessons is also considered, which clearly shows that there is a great degree of openness towards the idea of broadening the scope of the RE provision towards the "subject […] religions' (379).

4.5.3 On the Acceptance of RE for all Jointly Organised by the Churches and Religious Communities in this School

'RE for all' Poses Difficulties and is in Part Rejected Outright

There are different positions on 'RE for all' in both groups. The discussions reveal that members of both groups are worried about difficulties that would arise if 'RE for all' were to be established. In part this type of RE is rejected outright.

The RET-group sees difficulties in having to change aspects of what RE covers contextually. At the same time this is believed to be potentially enriching; if pupils all came together, their diverse faiths could become the subject of a discursive-reflexive learning experience. The SCC-group suspects that difficulties would come from the side of the RE teachers. According to this group there would be difficulties in teaching all the various religious traditions in an adequate way, as a single member of teaching staff would not be able to represent all religions equally well. This also connects to their desire that all religions should be taught in a non-biased way. One of the problems

faced by RE in its current form and by a potential future 'RE for all' is the religious socialisation of certain RE teachers and within certain religions and its formative effect (denominationalist attitude). This problem stands in the way of the SCC-group's desire, which is for a more open RE provision that takes a non-biased stance towards all religions. The group also suspects that strict religious (Muslim) parents would be closed off towards other religions. Consequently RE must not address other religions according to these parents. An insular denominationalist attitude is the fundamental problem in both cases. This goes hand in hand with the group's desire to open up the current RE provision and to give it a different name.

These difficulties aside, 'RE for all' gets decidedly rejected by two RE teachers in the RET-group. According to one of these RE teachers, it is RE's task to introduce pupils into a particular denomination/religion. There is for instance an enormous gulf between the Oriental Orthodox denomination and certain areas of Western morality, as there is a gulf between the Oriental Orthodox denomination and some other denominations and religions (Jehovah's Witnesses and Islam), as they do not have a common basis in their faiths (the divinity of Christ). This means that 'RE for all' is out of the question. The other RE teacher, who also rejects this approach, can imagine some limited cooperation with other religions under certain circumstances.

This rejection of an RE provision organised in this way, also links to their focus on the RE classes of their own religion and how important it is to them. Similar points of view can be observed with two of the RE teachers. To them RE is not a subject of general education, but a subject reserved for pupils from a certain denomination or religion. While one of the RE teachers understands RE as an introduction into the denomination, and thus focused on the pupils who are part of this denomination, the RE lessons of the other RE teacher are tailored specifically to the pupils from his religion, as this teacher discusses issues that are relevant to their lives during RE classes.

'RE for all' Has Wider Significance

As they talked about the significance of RE in its current denominational form, the SCC-group also addressed the significance of 'RE for all pupils'. For them this form of RE has wider, general significance, it would open up denominational constraints and would reveal its relevance to education. One of the RE teachers in the RET-group also underlines the advantages of this approach to RE. He discusses this from the horizon of experience of the school, and believes that this change would make the subject equal to other teaching subjects. It would take RE out of its marginalised position. This desired symmetry would for instance find expression in possible collaborations with other subjects, which could be realised, since all pupils would now be participating in RE.

5. Discussion of Empirical Findings and Perspectives

As the ÖRF endorsed the development of context-sensitive models of RE in its position paper to make it possible to ensure religious education in the form of a teaching subject on the school curriculum where RE organised in a denominational context runs up against its limits, this study constitutes an empirical basis for the development of such models. The study is based on the idea to first explore the context empirically in schools to give forthcoming models an appropriate foundation. The study contributes towards finding out what the appropriate consequences for religious education and more precisely for RE at schools, must be in view of the reality of ever-growing religious plurality. The discourse descriptions and case collations aimed to focus the attention of religious education studies, by means of an empirical approach, on the question of how RE in (individual) schools could be organised in future, if it is stretched to its limits in its present form. The study at hand offers insights based on data: it shows how religion, religious diversity and RE are perceived and valued and what levels of acceptance RE for all, jointly organised by the churches and religious communities, which could be seen as an alternative, context-sensitive way of organising religious education, would receive at two schools in Vienna.

The groups' attitudinal framework that was reconstructed in the two investigated schools was reported in a concentrated manner in discourse descriptions and case collations. In this chapter the individual empirical results will be reflected on in the wider context of religious education studies. Initially partial results of this study will be collated once again and defined as empirical findings. These findings are sourced from the empirical clues found in *School A* and *School B*. These findings will then be discussed and compared with other empirical religious education studies, which have already been addressed repeatedly in the chapter on the current state of research.[1] This discussion will be followed by a look at the perspectives for religious education studies, which to the author seems particularly relevant to the theory and practice of religious education (studies). The perspectives for religious education studies will be specified in separate arguments, which intend to stimulate further religious education studies discussion. Even though these perspectives for religious education studies are primarily focused on the two schools investigated (scope of application) for this study, ideas worthy of consideration for religious education studies as a whole can be formulated. The proceedings for this are presented schematically in the overview below. Like the case collations, this chapter is structured in accordance with the research questions outlined earlier. Here is a reminder of these research questions:

- How is religion and religious diversity perceived and valued in schools?
- How is denominational RE perceived and valued in schools?
- What level of acceptance does RE for all, jointly organised by the churches and religious communities, find within schools?

1 Cf. chapter 1.5 The State of Research in 'New' Empirical Studies.

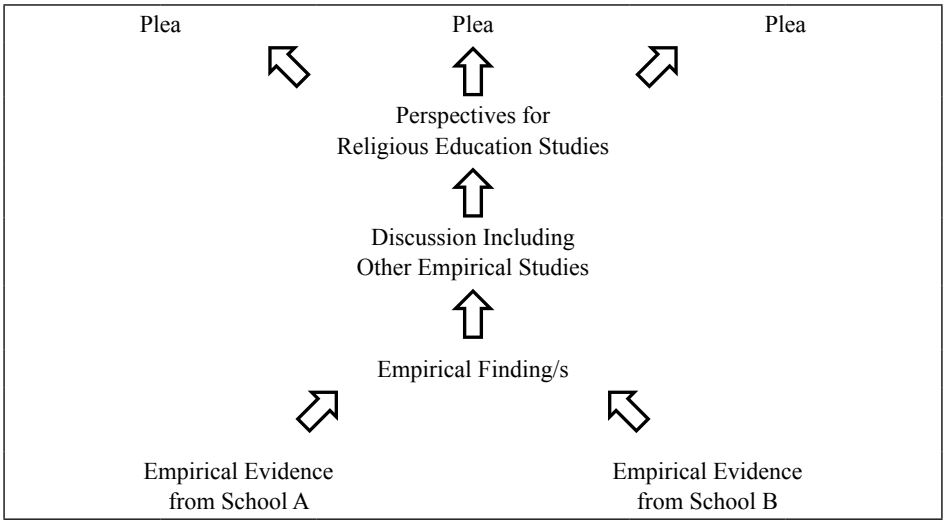

Figure 8: Procedure for discussion and for formulating the perspectives

5.1 Perception and Assessment of Religion and Religious Diversity in Schools

5.1.1 Empirical Finding I: A Tendency towards the Harmonisation of Religion and towards Shifting it away from the Public Sphere of the School

In the reconstructed attitudinal frameworks of the two investigated schools it became discernible how religion was perceived and valued. There is a visible tendency to harmonise religion, evidenced by the fact that in *School A* there was a general wish for harmony. As religion is seen as an issue potentially fraught with conflict, schools can only tolerate it in harmonised form. At *School B* there is a tendency to segregate pupils according to their denominations or religions and to shift religion away from the public sphere of the school. The following empirical indications taken from the evaluated group discussions substantiate this finding:

- *A Tendency to Harmonise (School A)*: in this school there is a general tendency towards harmonisation and the wish for a school to be an "island of bliss" (185 and 208–209). As religion in general, and religious diversity in particular, have the potential to cause conflict, efforts are being made to harmonise them. Religion can only be compatible with school if it causes no problems, evokes no conflicts and makes no trouble whatsoever. Because of this tendency of the school on the one hand and the expectations of the ecclesiastical education authorities on the other, the RET-group feels they are "sitting on the fence" (466) and cannot see any way they could act in order to cope with this situation in the school in a resourcefully.
- *Denomination and Religion Segregate Pupils (School B)*: In the RET-group it becomes evident that pupils are seen as segregated according to their denomina-

tional or religious affiliation, in as much as certain pupils together with their RE teachers form their own group, which is different from the others (separation). To some extent RE is held outside the school on parish premises, which makes the separation of pupils even more obvious and a tendency to shift religion away from the public school area becomes apparent.

5.1.2 Empirical Finding II: An Overall Concept of how to Deal with Religious Diversity is Lacking

When it comes to the perception and assessment of religious diversity the two case studies present disparate pictures. On the one hand the introduction of ethics education at *School A* and of Islamic and Oriental Orthodox RE at *School B* point to the fact that religious diversity has prompted theses schools to take organisational measures.[2] The reconstructed attitudinal frameworks imply that an overall concept for constructively dealing with religious diversity outside of lessons is missing in both schools. Relevant indications for the lack of such an overall concept can be found in both case studies; they mainly show up in the way Muslims and Islam are addressed:

- *Muslims Serve as an Opposite Horizon (School A)*: In part Muslims are not present in this school's perception. Their presence in school is blanked out. For both investigated groups Muslims represent a potential for conflict, which has, however, not been realised in this school up to now. This is for instance explained with the cooperative skills of the Islamic RE teacher and the fact that, in their view Muslim girls, wearing head scarves purely as a fashion statement. Yet, because of the possible conflicts associated with them, Muslims could disrupt the desired harmony within school.
- *Religious Diversity Enriches and Disrupts – Difficulties with Islam and Muslim Pupils (School B)*: While religious diversity is referred to as enriching, it is at the same time the reason for organisational difficulties in school (timetable, school events). Apart from these difficulties a certain dissociation from Islam is noticeable, as strictness at home, heteronomy and problems with living together are associated with it. In *School A* "being-Catholic" is regarded as the norm. This is also partly the case in *School B*.

5.1.3 Discussion Including other Empirical Studies

That young people's skills in dealing with cultural and political diversity should be promoted at school is regarded as self-evident in religious education studies. An international study by Ziebertz/Kalbheim/Riegel offers reveals important findings on how

2 The empirical materials available for this research do not contain assured findings why these subjects were introduced in these two schools. It can, however, be safely assumed that the awareness of religious plurality caused their introduction, as in both cases ("Ethics' on the one hand and Islamic and Oriental Orthodox on the other) the schools (SCC or school administration) had to file applications with the relevant authorities.

young people interpret diversity and how they deal with it. The quantitative sub-study shows that young people perceive socio-cultural diversity as normal and not as a problem for themselves, although they also see a potential for conflicts in it. Young people assess socio-cultural diversity according to functional considerations and ask themselves what significance this kind of diversity has for them and society. In addition to socio-cultural diversity the study also focused on religious diversity. For the evaluation of this young people were offered three models: exclusivist attitude (Christianity contains the whole truth and therefore constitutes the path to salvation), dialogical attitude (knowledge of God comes through dialogue with people from different religions), and equal value of religions (the religions are not significantly different, they have different paths to salvation). The exclusivist model is mostly rejected by young people. In an international comparison opinions on the other two models vary, Austrian and German youths mostly prefer the equal value model. In Great Britain most young people tick 'don't know', while young Dutch people are sceptical towards all three models. This qualitative sub-study shows that young people use religious diversity as a resource for their own religiosity and handle it actively, without fear of institutional or social sanctions.[3] Just like the study by Ziebertz/Kalbheim/Riegel the REDCo sub-study also shows that religious diversity is part of young people's lived environment, although they encounter this diversity more frequently at school than in their leisure time. The young people, who were interviewed, want to school to be a part of school.[4] Pupils should have the right to express their faith at school (Wearing 'unobtrusive' religious symbols and participating in religious services. The majority of the young people questioned also think that religious dietary rules should be observed in schools.). Responses varied less significantly in different countries than they did between people from different religions. An analysis of the data in view of this, shows differences between Muslim youths on the one hand and Christian or 'non-religious' ones on the other. Young Muslims agree much more frequently that pupils should have the right to stay away from school because of religious festivals, not to take part in certain subjects if there are religious reasons for that, to be allowed to perform their prayers at school and to voluntarily take part in religious services at school.[5] These differences point to majority-minority circumstances in the investigated countries, as there are concerns that certain religious traditions might be lost.

Both studies point to the great importance of engaging with religious diversity in a way that is capable of dealing with plurality by taking religion and religious diversity into account and giving them a place in school life. While the studies by Ziebertz/Kalbheim/Riegel and REDCo offer important basic empirical principles for how young

3 Cf. Ziebertz/Kalbheim/Riegel 2003, 95–113.

4 This qualitative sub-study asked, among other things, whether there should be religion at school. Young people argued for as well as against it. The arguments in favour included: 1. Learning about religion because it is part of your own life, of general education, culture and national background, 2. Learning about other religions and cultures, 3. Passing on values, 4. Contributing towards living together in peace. The arguments against could also be grouped in four categories: 1. No interest in religion, 2. Suspicion of being missionised, 3. Triggering conflicts, 4. Religion is a private affair. Cf. Knauth/Körs 2008, 398 f.

5 [380] Cf. Jozsa 2009, 143–147; cf. also Knauth et al. 2008; Valk et al. 2009.

people's ability to deal with diversity can be strengthened in school, Ritzer's longitudinal study points to the RE's limitations in this area. In his study he was not able to find any significant changes in the competency area of 'tolerance' over the course of a school year among pupils who attended RE, ethics education or neither of the two.[6] Instead of exaggerating expectations regarding RE, Ritzer's study makes clear what RE can realistically achieve and that tolerant and constructive handling of religious diversity cannot exclusively be the task of one subject, such as RE. It is rather the task of the entire school.

Even though, as mentioned above, young people are open-minded and positive about diversity and think that a constructive handling of RE should be fostered albeit its limited scope, it is on the one hand hardly surprising that no appropriate overall concept exists in either of the two schools analysed for this study. School development is not concerned with issues of religion and religious diversity, neither in theory nor in practice.[7] On the other hand both empirical findings of this study draw attention to the importance of not pushing religious diversity aside and to the necessity of addressing it within the religious education studies agenda, or rather to include it in general school education. The aforementioned empirical studies by Bolz/Schrumpf/Jäggle and Strutzenberger show similar results to the present study. Among other issues Bolz/Schrumpf/Jäggle surveyed if, and in how far cultural and religious food practices are taken into account in schools. This was used as an indicator for cultural and religious traditions being acknowledged or ignored. While local businesses on school trips (e. g. skiing weeks) show consideration for eating traditions, this issue is ignored in everyday school life they. Eating raditions are considered a private matter that would not justify additional organisational expenditure. This practice is not believed to be a problem in the schools surveyed by Bolz/Schrumpf/Jäggle. The issue of wearing head scarves is dealt with in a similar way. Head scarves should be worn, as wearing them holds potential for conflict and is a possible cause for marginalisation. The authors' findings on how these schools handle cultural and religious differences were as follows: difference is frequently pushed away, delegated or marginalised, especially at all-day schools and ecclesiastical private schools.[8] Strutzenberger's results are similar. Consequently, Catholic RE teachers interviewed by her, who contribute to school development processes, never explicitly mentioned religious diversity. Just like Bolz/Schrumpf/Jäggle she sees the actions of these RE teachers as conforming to the system, for a constructive handling of religious diversity would primarily be the task of the whole school and not of individual persons.[9] Fischer's et al. school case studies also point out the importance of handling religion and religious diversity constructively throughout the entire school; it should not be imposed on individual persons or rather exclusively on RE teachers as competent experts, or passed off entirely to RE. As an issue that cuts across the entire educational system, dealing with religious diversity concerns the whole school. Intercultural and interreligious learning therefore are school issues and strategies for dealing with them

6 Cf. Ritzer 2010, 312–370.

7 With the exception of the initiative 'lebens.werte.schule'. Cf. Jäggle/Krobath/Schelander 2009; Jäggle et al. 2013; Initiative 'lebens.werte.schule' 2008a; cf. also Battke et al. 2002.

8 For the complete research project cf. Bolz/Schrumpf/Jäggle 2000; also Jäggle 2000, 127–137.

9 Cf. Strutzenberger 2012, 436–446.

have to be developed consciously. "Intercultural [and interreligious, P.K.] learning does not happen by itself just because there are children from different backgrounds [and religions P.K.], there has to be political will and educational planning. Shaping the living together of different children in schools is a universal educational task."[10] Altogether these studies clearly show the importance of school management. They point to systemic conditions in schools, as teachers act in conformity with the system, even if they did have strategies for handling religious diversity constructively. This shows how necessary it is to make religious diversity into an issue that concerns the entire school.

A qualitative-empirical study in the context of the REDCo project showed that teachers are aware of (religious) diversity and have strategies for dealing with it in their lessons. The authors of this study recognise the significance of teachers' own biographies when it comes to constructively handling religious diversity in class. Teachers interviewed for that study all talked about positive experiences with religious plurality in their own lives, e. g. their family lives, their childhood, during stays in foreign countries or when they were studying. Nonetheless, the authors found a disconnect between these positive experiences and their style of teaching, although they would have strategies for working with religious diversity in class.[11] The results of this REDCo sub-project are especially remarkable and contrasting when compared to the present stud. After all, religious diversity is in part not taken into account at all by the schools in this study, or rather there is an altogether reserved relation towards Muslims and Islam, even among RE teachers. Rosenberger's vignette study of student-teachers' ability to differentiate underlines the urgency of the findings presented. In their study no reference is made to student-teachers or their supervisors in school placements, taking any notice of religious diversity. Cultural diversity (language) is hardly noticed at all (3%) by student-teachers either and only insufficiently by placement supervisors (15%).[12] If religious diversity is not addressed during the training of RE teachers and other teachers, perceptions of how to deal with religious diversity will presumably remain random. They will thus continue to rely on personal experiences, which are likely to be insufficient, because of where they come from, and only address religious diversity within a limited scope (their own lessons). The studies discussed above indicate that teachers, even if they have appropriate perceptive skills and strategies for handling religious diversity, do not use these skills in schools where religion and religious diversity are not presented as a reflexive and structured topic. They will instead align their actions to the system.

5.1.4 Perspective I: Religion and Religious Diversity as Task and Challenge for Schools

Due to the fact that there is a tendency towards harmonisation and privatisation of religion in both schools assessed for this present study on the one hand, and because there is no discernable overall concept for handling religious plurality on the other, it is advisable to not only maintain, but to strengthen and, if necessary, implement religion and

10 Fischer 1996, 103.
11 Cf. Avest/Bakker/Want 2009, 123–126; Avest 2009,401.
12 Cf. Rosenberger 2013, 182.

religious diversity as a topic that cuts across the entire educational system as an issue for religious education studies in theory as well as in practice. The empirical findings of this study and the discussions resulting from them, suggest that the field of religious education studies needs to look at school development and RE, as well as the training, further education and continuous professional development of RE teachers and other teachers. Addressing religion and religious diversity is of great importance for school as a whole, because ignoring and marginalising religion and religious plurality coupled with the stereotyping of Muslims and Islam would risk gambling away "content-related and social key functions for how people live together with migrants, for the intensity and quality of mutual understanding and for acquiring an attitude of critical respect towards others. The reasons for and the development of social and cultural conflicts would remain permanently hidden."[13] This view on the perspective would therefore like to encourage that greater attention should be paid to religion as a dimension of school and to religious plurality in the three areas mentioned above.

5.1.4.1 Plea 1: Religion and Religious Plurality Must be Addressed as Part of School Development Processes

In order to integrate religion and religious plurality into sustainable school development processes, that is to say to enable the constructive handling of this issues that cuts across the entire educational system, certain personal and organisational conditions must be met. In this way school development processes can be fostered by means of innovative actions of individuals as well as reliable and targeted organisational structures[14] on the one hand, and through a sensitive perception of the individual school's context (e. g. the school and its history, its representatives, its catchment area, its political and educational framework) on the other. In addition, it is necessary to find the relevant resources. If processes aiming to develop a sustainable overall concept for dealing constructively with religion and religious plurality are to succeed, it is essential that all parties involved are willing and serious in their intention. This for instance means that individuals responsible for such development processes at specific schools must be prepared to initiate and accompany them they must be willing to make organisational changes if necessary as well as to supply resources and evaluate progress. Experience from successful school development processes also show that head teachers have a very important role to play.[15] They are able to substantially contribute to the success of such processes. In Austrian schools for secondary and further education, the body responsible for educational matters, which also possesses the necessary formal decision making powers, is the SCC; it consists of elected school representatives (pupils, teachers and parents as well as the head of school).

The ecumenical initiative 'lebens.werte.schule' (value.able.school), a collaboration between the University of Vienna and University College of Teacher Education of Christian Churches Vienna/Krems, has made diversity in schools and religious diversity

13 Fischer 1996, 103.
14 Cf. Biermann 2007, 304–316.
15 Cf. Fischer 1996,104.

in particular, into an issue for school development. It wants to make "religious dimensions in school culture and school development visible and fruitful for the community." It aims to create "a school that is compatible with democracy and to make a contribution to people-friendly education."[16] Its work is guided by the question, of how diversity and plurality are dealt with in schools and how young people can gain recognition from any every head of school.[17] If a school was to look for a an example of a 'good school' during its school development work, such a school "may be judged by how it perceives people and their differences and how it handles social inequality as well as cultural and religious diversity. Sustainable school development is based on the extent to which individual, social, cultural and religious differences are seen as an asset for the school".[18]

In view of an increasingly religiously pluralistic society the Council of Europe also addresses the significance of religion within the context of intercultural education at school in several documents.[19] In its handbook for religious plurality and intercultural education it offers schools a "checklist of key issues and questions for self-reflection and for action", which, although it was hardly used, would be really helpful during school development processes. It focuses on the religious dimension of school and its religious plurality. It keeps an eye on the school as a whole, holding it responsible for religious education and offering stimuli for self-reflection, intending to encourage appropriate measures being taken.[20] Against the backdrop of the two schools analysed for this study, the author created a similar[21] context-sensitive adaption of this checklist. This list is intended to contribute to the establishment of a sustainable school development process and an overall concept for the constructive handling of religion and religious plurality at schools:[22]

1. Ethos and Values
   - What is the value base the school was founded on?
   - Who defines and promotes this value base?
   - Does it support and foster dialogue, respect and acceptance?
   - Does it reflect the religious dimension and religious diversity in school?
   - Is this value base known the wider school community and have they agreed to it?
   - In view of an increasingly religiously pluralistic school, is religious education part of the school programme?

16 Initiative 'lebens.werte.schule' 2008b.

17 Cf. i. a. Jäggle/Krobath 2009; Schröder 2009, also Jäggle et al. 2013.

18 Jäggle/Klutz 2016, 56 f. Every term the course 'Theory and Practice of School Development and Religion' is offered as a compulsory optional seminar by the Centre for Teacher Education at the University of Vienna to all student-teachers; it is conducted by members of the initiative 'lebens.werte.schule'.

19 Cf. Chapter 1.3 Religious Education and teaching religion in the European context.

20 Cf. Keast/Leganger-Krogstad [3]2008, 119–121.

21 The checklist was adapted to the Austrian background in general and the two analysed schools in particular. Compare the checklist in the appendix of this study.

22 For the following, cf. Keast/Leganger-Krogstad [3]2008, 119–121.

2. Curricular Prioritisations within the School's Profile
   - Are pupils' and the school communities' various needs, especially their cultural and religious needs, recognised with the school's curricular prioritisation within the schools profile? Which aspects are not taken into account?
   - Do the curricular prioritisations within the school's profile promote respect for and acceptance of religion and religious diversity in the school?

3. School Governance and Management
   - In how far does school governance and management reflect (religious) diversity in the school?
   - In how far is the school's profile based on Christianity (in its Roman Catholic form) being the norm?
   - In how far does the school calendar reflect religious diversity?
   - To what extent do school holidays (e. g. school autonomous school-free days) reflect religious festivals of the various religions?
   - Are the religions represented by pupils and teachers in the school, and their holidays considered when school-free days (e. g. school autonomous school-free days) are being scheduled?
   - How does the school handle religious ceremonies of different religions?
   - How are cultural and religious eating habits and dietary rules provided for in the school?
   - How does the school deal with characteristic cultural or religious items of clothing? How are clothing regulations and the wearing of religious symbols dealt with?
   - To which extent is religious diversity reflected in this way?
   - How are conflicts handled?

4. Prioritisation in the Curriculum[23] and the School Routine
   - Has the school conduced an audit of how much the religious dimension and religious plurality are taken into account?
   - What is the main focus of the curriculum?
   - Is the curriculum adaptable to future challenges in pupils' lives? Is cultural and religious diversity part of the curriculum? If so in which areas?
   - Is religious diversity being addressed in ethics and philosophy lessons? If so in which areas?
   - Do subjects that are specific to the type of school address religious diversity? If so how?
   - Which languages are taught in the school? Are courses in the pupils' mother tongues offered?
   - In how far are cultures represented amongst teachers and pupils taught in history lessons?
   - Whose music is played in everyday school life and during school festivals?
   - Whose games are played in the school yard?
   - Whose sports are played in PE?

23 Since, the Austrian curriculum is a framework curriculum, content prioritisation by teachers is possible.

5. RE
    - How many pupils attend RE?
    - What are the difficulties in the organisation of RE?
    - Where and at what time is religion taught?
    - Has RE got the same status as other subjects with regard to premises and time-tabling?
    - What are the aims of RE?
    - Do these aims correspond with the aims of the school?
    - Which religions are addressed in RE? How are they chosen?
    - How are other religions judged in RE?
    - How is the relation to other religions viewed in RE?
    - In how far are the religious socialisation and the individual religiosity of pupils taken into account?
    - Are common features of religions uncovered and emphasised?
    - Are differences between religions appreciated and accepted?
    - Are religions taught in a comparative-systemic way (as in religious studies)?
    - Is there any interdenominational and interreligious learning that is based on and aimed at mutual respect and acceptance?
    - What opportunities are there cooperation (joint teaching, projects and celebrations) for teachers of different denominations and religions in the school?
    - Are they supported by the school governance and management?
    - Are there any negative attitudes towards religions and RE in the school?
    - Does the school provide ethics education for the pupils who don't take part in RE.
    - How many pupils attend ethics education?
    - What were the reasons to introduce ethics education? In how far was religious a reason for this?

6. Teachers Training
    - To what extent have teachers been trained to recognise the religious dimension in the school and to provide a constructive way of dealing with religious diversity?
    - In which way and to what extent are teachers supported by the school governance and management?

5.1.4.2 Plea II: Discover the 'Catalysing Power' of RE for School

Even if RE must not be burdened with the task of providing an overall concept that helps schools to deal more constructively with religion and religious diversity on its own, it can still serve as a driving force and 'catalyst'. Its educational significance would increase if it provided a service for schools, without being functionalised in and of itself. Thus RE could for example call attention to religion and religious diversity in the course of teaching projects. These projects could uncover and identify areas within the school where religion and religious diversity become visible. Afterwards their potential for the entire school could be discussed. The experience of cooperation, as talked about in the study of *School B*, is a remarkable example for how RE can act as catalyst for

the school to develop an overall concept for dealing constructively with religion and religious diversity in schools. In *School B* there was cooperation in RE (Catholic and Islamic on 'Jesus and Mary in Islam') and in joint school services (Catholic and Oriental Orthodox as well as Catholic and Islamic), which opened up possibilities for learning and contact, as the experience of religious differences triggered learning. It is especially significant that this cooperation was mentioned by the SCC-group. The RE teachers' cooperation in *School B* draws attention to two things: 1. The Catholic RE teacher took part in all of the cooperation. The Catholic RE teacher teaches only in this one school, while the other two teach in several school. This seems to put the Catholic RE teacher into a key position. In other words: cooperation probably needs a person for whom the school is their main place of work, who has a solid position within it and therefore has the opportunity to take the initiative to organise cooperation and to promote it. 2. As evidenced by the joint Catholic Islamic school service, cooperation gets noticed outside of RE lessons. This is clear from the fact that it was specially and positively mentioned by the SCC. Thus making things public in this way plays a crucial role. The experiences in *School B* fuel the courage to discover the catalysing power RE can have for a school as a whole in its specific context, not least because the positive attitude of young people towards religious diversity can be counted on.[24] The experiences of *School B* lead to the following impulse questions to help discover the 'catalysing power' of RE:

- Which (staff) resources are available?
- What possibilities for cooperation exist already and which could yet be established?
- How can religion and religious diversity be made visible as a dimension of school itself?

In order to enable RE to unfold its 'catalysing power' to foster a constructive handling of religion and religious diversity in school, aside from organising teaching projects triggered by the work done in RE lessons, it is in my opinion necessary to promote models for religious education that help pupils to develop a sensitivity for the phenomenon of religious diversity in all its dimensions[25] and to practice the competent handling thereof, within the framework of RE. In other words, pupils' interdenominational and interreligious skills need to be fostered.[26] Roebben presented a convincing model for religious learning. This model recognised religious diversity and the personal biography of every single pupil and integrates them constructively into the religious-educational processes. Roebben's model will be presented here very briefly, because it possesses the potential to reveal the 'catalysing power' of RE for the entire school. It also does justice to the subject orientation demanded by religious education studies and strives to establish religious learning processes of existential importance.

Roebben understands RE to be a pilgrimage, which draws its inspiration from the observation that the hermeneutic-communicative concept prevalent in religious educa-

24 Cf. Ziebertz/Kalbheim/Riegel 2003, 95–113.

25 Cf. Englert 2002, 19–31.

26 Cf. a selection of numerous concepts: Langenhorst 2016; Schweitzer 2014b; Schambeck 2013; Willems 2011; Tautz 2007; Leimgruber [2]2012; Sajak 2005; Jäggle 2003; Goßmann 1987.

tion studies, which perceives RE and the-religious-in-the-world and explores it though communicative exchange, is stretched to the limits. Roebben is, however convinced that existential questions will arise in RE and that pupils will be longing for answers. He uses the image of the 'narthex', the porch of a church, and calls religious learning narthex learning. This emphasises the educational and theological momentum of religious learning, "which cannot be studied for but can only be received. In the narthex you can come to the understanding, that your own existence cannot be fathomed, that you are not the source of your own thoughts, that in your search you have already been found and can never lapse back into final meaninglessness, even if you have strayed or lost sight of the road." [27] Thus Roebben does not see RE as a calculable event, but as a gift. Even if there is not yet any relevant empirical educational research on his model, which would surely be informative, it is convincing because it spells out religious learning beyond the partly ideologically overloaded discussion about 'learning in religion', 'learning from religion' and 'learning about religion'. Mary C Boys understands this as learning in the presence of the religiously different. In this way Roebben takes the reality of increasing religious diversity into account and considers it fundamental to the learning processes. As far as approaches to interreligious learning are concerned Roebben thinks ahead and includes them in intra-religious learning. He justifiably points out the limits of interreligious learning at school,[28] because at times it places excessively high expectations on the pupils. For this kind of learning to work, an adequate knowledge base of various religions as well as an individual reflected religious position are necessary. By contrast, Roebben advocates inter-spiritual learning in the presence of religiously different others. He calls this learning in/through religion or intra-religious learning, which opens pupils up to religious experiences through the encounter with the religiously different; this can also mean religious text sand traditions. "Those who spend time encountering the other, will not only be confronted with dissimilarity and difference (*la difference*) but also with radical otherness or alterity (*l'altérité*). In the classroom pupils meet in a direct way, as classmates, as persons, as human beings with their own origins and future."[29] These encounters challenge them to "*define themselves anew* and *dignify (meaning appreciate) themselves anew",*[30] thus helping them to develop their own identities and to deal with diversity in a constructive way. While Roebben's model does not make organisational changes to RE essential, he does argue that pupils should stay together in "a classroom of diversity'. Through using this method of inner differentiation the teacher may succeed in getting the class to work together in unity, on the same topic or question and in the same context, focused on identical goals. At the same time the teacher is able to guide his pupils to deal with the respective topic using their own individual learning

27 Roebben [3]2012, 93.

28 The fact that the term 'interreligious learning' is often being used in very different ways and that nowadays the term 'interreligious competence' is being established, have been compiled trenchantly by Schambeck. Her teaching- and study-book also offers a good survey of paradigmatic approaches to interreligious learning. In this survey it becomes clear that the approaches to interreligious learning are developing from being focused on contents or topics to being subject oriented. Cf. Schambeck 2013, 52–110.

29 Roebben [3]2012,133 f. [italicised as in the original]; cf. also Greiner 2000; Grümme 2007.

30 Roebben [3]2011,152. [italicised as in the original]

basis and their own means. Collective and personal learning are brought together in this approach."[31] Roebben assumes that pupils are the subjects of religious learning, so that religious learning processes can be triggered through their encounter with the religious other, for instance through their experience of difference. He himself admits that this kind of learning is an ambitious endeavour for religious education in school. He is nonetheless convinced that pursuing this model is worthwhile, since it promises to be existentially meaningful for individuals.[32] It also promises to have a radiating influence on how the whole school deals with religion and religious diversity.

At the same time a model like this will have consequences for theological training, further education and continuous professional development, where the practical-theological mode of reflection should be brought to bear, so that (future) RE teachers become sensitive to "sacred things in everyday life' and 'speak about and interpret"[33] them in the classroom. The third plea of this first look at the perspective was drafted with this in mind.

5.1.4.3 Plea III: Strengthen the Skills of (RE) Teachers in the Area of Religion and Religious Diversity

The reconstructed attitudinal framework of the RE teachers in *School A* shows that grater support for RE teachers through training, further education and continuous professional development is needed. RE teachers at *School A* notice divergent expectations are being put on them. They feel they are "sitting on the fence" (466) and do not know how to act. That means that doing the job of an RE teacher can be experienced as a burden, despite the fact that this group professionals is all in all reasonably content with their work and burnout is rarely observed.[34] If viewed objectively, the profession of RE teacher is very demanding and onerous because of its framework conditions. To feel at the mercy of religious plurality without having a satisfactory concept for RE in practice makes it even more difficult. Educational-didactical, theological-religious educational, institutional and personal concepts are particularly urgent.[35] The empirical results from the RET-group in *School A* and Rosenberger's aforementioned vignette study point to the importance and respectively urgency of making religious diversity an integral part of training, further education and continuous professional development for (RE) teachers. If this does not happen, the perception and handling of religion and religious diversity by (RE) teachers will remain random, that is to say, exclusively reliant on biographical experiences.[36] Consequently, this plea focuses on (future) RE teachers, students in teacher-training and teachers of other subjects. This is because, as has

31 Roebben 2011, 40.

32 Cf. Roebben [3]2012, 83–98, 133–156.

33 Roebben [3]2012, 170; cf. Roebben 2016.

34 Cf. e. g. Bucher/Rothbucher 1996, 132–151; Bucher 2005a, 30–70; Danner/Lagger/Schwarz 2005, 124–169; Bucher 2005b, 219–221; Bastel 2005, 228–230; Englert/Güth 1999, 49–54; Lück 2003, 287–290; Feige/Tzscheetzsch 2005, 44–54.

35 Cf. Ziebertz/Heil 2005a; Buchrichter et al. 2012.

36 Cf. Want et al. 2009.

been made clear several times already, religion and religious diversity are educationally relevant issues that cut the all of school and the entire education system. Since (RE) teachers' educational-didactical, theological-religious-educational and personal skill are indispensable – evidently to varying degrees – the curricula of degree course with their lectures or further training and continuous professional development, must take this demand into account. Courses such as 'Learning Ecumenism', 'Ecumenical Explorations' – both conceived from a practical-theological perspective – and 'Theory and Practice of School Development and Religion' at the University of Vienna encourage student (RE) teachers to take on board the phenomenon of religion and religious diversity as a dimension of school, during their training period. Throughout these courses students are helped "to acquire the ability of denominational self-reflection in ecumenical encounters."[37] Reflexivity is, after all, said to be a key competency of teaching.[38] Students' intra-religious learning processes clearly get initiated when they meet denominationally different people.[39] Practical-theological courses as well as school-educational ones with practical-theological awareness foster personal skills in a very special way: they help student (RE) teachers to become aware of their own goals and basic options in the school as a place of learning and to disclose them to others, to notice the resources available in the school, to judge them according to their potential for the school and to develop options for action. Such a resource oriented, deeply practical-theological approach (orientate yourself-see-judge-act)[40] aims to identify available possibilities. In boosting personal skills these courses comply with the recommendation of the REDCo sub-study to afford more space to the personal dimension in the training, further education and continuous professional development of (future) (RE) teachers and to develop resource oriented action.[41] Following on from this plea, the following questions intend to stimulate actions:

- How are (future) (RE) teachers assisted in developing strategies to handle religious diversity in school constructively?
- What help do (future) (RE) teachers need in their schools to build up resource oriented thinking and to develop it further?

37 Senat der Universität Wien 2013, 16.

38 Cf. Ziebertz/Heil 2005b.

39 Cf. Roebben [3]2012, 151–154. In the course 'Thinking philosophically and theologically' students can also experience intra-religious learning processes by taking part in philosophical and theological discussions with their fellow students. Cf. Klutz/Lehner-Hartmann 2013.

40 Cf. Boschki 2007.

41 Cf. Avest 2009, 401. On the significance of supervision and systemic counselling for RE teachers cf. Wedding 2013; Wölfel-Ternes 2013; cf. also Kögler 2011.

5.1.5 Overview of Empirical Finding I + II and Perspective I

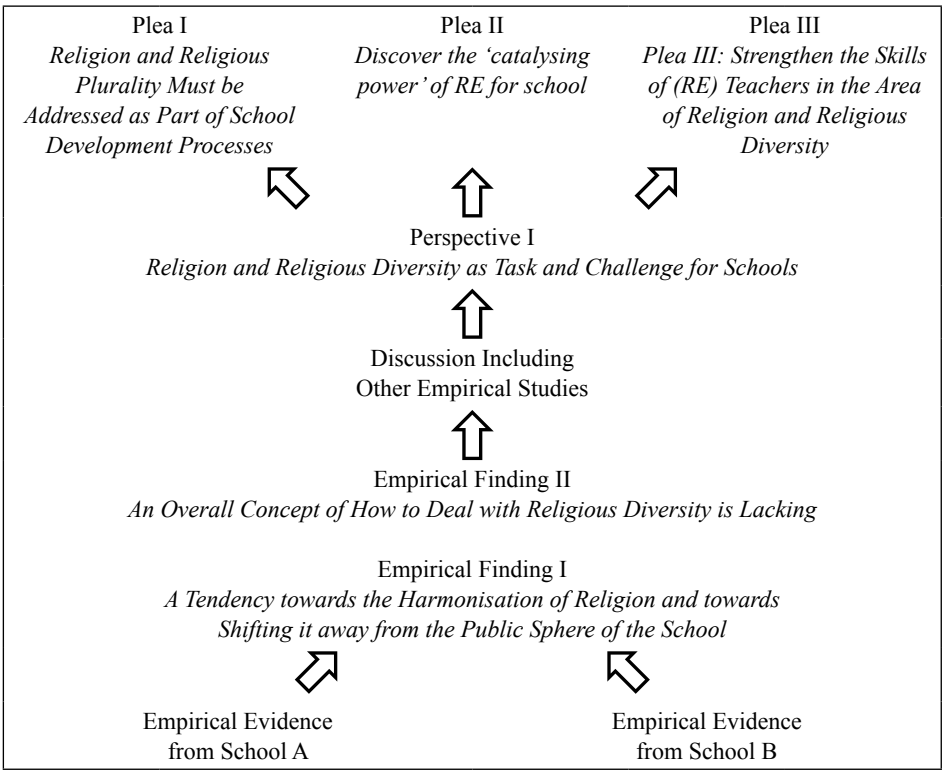

Figure 9: Empirical findings and perspective (perception and assessment of religion and religious diversity in schools)

5.2 Perception and Assessment of RE Lessons in Schools

5.2.1 Empirical Finding III: School Structures and Expectations towards the Subject Promote its Marginalisation

How RE is perceived and assessed at the two analysed schools can be understood through the reconstructed frames of reference. On the one hand these frames of reference point to the subject's fragile position within the organisational structure of the schools. On the other hand different and in part contradictory expectations manifest themselves. RE is thus supposed to fulfil meta-disciplinary functions (a contribution to the school's values education). At the same time, it is seen as a subject of denomination and conviction, which means that taking part in it or opting out, is legitimised by personal convictions. RE's position in school and the demands it is expected to meet have the potential to initiate a dynamic of marginalisation. These empirical findings are underpinned by the following examples:

- *RE is Unremarkable and a Subject that is Difficult to Teach (School A)*: The perception of RE in *School A* is disparate. The SCC-group has hardly anything to say about RE. It is shown to be a mostly nondescript and inconspicuous subject. That this is the case is believed to be a positive thing and is interpreted as a sign that there are no conflicts in and around it. According to the SCC-group ethics education play a part in avoiding conflicts, but the RET-group sees it as a rival to RE, which is considered to be a subject that is difficult to teach, because of this organisational constellation.
- *Diverging what is Expected of RE (School A)*: In spite of its potential to arouse conflicts religious education is charged with a meta-disciplinary function by the SCC, as it contributes to value education and responds to the school's wish for an "sland of bliss" (185 and 208–209). This anticipated meta-disciplinary function is also shared by the group of RE teachers. The effort to fulfil this function results in a lack of an autonomous profile for religious education. This situation is felt to be burdensome by a number of the teachers.
- *From an Organisational Perspective RE is a Fragile Subject in School (School B)*: RE was partly regarded as a fragile subject within the school's organisation: the possibility to opt out and their own position as RE teachers at the school (no full-time position) with consequences for the organisation of the timetable was proffered as a reason. Even though a general esteem on the part of the school management is recognised, RE is not counted as equal among the core subjects. (e. g.: not all pupils participate; competition with leisure activities). Moreover, RE is regarded as a subject of denomination and conviction, so that participating depends on the personal preferences of the pupils and is ultimately random. This view is underpinned, when it is assumed in the SCC that RE teachers are denominationally minded. In spite of the general rating of RE as school organisationally fragile, there was one RE teacher who disagreed. His argument is based on the high number of participants.
- *The Tendency to Broaden the Scope of RE lessons (School B)*: Because of the school's organisationally fragile and marginal position of RE, there are ambitions to either change the way it is organised and establish a subject called "religions" (379) or to recruit more participation, as RE is socially and individually relevant. In both cases suggestions were made of how to deal with the marginal position of RE and in both analysed groups opinions on this were far from unanimous. The future of RE is thus judged differently.

5.2.2 Discussion Including other Empirical Studies

In *School A* ethics education is seen to be a rival of RE. In empirical-representative studies focussed on Austria, Bucher and Ritzer studied the relation between ethics education and RE. Although Bucher's evaluation study on the school pilot project ethics education was primarily focused on that subject, its relation to RE – not least because of its genesis – was also considered. Registering to attend ethics education is motivated by interest and curiosity as well as by not being interested in or satisfied with RE. On the whole pupils were very satisfied with and accepting of ethics lessons. This was a more likely response the more they liked what went on in the lessons. Organisational reasons also play a part in the satisfaction with and of acceptance of ethics education.

Satisfaction and acceptance decreased if lessons were scheduled at the beginning or the end of the teaching day. All in all ethics education supports RE, as fewer pupils opted out during the investigated period of time and RE teachers experienced this as a relief.[42] In Ritzer's study of the motives for attending or opting out of RE, ethics lessons also played a central part. According to him, the willingness to participate in RE is greater, if ethics education is offered at the school.[43] At the same time ethics education does not only boost participation in RE, it also promotes pupils' acquisition of skills, especially when it comes to increasing their knowledge.[44] Bucher's and Ritzer's research demonstrates the great importance of ethics education in a school being offered in schools has for RE. Its mere existence is nonetheless not the only factor in how pupils evaluate RE. This mainly depends on what happens during lessons.[45] Ritzer uncovered further important factors that either encourage pupils to attend RE or to opt out of it. An example for this would be the school atmosphere and the importance attributed to RE by the school (what pupils suppose to be the teachers' and the head teacher's view of RE), which both carry a lot of weight. Evidently a positive school atmosphere boosts the participation in RE. A supposed low rating of RE by the teachers and the head of school increases opt-out rates.[46] While Bucher's and Ritzer's results clearly show the importance of ethics education in schools and the positive effect it has on RE, the present study presents a different picture, which nonetheless complements to the studies by Bucher and Ritzer. In their research project the structural (fewer pupils opting out) and the content-related (increasing skills) support of ethics lessons becomes particularly evident. In the present investigation RE teachers are outspoken about the difficulties they experience. The implementation of ethics education as a teaching subject is not a 'panacea'. *School A* even sees it as a rival (e. g. endangering the number of RE lessons per week). Especially at the beginning of the school year the RET-group is acutely aware of the necessity to present the topics of RE in a tempting light. This might help RE to gain a higher content-related profile, meaning that ethics education could improve the quality of RE. This does, however, not appear to be the case in *School A*, since according to the SCC RE merely performs a meta-disciplinary function (values education) and is altogether rated as inconspicuous and nondescript. With the possible risk of its causing a loss of RE lessons, the 'reverse side' of ethics education also becomes visible. How RE can structurally be supported remains an issue for the field of religious education studies. It has not been by the introduction of ethics education as a teaching subject.[47]

In *School B* it is evident that RE is a fragile subject within the school's organisational structure. Even if, as has been mentioned before, RE teachers are generally rather con-

42 Cf. Bucher 2001, 179–232, 292 f.
43 Cf. Ritzer 2003, 133–139, 190 f.
44 Cf. Ritzer 2010, 221–370.
45 Cf. e. g. Bucher 1996, 72–77; Bucher 2000b, 38–44, 68–81, 100–102; 112 f.; Ritzer 2003, 60–79, 146–172.
46 Cf. Ritzer 2003, 79–84, 89–96.
47 This is particularly relevant for RE that is organised by churches or religious communities that are small in numbers, because ethics will push this towards the structural margins, which is situation that can hardly be overcome. Cf. Bucher 2001, 186; Clark-Wilson 2011, 60–62; Bucher 2014, 75 f.

tent in their jobs, difficulties in teaching the subject exist for them nonetheless. These stem from RE's structural status within the school as well as from the subjects socio-religious context. In his study on RE teachers in Viennese primary schools Jäggle already observed that teachers were noticing that religious socialisation among children was changing at an increasing rate, which is making a change to the concepts of RE necessary.[48] These RE teachers experienced the pertaining "problems of communication and processes of alienation between contemporary society and the institutional Christian tradition, especially in a major cities"[49] for themselves. Bucher/Rothbucher arrived at similar results. More than half of RE teachers experience the mostly non-existent religious education of children by their parents as problematic. They also experience negative perceptions of the church and a level incongruity between ecclesiastical rulings and personal conscience. Despite this the interviewed RE teachers have no problems with their colleagues at school.[50] Bucher/Miklas published a study, which addressed the question of how the strain felt by the RE teachers is linked to their overall job satisfaction and what part it plays in them developing burnout. Low job satisfaction and a risk of burnout are related because of the following issues: poor discipline in class, an inability to keep work and leisure time apart, too little public recognition and an unsatisfactory timetable when it comes to Protestant RE teachers.[51] The 'Essen study' on RE teachers also inquired after difficulties RE teachers encountered in their work. Using closed questions they collated difficulties experienced by RE teachers. These included educational ones (e. g. the behaviour of children) as well as religious educational ones (e. g. religious preconditioning of children, or their non-existent interest in religious issues). RE teachers surveyed for that study were more concerned with the former than with the latter. Among the difficulties revealed by open-ended questions, their status as RE teachers, given its organisational problems, and the weak position of religious education in schools were most frequent.[52] Studies by Feige et al. and Feige/Tzscheeetzsch arrived at similar conclusions. Conditions outside school as well as the appreciation of RE by colleagues, school management and parents were felt to be more stressful than other school-internal issues.[53] All in all the above mentioned studies point to the fact that difficulties primarily arise outside of school. They are thus compatible with the empirical findings of the present study. Both schools address issues related to RE's structural position. On the one hand *School A* talks about the rivalry between RE and ethics education while *School B* mentions the subject's organisationally fragile position on the other. In both schools the RET-groups' position on the situation of RE could in part be reconstructed as an opposite horizon. This is due to the repercussions it has on teaching RE (e. g. the need to market RE at the beginning of the school year in *School A*; not teaching all pupils of any given year group because of the marginalisation of RE in *School B*).

48 Cf. Jäggle 1992, 174–188.
49 Jäggle 1993a, 52.
50 Cf. Bucher/Rothbucher 1996, 125–129.
51 Cf. Bucher 2005a, 54–70; Danner/Lagger/Schwarz 2005, 154–169.
52 Cf. Englert/Güth 1999, 108 f.
53 Cf. Feige/Lukatis 2000, 290–306; Feige/Tzscheetzsch 2005, 44–54.

Like the Danner/Lagger/Schwarz study on Protestant RE teachers in Austria, the empirical findings of the present study call attention to the situation of RE teachers, who belong to churches or religious communities that are small in numbers. The Islamic RE teacher in *School B* believes that his RE lessons, as well as his own position, (no full-time job at *School B*), are in a marginal position, which is reflected in the timetable. The empirical findings at hand thus point to a connection between the position of the teacher and the position of the subject he teaches. The structural position RE finds itself lends momentum to increasing the marginalisation of RE. This especially tends to happen in schools where RE teachers only teach a few lessons. This trend is reinforced by transformations within the religious scene in general and in schools in particular. The religious diversification of society and of the pupil body in particular effects RE (diversification of RE). Nevertheless, the Islamic RE teacher feels that his subject is on an upward trend, while at the same time Catholic RE teachers are under the impression that their subject is being marginalised more and more. It seems reasonably safe to assume that the perception and assessment of RE, at least at the two described schools for this study, is largely determined by denominational or religious affiliation, that is to say whether people belong to a large or small church or religious community.

In this study assumptions with regards to the function and self-image of RE could be reconstructed in both SCC-groups. In *School A*, RE is seen as making a contribution to value education, thus responding to the wish for a school as an "island of bliss" (185 and 208–209). In *School B* it is regarded as a subject of denomination and conviction. RE teachers' objectives for their subject have been surveyed in numerous studies. Bucher/Rothbucher found that there is a high degree of agreement with both ethical, ecclesiastical objectives. There are significant differences between age groups and types of school as well as between urban and rural settings. Traditional-ecclesiastical objectives have, however, become far less popular.[54] Englert/Güth found significantly less agreement with ecclesiastical goals. Primary school RE teachers interviewed by them, agreed most strongly with general-educational objectives of RE, followed by religious educational ones and least of all traditional ecclesiastic ones. As far as age groups are concerned, favoured objectives largely overlap. Only when it comes to traditional ecclesiastical objectives there are significant differences. Younger teachers are far less likely to approve of them than their older colleagues ones. All the RE teachers interviewed, feel that RE makes an important contribution to education in their schools.[55] Lück, who also interviewed RE teachers at primary schools and highlighted correlations between the objectives of RE and preferred organisational structures, arrived at very similar results.[56] A further study by Bucher also presents comparable results. For Catholic RE teachers, general educational objectives and the fostering of personal and religious competencies clearly rank above any catechistic aims or an effort to compensate for the usual lack of religious education by families. Ecclesiastical objectives are most likely to be pursued by RE teachers in primary schools.[57] Protestant RE teachers in Austria are not particularly interested in ecclesiastical objectives either, although the ones who

54 Cf. Bucher/Rothbucher 1996, 129–132.
55 Cf. Englert/Güth 1999, 78–93.
56 Cf. Lück 2003, 207–226.
57 Cf. Bucher 2005a, 78–95.

teach in primary school are a bit more likely to pursue them.[58] The great importance of general educational goals and the desire to boost personal competencies are also found among the objectives of the Protestant RE teachers in Lower Saxony, "who want to help pupils develop towards personal-autonomous growth based on Christian-biblical values." By contrast, objectives, which try to impart "denominational-dogmatic contents",[59] are scarcely employed. The educational aspect of RE is also paramount to the RE teachers of Baden-Württemberg.[60]

It is obvious from the studies mentioned above that RE teachers by and large favour general educational and religious educational objectives. By contrast traditional ecclesiastical objectives are rejected. These results coincide with pupils' thought on what an ideal RE provision would look like. All in all pupils rate RE highly, although this varies depending on school-types and other factors.[61] This becomes clear in a study by Ziebertz/Kalbheim/Riegel, among others. The young people interviewed preferred non-denominational-existential RE that is informative and deals with their questions about life. They adopt a critical position towards RE conceived as catechistic instruction, initiating to introduce them into Christianity, and sometimes reject it outright.[62]

The function and self-image ascribed to RE in this study partly cut across the objectives primarily pursued by RE teachers in their classes. From the way the SCC-group in *School B* talks about RE it was possible to reconstruct it as a subject of denomination and conviction could. According to this definition participating in RE or opting out of it depends on the personal preferences of pupils. On top of this, the image of RE is supplemented by the way the RE teachers are seen. At first sight they are regarded as members of a church or religious community, who, because of their denominational conditioning, teach in a denominational manner. Consequently, RE in its present form is not seen as a subject that teaches general education. It is first and foremost a subject for 'religious insiders. Just like the RE teachers in the schools discussed above, the SCC-group in *School B* does consider RE to be a general education subject. Because of the way it's presently organised it cannot completely fulfil this educational task. The SCC-group believes it is necessary to expand RE into a "subject [called] religions" (379). The general-education dimension of RE is also highlighted RET-group. The wish that RE should be a subject comparable and equal to other teaching subjects could be reconstructed. For one of the RE teachers, RE classes played an important role in the development of his pupils' personality (pupil-centred). Another RE teacher believes catechistic work to be his main objective and his teaching is bound to his parish. As this RE teacher is a member of a church that is small in numbers, it can logically be assume

58 Cf. Danner/Lagger/Schwarz 2005,174–191.

59 Feige/Dressler 2000, 448; cf. also Feige/Lukatis 2000, 223–245.

60 Cf. Feige/Tzscheetzsch 2005, 23–33. Studies in the context of TRES, which were carried out internationally, came to the following results: the ideal type of differentiation, namely 'learning in religion", 'learning from religion' and 'learning about religion' does not exist for most RE teachers. In their objectives they are interlaced. Cf. Ziebertz/Riegel 2009; Jacobs 2009; Popp 2013. Which target goals future RE teachers deem impotant cf. Feige/Friedrichs/Köllmann 2007, 24–34; Lück 2012, 135–146.

61 Cf. e. g. Bucher 1996, 33–72, 80–83; Bucher 2000b; Ritzer 2003, 46–48, 146–148.

62 Cf. Ziebertz/Kalbheim/Riegel 2003, 199–230.

that catechistic objectives are more important to RE teachers belonging to churches or religious communities that are small in numbers. A possible reason for this could be the effort to maintain denominational or religious identity in a diaspora situation. The functions and self-image ascribed to RE and the idea of RE as an induction into a certain denominational or religious tradition, have the potential to promote a dynamism of marginalisation of RE. This makes it lose its importance as a general-education subject.

In *School A*'s SCC-group a general-educational vision of RE could be reconstructed too. This group assigns the meta-disciplinary task of value education to RE in spite of its assumed potential for conflicts. RE's own objectives are not even thought about.

5.2.3 Perspective II: Think RE in the Context of School

In Austria, as in Germany and other European countries, RE is soundly safeguarded by law. RE is nonetheless a controversial subject in Austria.[63] The fact that religion is being taught at school and under which organisational structures this happens must be argued in multiple ways.[64] As diversity in society and amongst pupils is increasing, while at the same time numbers of persons without any religious affiliation are growing, RE in state run schools needs to justify itself more and more. In the debates about educational standards and a focus on competencies, which followed the PISA-studies RE has increasingly become a target of public awareness. "Al in all RE, like all other subjects, will surely be on trial and will also have to socially identify and justify itself"; according to Weirer RE has "excellent prerequisites"[65] to do this, because it is subject-orientated. The empirical findings of the present study point to the fact that structures in schools, as well as the functions and self-image attributed to RE, can produce a dynamism that marginalises RE in schools. RE is seen as an inconspicuous and nondescript subject that primarily fulfils a meta-disciplinary task (values education).[66] In addition RE is believed to be a subject of denomination and conviction and an induction into denominational traditions of faith (catechistic objective). For the field of religious education studies, these findings are of an explosive nature, because they show that RE at school could turn into a marginal phenomenon and finally disappear altogether. It is therefore imperative from a religious education studies perspective, to consistently think about RE in the context of schools, because it "only [has a future] as long as it can prove that it can make a genuine contribution to the educational mandate of schools".[67] Against the backdrop of the empirical results of this study, the perspective will be further refined in the following two pleas.

63 Cf. Initiative gegen Kirchenprivilegien 2013.
64 Cf. Chapter 1.4.1 Religion as a Subject in Schools Needs to Justify its Existence.
65 Weirer 2011, 117.
66 Cf. critically Mette 2010.
67 Mette 2007, 213.

5.2.3.1 Plea IV: Strengthen RE Structurally

To prevent RE from becoming even more marginalised with schools it has to be strengthened structurally. The school-management[68] and on-site RE teachers can contribute greatly towards achieving this goal. Even though the existing data does not allow any conclusions to be drawn about why ethics education was introduced in *School A*, this school nonetheless demonstrates one way to strengthen RE structurally. Since ethics education has been introduced in this school, opting out of RE no longer results in a free period for pupils, they have to go to ethics lessons instead. At the same time the RET-group in *School A* clearly showed that having ethics lessons does not in and of itself make the structural difficulties experienced by RE disappear, as ethics education is felt to be a rival. The school management also plays a decisive role in determining the status of RE in a school. The introduction of ethics education in any school needs to be decided on by the SCC.

Scheduling RE lessons for the start or the end of the school encourages pupils to opt out.[69] Even if RE presents structural challenges, especially for the timetable, it is all the more important to grant it priority in the scheduling of the timetable, as the timetable may be called "the visiting card of the school".[70] This, of course, presupposes that the school management accepts RE as part of the general education educational mandate, and understands the importance of handling religious diversity in a constructive way. In the SCC-group in *School B* it could be reconstructed that RE is part of the schools' educational task. It calls for transforming RE as it stands now into the "subject religions" (379). This means that *School B* offers a meaningful plan for action. Establishing this subject is, however, considered difficult, as churches and religious communities would primarily be responsible for it. RE teachers in situ could also strengthen RE structurally by cooperating with RE teachers from other denominations and religions and with teachers from other subjects.[71] It is certainly true that this can only be happen to a limited extent, and only if the organisational framework conditions are supportive and existing resources are used wisely. Is it not conceivable that the more RE manages to establish cooperation and thus becomes understood as a discernible part of the school's educational task as a whole, the more other teachers and the school management will notice and value it? Would this not also mean that RE would be appreciated as an indispensable part of school and would be strengthened structurally with all means available to the school (e. g. timetabling)? There is empirical evidence within the framework of denominational-cooperative RE that suggests this.[72] In any case RE will be recognised as a common concern, if school management and RE teachers are equally challenged

68 In addition to the school principal and the school administrators the SCC can also be named as a part of the school management.

69 Cf. Ritzer 2003, 100–103.

70 Jäggle 2011, 10.

71 It is definitely easier for RE teachers who only work in one, or at least only a few schools to establish cooperation. In this way the majority – minority ratios of a country, which might also be limited by time resources – are mirrored in the readiness to cooperate. Cf. Bastel/Miklas 2006.

72 Cf. Schweitzer/Biesinger 2002; Biesinger et al. 2006; Kuld et al. 2009; Bastel et al. 2006.

to work on a structural strengthening of RE in school. The more school management and RE teachers take up this challenge, with the support of their churches and religious communities, the more obvious the shared responsibility for RE becomes. As a result, RE and RE teachers would no more be "sitting on the fence" (466) feeling torn apart, "but they [could] sit upright and self-confident on both sides of the fence".[73]

The following questions are intended to stimulate school managements' and RE teachers' ideas for how RE could be structurally strengthened at their schools.

- How is RE positioned in the timetable (compared to other subjects)?
- Which further possibilities are available to the school management to strengthen RE structurally?
- To what extent does the framework of the school assist cooperation and make it possible?

5.2.3.2 Plea V: Make RE Distinguish Itself and Make its General Educational Value Known

The functions and self-image attributed to RE in both schools, of which one sees RE primarily as a values education subject and the other as a subject of denomination and conviction, hardly coincide with RE teacher's own objectives, outlined in the aforementioned RE teacher studies. In *School A* it can, however, be reconstructed that the RET-group and the SCC-group do have similar ideas about RE teaching. In the opinion of this RET-group the profile of RE is not constituted by its content, but by its shadowy existence in the service of the pupils, other colleagues and their subjects as a "lessons were [pupils] can recover" (500). If RE at school gives in to such expectations it is, according to Schlag, in danger of becoming more and more marginalised, "as under-challenging pupils and underestimating the subject will result in RE ending up in the precarious situation of an outsider within the curriculum and staying there. Understanding the subject as a kind of heterotopic compensation, which provides relief from the demands and severities of the school system, would make its position in school impossible, even in the medium term."[74] This is the reason why building up RE's profile with regards to its content is unavoidable. The acceptance of RE by the pupils depends largely on what happens during lessons.[75] What this raised profile might look like has recently been presented by Englert in an impressive way. In his didactics of religion he mentions numerous indications of problems that cast doubt on current RE as it is currently taught.[76]

---

73 Weirer 2012, 46.

74 Schlag 2012,128.

75 Cf. e. g. Bucher 1996, 72–77; Bucher 2000b, 40–44, 68–81, 112 f.; Ritzer 2003, 146–172.

76 Englert presents six indications of problems and queries that show an extensive view of RE: "Are pupils not interested in theological questions any longer?", "Does working on theological questions not lead to sufficiently clear results?", "Does RE not offer enough cognitive challenges?", "Does RE too rarely offer the experience of advancing skills and knowledge?", "Does the subject-related expertise of the RE teachers come off badly?", "Are meaningful connections missing?" Englert 2013a, 21–35.

He proposes "addressing models of theological thinking"[77] as a possible method. He provides 19 object lessons for this, all of which are theologically and didactically well thought out. These "models of theological thinking [are meant to] encourage pupils in their own deliberations about religious issues' and to be at their disposal "for the development of their own capacities for religious thinking".[78]

If RE, as is the case in *School B*, is seen and legitimised as a subject of denomination and conviction and pursues catechistic objectives, it is marginalised even further. In order to avoid this, RE has to be regarded as a subject that is relevant to general education and needs to be considered from the school's point of view (see plea I). If that does not happen and it is seen as a subject of denomination and conviction it is not relevant for all pupils. As such it would only turn towards the 'believing' pupils and shut itself off from those who are "searching or doubting' and those who "see themselves as nonbelievers".[79] It is astonishing that RE is perceived and assessed in this way at *School B*. At the least since the synod of Würzburg RE conceives itself conceptually as serving the schools' educational mandate and not the "procreation of future members of the church." The goals of RE are attuned to "to the goals of the state school".[80] This conceptual orientation of RE is also evident in the current curriculum for Roman Catholic RE in Austria. It sees RE as a place where pupils, their lives and their beliefs are the centre of the lesson. RE aims to make a contribution to the formation of young people's identities, as well as to a tolerant and critical encounter "with other cultures, religions, beliefs and trends".[81] In the studies discussed above it is also obvious that the majority of RE teachers agree with these conceptual objectives.

That the general educational factor of RE in its present form is not recognised provides food for thought and challenges us not only to go on pushing ahead with this factor both as a concept and in teaching, and to make it widely known, so that RE does not remain an inconspicuous and non-descript subject (SCC-group of *School A*) and is not burdened with functions and self-images (mainly in *School B*) that contradict its own conception. It has already been mentioned that making facts public is of utmost importance. This is equally true here. One possibility would be to produce leaflets, as has been done in *School A*, to inform people about RE and about ethics education in the school. The school's homepage can also be used. It may be assumed that giving insights into what goes on in RE classes and informing about RE's general education importance for schools (information leaflets, school homepage etc.) it would weaken the image attributed to RE, which shows it as a subject of denomination and conviction, thus edging it into the position of an outsider within the school.

---

77 Englert 2013a, 19.

78 Englert 2013a, 20.

79 Bertsch et al. 1976, 139. The threefold differentiation between believing pupils, ones who are searching or challenged in their faith and those who see themselves as non-believers stems from a declaration of the German Catholic Bishops' Conference on the aims of Catholic RE. Cf. the reference in Bertsch et al. 1976, 139.

80 Bertsch et al. 1976, 141.

81 Interdiözesanes Amt für Unterricht und Erziehung n.d., 2 f. Since 2003 the 'educational and teaching task' of Roman Catholic RE was drafted in an analogous way in the curriculum of the other school types.

At *School B* one RE teacher showed that he believed in catechistic objectives for RE. There are certainly understandable reasons why his RE is designed in this way (diaspora) and why it is held in the rooms of his parish (easier to organise), but if RE wants to have a legitimate place within state schools, it is necessary that it takes place both within the context and the venue of the school. A state school is neither the appropriate place to learn to believe – this can, at least from a Christian point of view, only happen in a religious community (community as the genuine place to learn to believe) –, nor should RE be burdened with catechistic objectives. It would be doomed to failure to a large degree, anyway.[82] The following questions might offer food for thought for schools:

- How does RE present itself at the school and what is its self-image?
- How does the school call attention to what happens in RE classes?
- Which objectives does the school expect RE to meet? How realistic are they?

5.2.4 Overview of Empirical Finding III and Perspective II

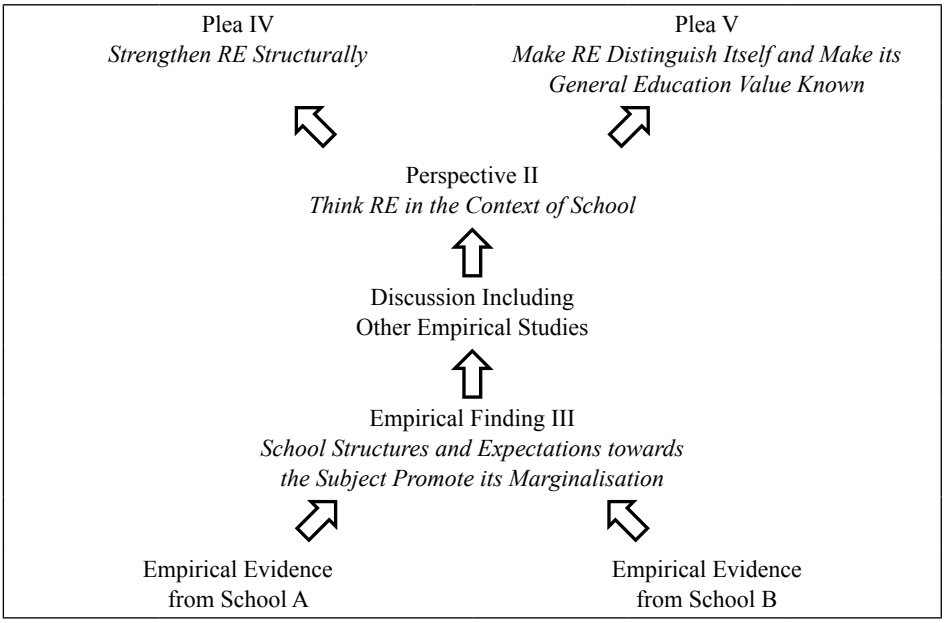

Figure 10: Empirical finding and perspective (perception and assessment of RE at school)

82 This already becomes clear in the objectives for RE expressed during the synod of Würzburg, which ask for a "realistic rating of what can be achieved at school" and already counts it a "profit if pupils at least don't consider religion and faith superfluous or even nonsensical when they leave school". Bertsch et al. 1976, 142 f. Empirical researchers also warn of the danger to expect effects from RE that it cannot realistically yield. Cf. e. g. Ritzer 2010.

5.3 Acceptance of RE for all Jointly Organisied by the Churches and Religious Communities

5.3.1 Empirical Finding IV: What is Expected of RE is a Key Determinant of the Acceptance of this Kind of RE

At both investigated schools it could be reconstructed what is expected of RE. This is a key determinant of the extent to which RE jointly organised by the churches and religious communities are accepted in these schools. It is this expected of RE to emphasise what denominations and religions have in common, while at the same time levelling out the differences. Religious education is believed to matter to all pupils, so that the present way RE is organised gets rejected. It is deemed necessary to broaden the scope of RE and create the new "subject religions" (379). Moreover, such a subject would be accepted because it would contribute to the structural strengthening of RE within the school and might promote equality in the school's curriculum. The empirical results, which show that what is expected of RE in schools is a key determinant of how well RE for all jointly organised by the churches and religious communities would be received, can be underpinned by the following indicators:

- *The Emphasis is on Commonalities (School A)*: Even if such an organisational structure in not deemed necessary, because ethics education is taught in this school, the idea still finds acceptance. In both group discussions tendencies to level out differences regarding RE could be found. Expectations of RE are a key determinant of the acceptance of this kind of organisational structure. Thus it also gains recognition because it contributes to levelling out religious differences, placing the emphasis on things held in common (e. g. common belief in God by young people) and is able to move RE away from its marginal position.
- *'RE for all' Has Wider Significance (School B)*: As has already become clear in the empirical results on perception and assessment of RE at the schools (Empirical results III), the SCC-group sees the present organisational form of RE as problematic, because it is thought to be denominationally oriented. Because the group ascribes a general significance to RE all the same, it advocates the broadening of the scope of RE towards the "subject religions" (379). Some of the RET-group also supported this; they argue from a school organisational point of view. RE for all jointly organised by the churches and religious communities that churches and religious communities is accepted, because this organisational structure would lead to the equality of RE in the curriculum.

5.3.2 Empirical Finding V: Difficulties with the Introduction of this Kind of RE are Primarily Expected to Come from Outside the School's Area of Responsibility

In the reconstructed attitudinal frameworks, it was noticeable that difficulties were also expected to be connected with this organisational structure of RE. They were primarily

seen outside schools' area of responsibility and would come from the side of the religions, especially from the Catholic Church, RE teachers of some religions as well as from strict religious (Muslim) parents. For these empirical results the following empirical findings are to be found in the group discussions:

- *Religions, Above all the Catholic Church, Put Obstacles in thy Way (School A)*: as far as the introduction of RE organised in this way is concerned, there are no obstacles pertaining to the school for the two groups. They are instead seen with the religions, especially the Catholic Church. The SCC-group considers School A to be altogether conductive to tolerance, but they deny this to be the case for the religions and especially the Catholic Church, because they, contrary to their own teachings, do not practice tolerance. For the RET-group the Catholic Church also represents an impediment, as it lags behind 'real life' (668) with its regulations and principles of faith.
- *'RE for all' Poses Difficulties and is in Part Rejected Outright (School B)*: the SCC-group also sees difficulties outside their school's area of responsibility. These difficulties exist among teachers of certain religions and denomination who, because of their religious/denominational conditioning have a denominationalist point of view and teach accordingly. Difficulties are also expected from families, as strict religious (Muslim) parents are not open towards other religions and would not agree to such a form of RE. In the group of RE teachers, RE organised like this is partly rejected, because, according to them, the differences between some denominations and religions are insurmountable and therefore joint RE is not wanted; RE in school could be reconstructed as an induction to certain traditions of faith. Another RE teacher explains his refusal with the fact that his RE is focused on pupils of his own religion. But he can imagine some limited cooperation.

5.3.3 Discussion Including other Empirical Studies

As has already been shown in the section on the current state of research there are a number of empirical studies on the acceptance of alternative organisational forms of RE, which go beyond denominationally segregated RE provisions.

These studies either concentrate on the point of view of the pupils[83] or the teachers'[84] or both.[85] Besides these studies already existing alternative forms of RE have also been studied and evaluated. Among those there is a rather explorative study by Hütte/Mette who investigated RE provisions for entire classes,[86] and the studies that evaluate denominational-cooperative RE in Vienna[87] and in Baden-Württemberg [88] that also include the points of view of parents and heads of schools.

83 Cf. Bucher 2000b.
84 Cf. e. g. Feige et al. 2000; Bucher/Miklas 2005.
85 Cf. Bucher 1996; Bucher/Rothbucher 1996; cf. also the studies in the framework of the REDCo project.
86 Cf. Hütte/Mette 2003.
87 Cf. Bastel et al. 2006.
88 Cf. Schweitzer/Biesinger 2002; Biesinger et al. 2006; Kuld et al. 2009.

Whether any of the organisational structures that differ from current RE would be accepted by pupils has been explored by Bucher in a study representative for Austria in the 1990s. He asked pupils whether the participation of Protestant pupils or those belonging to another religion such as Islam would bother them. With these items, which are no doubt worded a bit sloppily and problematically, he wanted to test whether pupils would accept ecumenical or interreligious RE classes. Whether ecumenical or interreligious classes are meant is surely debatable, because of the way the items are phrased. Both items were answered affirmatively by pupils; pupils agree more strongly the older they are and the more urban their residential environment is.[89] Bucher conducted another study on RE with pupils in Germany, in which attitudes towards ecumenical RE were explored with similarly phrased items (Protestant pupils should attend the same RE classes as we do).[90] These items were used to interview pupils in lower secondary education and in the upper forms of grammar schools. The wording of the item that aimed to find out about attitudes towards interreligious RE was similarly problematic. It was, however, only ever used in vocational schools. Here pupils were asked, more or less like in the Austrian study, if they would mind if Muslims or children belonging to religions other than their own attended RE classes together with them.[91] In lower secondary education Bucher noticed a discrepancy between the pupils' rating of the importance of their friends' denomination and the evaluation they gave to the problematically phrased items asking them about their attitudes to ecumenical and interreligious RE. While the pupils questioned did not mind at all about the denomination of their friends, most of them did not want an ecumenical RE. In the upper forms of grammar school the approval rates for joint RE classes for Catholic and Protestant pupils is marked, even if there are still wide regional variations. In Lower Saxony acceptance is highest at 42%, in Bavaria it is lowest at 23%. Pupils of this type of school pay hardly any attention to the denominational affiliation of their classmates. This is similar with pupils from vocational schools. They agree with interreligious RE, but not with an ecumenical approach. Bucher thinks that the issue of the future organisation of RE cannot be determined empirically. Even so, in view of stereotyping attributions, he argues for the strengthening of the ecumenical spirit in schools.[92] A sub-study by REDCo revealed that young people predominantly opt for the kinds of organisation they are familiar with. It also became apparent that, for instance young Muslims in Spain overall prefer separate RE provisions to a joint ones. They are concerned that their religious tradition might no longer be visible in a country with a Catholic majority.[93]

Bucher did not only question pupils, but also carried out the same investigations with teachers. In the 1990 he conducted research together with Rothbucher on the visions and fears of RE teachers of the archdiocese of Salzburg had with regards to future of RE (open questions) and how they viewed possible future scenarios for RE

89 Cf. Bucher 1996, 78.

90 Bucher 2000b, 93. This time Bucher himself sees the wording as problematic "because it could also be interpreted as if Protestant pupils were not allowed to attend their own RE but had to sit in the Catholic one, which could provoke reactance." Bucher 2000b, 119.

91 On the phrasing of the items cf. Bucher 2000b, 119.

92 Cf. Bucher 2000b, 93 f., 105 f.,119 f., 150.

93 Cf. Knauth/Körs 2008, 400–402; Jozsa 2009, 147 f.

(closed questions). Maintaining the status quo, increasing interreligious learning and the possibility to conduct RE ecumenically received the majority votes from RE teachers. The option to make regional decisions about RE possible was very narrowly rejected. Differences in the answers given were due to types of school, age and the socio-ecological factors in urban-rural environments. Interreligious and ecumenical teaching was preferred by RE teachers in grammar schools and higher vocational schools as well as by younger teachers and by those who taught in urban areas. General religious knowledge lessons were rejected less frequently by teachers in grammar schools and higher vocational schools than by their colleagues in other school types.[94] A few years later Bucher obtained similar results from the RE teachers in the (arch-) dioceses Linz and Salzburg. They also preferred maintaining the status quo, while at the same time strengthening ecumenical and interreligious learning.[95] The study by Danner/Lagger/Schwarz found comparable results with the Protestant RE teachers in Austria. Just like in Bucher's survey of Catholic RE teachers they preferred to maintain denominational RE. While the majority opted for intensifying ecumenical learning, relatively few, about one third of teachers interviewed, were in favour of denominationally-cooperative RE. RE teachers in primary schools prefer denominational RE significantly less often than their colleagues in grammar- or higher vocational schools, so that this partial outcome coincides with Bucher's findings.[96]

According to a study by Englert/Güth 45.2% of RE teachers in primary schools in Essen, prefer ecumenical RE. 42,0% prefer a denominational approach and 6,9% a general RE provision for all. Optional RE provided by the churches for interested pupils was favoured by 2,0%. Like Bucher/Rothbucher Engler/Güth found significant differences in the preference for denominational RE depending on age. The older the interviewed teachers were, the more likely they were to opt for a denominational approach to RE. "While an absolute majority of teachers over the age of 50 voted for denominational RE, not even every fifth of the younger teachers under the age of 30 opted for it."[97] Age specific differences also appear when it comes to other organisational structures of RE. Young teachers are much more likely to prefer ecumenical and general RE than their older colleagues. The answers concerning the preferred form of organisation were linked to RE teachers' objectives. Englert/Güth were able to show that those RE teachers whose aims were general-educational liked the ecumenical approach best, while those with traditional ecclesiastical ambitions preferred denominational RE. When asked for the reasons why they opted for a certain organisational structure, they mainly gave conceptual arguments, hardly ever pragmatic ones.[98] In this respect there are clear parallels to the results of the present study, as stated in the empirical results. What is expected of RE constitutes an important factor that influences the acceptance of RE for all jointly organised by the churches and religious communities. A notable interrelation with objectives is therefore evident. As was seen in *School A*, RE organised in this way is accepted if, meeting the expectations, it can stress the common factors

94 Cf. Bucher/Rothbucher 1996, 119–125.
95 Cf. Bucher 2005a, 103–118.
96 Cf. Danner/Lagger/Schwarz 2005, 197–204.
97 Englert/Güth 1999,95.
98 Cf. Engler/Güth 1999, 94–99.

and level out religious differences. This is particularly obvious in the SCC-group of this school, which considers religion to be a problem area and thus sees religious differences all the more as a potential for conflict. In the RET-group the desire to stress things held in common could be reconstructed, as denominationally separated RE mirrors the marginal position of denominations and religions. Whereas 'RE for all' would in the RET-group's view, have the potential to bring the current RE out of its marginal position and emphasise things held in common, which are generally appreciated far more than issues that divide. In *School B*, it was also noticeable that what is expected of RE presupposes an acceptance of 'RE for all', but in this school different expectations can be found, not least because of the incongruence the frame detected among the RE teachers. In the SCC-group, it is primarily the general significance of an RE provision structured in this way, which is perceived, mainly in contrast to current approach to RE, which the group considers to be a subject of denomination and conviction. As opposed to denominational RE, 'RE for all' or the "subject religions" (379) was characterised by openness. If this organisational structure, as opposed to current RE with its denominationalist profile, distinguishes itself by openness towards all religions, the SCC-group is prepared to accept it.

The study by Feige et al. of RE teachers in Lower Saxony also concerns itself with organisational structures of RE. It asked, which models of ecumenical cooperation would be preferred within the framework of RE. "The top ranking ecumenical cooperation in this vote goes to a structure that is strictly speaking not a *cooperation*."[99] The Protestant RE teachers interviewed, largely preferred to teach all pupils in the same class, where things held in common should be in the foreground. All the same the authors of the study found, that the teachers were prepared to cooperate, as for instance more than half of teachers questioned, would like to 'team-teach'. There were no variations in this readiness to cooperate caused by any specific factors. Feige et al. could, however, determine a significant difference based on the denominational structure of their place of residence. If the area was predominantly Catholic, Protestant RE teachers preferred denominationally segregated RE.[100] This outcome shows that there are majority-minority issues, which are particularly important for the way RE is organised. In the present study there were also two RE teachers in the RET-group of *School B* who were not able to accept RE for all jointly organised by the churches and religious communities. In one instance because RE at schools was meant to pursue catechistic aims, in the other, because RE was designed for pupils of a certain religion. This was seen as an added value, as the participating pupils came from a background of migration and the topics dealt with were issues especially relevant to their lives. Relating to the study by Feige et al. it can reasonably be assumed that, because of their denominational or religious affiliations, the two RE teachers at *School B* opted for denominationally segregated RE, because they feared that their RE, shaped by their

99 Feige/Lukaits 2000, 316. [italicised as in the original] RE being cancelled and taught in an interdisciplinary way found the least agreement.

100 Cf. Feige/Lukaits 2000, 314–326. As RE in Lower Saxony is partly not taught denominationally separately, Feige et al. asked what RE teachers thought of this practice. Half of the teachers interviewed said they were teaching Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils together for organisational reasons, the other half stated content-related convictions.

denomination or religion might be lost in an RE for provision for all that is jointly organised by the churches and religion communities. Thus keeping up denominational or religious traditions would appear to be paramount in a diaspora situation. The same questionnaire that was used to interview RE teachers in Lower Saxony was also used in Baden-Württemberg,[101] where aside from Protestant RE teacher's Catholic ones were also questioned. They neither agreed on a specific denominational model of cooperation nor did a majority think that denominationally segregated RE should remain. A little less than half speak up decidedly against the denominational structure of organisation. "All in all this is a remarkable outcome, if in Baden-Württemberg those versions are preferred that promise *to maintain denominational identity.*"[102] At the same time the RE teachers interviewed clearly reject the option of working with the contents of RE in other subjects, meaning that a general Christian approach finds greater approval than the option of having no RE provision in schools at all. In this context denominational cooperation becomes more important.[103] When the studies conducted in Lower Saxony and Baden-Württemberg are looked at together they show that on the one hand there are regional differences within Germany, and that neither of the two federal states favours denominationally segregated RE, even if RE should in principle be denominationally oriented. Most of all it becomes apparent that an ideal type of differentiation of various approaches to organising RE, as worked out by religious education theory, is not always clearly discernible from RE teachers' point of.[104]

Another study that looks at a German federal state is a large scale study conducted by Lück. In this representative study, he had previously carried out an empirical-analytical one,[105] Protestant RE teacher in primary school in North Rhine-Westphalia were asked which organisational structure of RE they preferred. They expressed approval of both interdenominational and interreligious learning to a very high degree; they were also very much in favour of denominational cooperation. When it came to the organisation of RE 43.5% favoured a mixed model consisting of cooperation during the first two years of primary school, followed by denominationally segregated lessons thereafter. Lück also wanted to find out why this organisational structure found such widespread support. Very much like in the study conducted by Englert/Güth, conceptual reasons were given most frequently as the main arguments.[106] Among the RE teachers he interviewed, Lück observed interdependences between their preferred organisational approach to RE and their conceptions of the tasks and objectives RE should pursue. Teachers who opted for denominational RE generally preferred RE's didactic target perspective of 'feeling at home'. Those who opted for interreligious or general RE provision see fostering a 'common understanding" as RE's predominant task and objective.[107] RE teachers who

101 In this federal state there are also alternatives to denominational RE, such as denominational-cooperative RE.

102 Cf. Feige/Tzscheetzsch 2005, 57. [italicised as in the original]

103 Cf. Feige/Tzscheetzsch 2005, 54–65.

104 Cf. also Ziebetz/Riegel 2009; Jakobs 2009; Popp 2013.

105 Cf. Lück 2002.

106 Cf. Lück 2003, 68–86.

107 For Lück 'feeling at home' means "the elementarising, familiarising induction into the religious-cultural tradition or denomination that predominantly shapes one's own history",

prefer a denominationally cooperative[108] and ecumenical approach consider 'feeling at home' and a 'common understanding' to 'be equally important' The more they agree with the primacy of the task to making pupils 'feel at home' the more *(ecclesiastically*) *denominationally* characterised their desired structure for RE will be. In other words: The more teachers agree with the primacy of creating a 'common understanding' the less *bound to the churches* their favoured option of organising RE will be.[109] In Lück's study the interdependences between the perceived objectives for RE and the preferred approach to it becomes apparent among primary school RE teachers. This supports the empirical findings of the present study, namely that there are momentous expectations of RE as far as the acceptance of RE for all jointly organised by the churches and religious communities is concerned.

5.3.4 Perspective III: The Development of Context-Sensitive Models is a Common Task for Schools, Churches and Religious Communities

This present investigation follows up on the question of how well accepted RE for all that is jointly organised by the churches and religious communities, would be in schools. This organisational structure is a possible alternative to denominationally segregated RE. The empirical findings resulting from this research question clearly show that the acceptance of this organisational structure is inconsistent. What is expected of RE constitutes a key determinant for how well this, and possibly other models are accepted. In other words: The acceptance of this organisational structure is not absolute; on the contrary it is decidedly rejected by some. This again depends on which key objectives a person supports for RE. The fact that preferring a certain organisational structure is linked significantly with the inner structure of RE, was also noticeable in the empirical studies discussed above. Which organisational structure of RE in state-run schools is able to meet today's challenges in view of cultural and religious diversity is no doubt an important question. This question is counted among the "contentious issues"[110] in religious education studies debate and is often omitted in reflections on religious-didactical approaches (external design).[111] This discussion is very often ideologically charged and flares up over the question of which objectives RE should pursue and how they should be met. Whether ones 'own' identity must be learned first, before

'common understanding' means "the universalising encounter and the dialogue with other denominations or religions". Lück 2003, 218.

108 How denominationally cooperative RE is assessed (Baden-Württemberg) cf. Kuld et al. 2009; cf. also Schweitzer/Biesinger 2002; Biesinger et al. 2006. On the experience of RE teachers in Vienna in the course of denominationally cooperative RE cf. Bucher/Miklas 2005.

109 Cf. Lück 2003, 223; cf. altogether Lück 2003, 207–226. Which model of denominational cooperation trainee teachers prefer cf. Feige/Friedrichs/Kollmann 2007, 55–64. Which options for the future of RE trainee teachers prefer and which shape future RE should take from their point of view cf. Lück 2012, 146–152.

110 Cf. Englert et al. 2012. In this volume the contributions to the question of how RE should be organised today and which didactic concept is suitable for RE, are, typically enough, entitled "contentious issues".

111 Cf. Englert 2012b, 255 f.

any encounter and debate with 'the other', 'the strange' can begin, or if one's own identity opens up and develops in this encounter and debate with these, are important questions.[112] Consequently an RE provision with religious-didactical aims experiences tension "between identity development on the one hand and managing diversity on the other."[113] Finally, to use the word of the EKD memorandum, there is the question[114] of whether religious identity must first be learned and developed in one's own religious tradition, before any other form of dialogue can follow, or whether religious identity has always developed in the mode of dialogue. The question regarding the organisational structure of RE is also controversial within society, even though RE is generally highly esteemed in Austria. This has, however, been diminishing in recent decades.[115] In Austria there is a growing body of opinion demanding that the state should take more responsibility for RE[116] or even that the state should it take over completely, as religion is a private matter.[117] For good reason, RE is, however, a joint concern of the state, the churches and the religious communities; therefore "constant attention to mutual interests, necessities, developments and basic conditions"[118] is required. For this reason, the development of context-sensitive models of RE is also a joint challenge for schools, churches and religious communities. The perspective, which will be substantiated in two pleas, takes this into account.

5.3.4.1 Plea VI: Use Individual Schools as Important Cooperation Partner in the Development of Context-Sensitive Models of RE

In its position paper ÖRF addresses the organisational structure of RE and calls for the development of context-sensitive models. Scientific studies in the field religious education supply their expert assessment for this.[119] When context-sensitive models of RE are to be developed so that schools can fulfil their religious educational mandate, the present study shows, with regards to the third research question, that specific school, every single one of them, are important partners in the cooperation of developing such models. If RE, in whichever organisational structure, wants to be accepted, schools' expectations have to be recognised and taken seriously (empirically explored and interpreted), critically reflected on and honestly taken into account in the development of RE. After all, the players at any particular school are experts on their schools and know about the context specific to this schools, with all its possibilities and limitations. Consequently experts from the field of religious education studies, players at the schools and representatives of the churches and religious communities who are responsible for RE and, if necessary, the schools' accountants and finance officers have to work together

112 Cf. controversially Verhülsdonk 2012a; Verhülsdonk 2012b; Verhülsdonk 2013; Knauth 2012a; Knauth 2012b.
113 Weirer 2011, 121.
114 Cf. Kirchenamt der EKD [2]1995.
115 Cf. Zulehner 2011, 192 f.
116 Cf. Schinkele 2011, 22 f.
117 Cf. Initiative Religion ist Privatsache 2013a; Initiative Religion is Privatsache 2013b.
118 Weirer 2011, 121.
119 Cf. ÖRF2010, 62.

to develop context-sensitive models for individual schools. Despite the fact that both schools assessed for this study, consider their responsibility towards RE to be minimal, it is still obvious that both schools have the potential to participate constructively in the development of RE. In *School A* there is reason to believe this because ethics education lessons were established there. The available data does not provide enough information to assess why ethics education was introduced. However, in view of the unsatisfactory educational policy in Austria, which has not yet integrated ethics education into the regular school system, in spite of its success story that has by now lasted for over 18 year, the existence of the subject is already a convincing clue.[120] Each and every school that wants to take the subject on, has to work out a plan and a curriculum for this school experiment separately; it can be assumed that the importance of offering both ethical and religious education to all pupils was paramount to this school.[121] In *School B* the potential to participate constructively in the development of context-sensitive models can also be recognised. The school would be available as a cooperation partner for innovative models. This can mainly be observed because the SCC-group itself expresses the wish to develop RE into a subject for all pupils that would be called "subject religions" (379). All the same, the voices that were decisively against RE for all jointly organised by the churches and religious communities, must certainly be taken into account as well. There were two RE teachers in *School B*, who had objections. In as far as there is a basic agreement amongst all significant players in the school (at least among some RE teachers and the SCC-group) about the wish to develop RE further, a solution has to be found in this development that takes the objecting voices seriously, respects them and handles them productively. The following questions are intended to trigger deeper analysis of this argument in schools:

- What potential is there to develop RE further in this school?
- Which context-specific problems and opportunities do on-site experts (pupils, teachers, parents, heads of schools) draw attention to because of their organisational knowledge?
- How can solutions be found that meet the requirements of everybody involved?
- How can conflicts be dealt with productively?

5.3.4.2 Plea VII: Creation of Concrete Models as a Primary Task for Representatives of the Churches and Religious Communities Responsible for Schools

In both schools the religions, and the Catholic Church in particular, are viewed as stumbling blocks in the further development of the organisational structure for RE. This was shown in the SCC-group of *School A*; their experiences of reactions by the Catholic Church to ethics education were for instance classified as proof of intolerant behaviour. As a result, some religions and the Catholic Church are not interested in RE for all jointly organised by the churches and religious communities. In *School B* similar assumptions are to be found. They suspect that strict religious (Muslim) parents as

120 Cf. Chapter 1.2.2 Religious Education in the Context of the Ethics Education Debate
121 Cf. Bucher 2001, 261–263.

well as the Catholic Church and some other religions would be opposed to this kind of RE. Nevertheless, "there is a good ecumenical and interfaith atmosphere, which has developed over many years"[122] in Austria. This becomes apparent in the following areas among other: RE teachers for primary and lower secondary education share a common training course that several churches and religious communities are responsible for (KPH Wien/Krems),[123] the activities of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Austria (ÖRKÖ) especially the publishing of the common Word on Economic and Social Questions, the introduction of cooperative RE in some schools in Vienna as well as the yearly joint publication of an ecumenical diary for pupils.[124] According to this, ecumenical and interreligious relationships in Austria seem to be extraordinarily propitious for the development of RE for all jointly organised by the churches and religious communities on the part of the churches and religious societies. While they are regarded as inhibiting factors in the two schools investigated for this study, their chance and challenge would simply be to demonstrate the opposite consistently and to promote RE in schools. Where churches and religious communities make their concern for RE in schools known, even if this includes a further development of denominationally segregated RE, the kind of assumptions noted at the two investigated schools could be minimised. As the school's area of responsibility for RE is considered to be small, it is primarily the task of the representatives of churches and religious communities responsible for schools to create concrete new models and to discuss and further them in collaboration with the school management and the players at the schools, so that context-sensitive models of RE can be developed and established where RE comes up against its limits or is even threatened to disappear from school altogether.

Experiences with what such models could look like, especially in the case of denominationally-cooperative RE, point to the need for providing adequate information[125] and for entering into clearly worded agreements of cooperation, so that all participants can cooperate at eye level.[126] What is possible when schools, churches and religious communities collaborate at their best can be observed at the vocational school for tourism in Warmbad Villach, Carinthia, where the project of a dialogical-denominational RE (dk:RU) is held, for which four churches or religious communities are responsible and which is taught by the respective RE teachers (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox and Islamic).[127] This example is especially interesting because RE at vocational schools,

122 Jäggle/Klutz 2016, 53.

123 The Catholic Church, the Protestant Church A.C. and H.C., the Greek Orthodox Curch, the Old Catholic Church, the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Syrian Othodox Church, the Free Churches of Austria, the Islamic Alevitic Religious Communitiy and since 2016 the Islamic Religious Community.

124 Cf. Jäggle/Klutz 2016, 53–55.

125 Cf. the exemplary information policy for denominationally cooperative RE in Baden-Württemberg. Cf. Diözese Rottenburg-Stuttgart 2014.

126 Cf. the cooperation paper including its school type-specific framework contracts on denominationally cooperative RE in Baden-Württemberg. Cf. Evangelische Landeskirche in Baden et al. 2009, 7–31.

127 Cf. Leitner 2012; cf. also the private school 'International School Carinthia' (ISC) in Velden, Carinthia. The body maintaining this school is the ISC club, which consists of various interested parties. Among them there are the Carinthian Camber of Comerce, the Industrialists'

with the exception of the Tyrol and Vorarlberg, is a voluntary subject, for which pupils have to enrol.[128] Another example for a successful cooperation of school, school providers/maintainers and financers and – in this case – the Roman Catholic church is the compulsory subject 'Culture Care' at the private vocational school with Public Right of the SPAR AG ('Spar Academy Vienna'). The curriculum as well as the distribution of the syllabus for this subject is drawn up in cooperation between the school providers/maintainers and financers (SPAR AG) and the Catholic Church. In its educational and learning tasks this subject includes key areas that would also be covered in a denominational RE (building up identity, values education, confrontation with religious and ideological traditions etc.). As the school subject "culture care" includes these educational objectives tasks, the Catholic Church at least has no ambitions to establish RE at this school.[129]

The examples mentioned above particularly point to the fact that in the development of context-sensitive models of RE the educational goals of specific types of school have to be integrated. Consequently, the following impulse questions can be defined:

- Which skills that help in the mastery of occupationally specific demands that arise from cultural and religious diversity does RE promote?
- How can churches and religious communities jointly promote these skills?
- What are the consequences for the organisational structure of RE?

Association, the Catholic diocese, Gurk and the Carinthian International Club. Cf. International School Carinthia.

128 On RE at vocational schools in Austria cf. Jäggle 2013.

129 At the moment this subject is taught by a Catholic teacher (a priest) who is at the same time educational head of the school. Cf. Schachtner 2013.

5.3.5 Overview of Empirical Finding IV + V and Perspective III

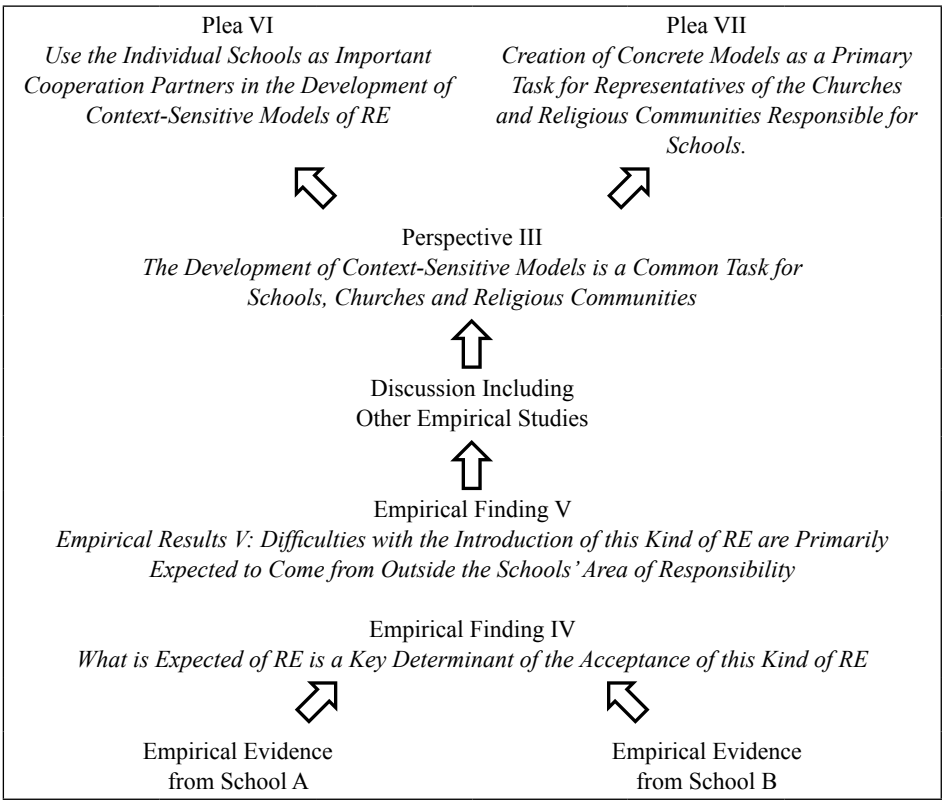

Figure 11: Empirical findings and perspective (acceptance of RE for all, jointly organised by the churches and religious communities)

6. References

Adam, Gottfried (2000), Ethische Bildung in einer pluraler werdenden Lebenswelt. Überlegungen zu einigen Grundfragen eines Faches „Ethik“, in: Angel, Hans-Ferdinand (ed.), Tragfähigkeit der Religionspädagogik. (Theologie im kulturellen Dialog 4), Graz: Styria, 134–145.

Adam, Gottfried/Lachmann Rainer (2014), Reasons for Religious Education in Public Schools, in: Rothgangel, Martin/Schlag, Thomas/Schweitzer, Friedrich (eds.) (2014), 131–144.

Altmeyer, Stefan (2011), „Dass einer fiedelt, soll wichtiger sein, als was er geigt“ (Th. W. Adorno) – Religion und Bildung unter den Vorzeichen einer ‚Theorie der Unbildung‘, in: Bitter, Gottfried/Blasberg-Kuhnke, Martina (eds.), Religion und Bildung in Kirche und Gesellschaft. (FS Norbert Mette; Studien zur Theologie und Praxis der Seelsorge 86), Würzburg: Echter, 134–154.

Altmeyer, Stefan/Bitter, Gottfried/Theis, Joachim (eds.) (2013), Religiöse Bildung – Optionen, Diskurse, Ziele. (Praktische Theologie heute 132), Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Arzt, Silvia/Porzelt, Burkard/Ritzer, Georg (2010), Empirisches Forschen in der aktuellen Religionspädagogik. Projekte aus der AKRK-Sektion „Empirische Religionspädagogik“ – ein Literaturüberblick über das vergangene Jahrzehnt, in: Religionspädagogische Beiträge 65, 43–55.

Asbrand, Barbara (2000), Zusammen Leben und Lernen im Religionsunterricht. Eine empirische Studie zur grundschulpädagogischen Konzeption eines interreligiösen Religionsunterrichts im Klassenverband der Grundschule, Frankfurt am Main: IKO.

Auer, Karl Heinz (ed.) (2002), Ethikunterricht. Standortbestimmungen und Perspektiven, Innsbruck: Tyrolia.

Avest, Ina ter (2009), Lehrerreaktionen auf religiöse Vielfalt. Eindrücke aus der Praxis und Empfehlungen für die Lehrerbildung, in: Jozsa, Dan-Paul/Knauth, Thorsten/Weiße, Wolfram (eds.), Religionsunterricht, Dialog und Konflikt. Analysen im Kontext Europas. (Religious Diversity and Education in Europe 15), Münster et al.: Waxmann, 398–403.

Avest, Ina ter/Bakker, Cok/Want, Anna van der (2009), International Comparison: Commonalities and Differences of 36 Teachers Teaching Religion(s) in Europe, in: Want, Anna van der et al. (eds.) (2009), 111–126.

Banach, Michael W. (2007), Statement at the 685th Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, 1. November 2007, in: http://www.osce.org/pc/28557 [16.04.2016].

Bastel, Heribert (2005), Religionspädagogische Implikationen und Diskussion der Ergebnisse, in: Bucher, Anton A./Miklas, Helene (eds.) (2005), 227–235.

Bastel, Heribert/Miklas, Helene (2006), „Ich bin informierter und persönlich gestärkt in meinem Glaubensverständnis“ oder Zusammenarbeit der ReligionslehrerInnen verschiedener christlicher Konfessionen – ein empirisches Forschungsprojekt, in: Bastel, Heribert et al. (eds.) (2006), 43–57.

Bastel, Heribert et al. (eds.) (2006), Das Gemeinsame entdecken – Das Unterscheidende anerkennen. Projekt eines konfessionell-kooperativen Religionsunterrichts. Einblicke – Hintergründe – Ansätze – Forschungsergebnisse. (Austria: Forschung und Wissenschaft. Religionspädagogik 1), Wien: LIT.

Battke, Achim et al. (eds.) (2002), Schulentwicklung – Religion – Religionsunterricht. Profil und Chance von Religion in der Schule der Zukunft, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.
Baumert, Jürgen (2002), Deutschland im internationalen Bildungsvergleich, in: Killius, Nelson/Kluge, Jürgen/Reisch, Linda (eds.), Die Zukunft der Bildung, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 100–150.
Benner, Dietrich (2004), Bildungsstandards und Qualitätssicherung im Religionsunterricht, in: Religionspädagogische Beiträge 53, 5–19.
Benner, Dietrich (2014), Bildung und Religion. Nur einem bildsamen Wesen kann ein Gott sich offenbaren. (Religionspädagogik in pluraler Gesellschaft 18), Paderborn: Schöningh.
Bertram-Troost, Gerdien (2009), How do European Pupils See Religion in School?, in: Valk, Pille et al. (eds.) (2009), 409–422.
Bertram-Troost, Gerdien et al. (2008), European Comparison: Methodological Reflections on the Comparative Approach, in: Knauth, Thorsten et al. (eds.) (2008), 367–373.
Bertsch, Ludwig et al. (eds.) (1976), Gemeinsame Synode der Bistümer in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Beschlüsse der Vollversammlung. Offizielle Gesamtausgabe I, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.
Biermann, Christine (2007), Wie kommt Neues in die Schule? Individuelle und organisationale Bedingungen nachhaltiger Schulentwicklung am Beispiel Geschlecht. (Veröffentlichungen der Max-Traeger-Stiftung 43), Weinheim: Juventa.
Biesinger, Albert et al. (eds.) (2006), Dialogischer Religionsunterricht. Analyse und Praxis konfessionell-kooperativen Religionsunterrichts im Jugendalter. (Unter Mitarbeit von Rosemarie Ilg/Julia Münch), Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.
Bildungssynode 1996 der Evangelischen Kirchen in Österreich (1997), in: Schulfach Religion. (Sondernummer), 20–30.
Bohnsack, Ralf (1983), Alltagsinterpretation und soziologische Rekonstruktion. (Beiträge zur Sozialwissenschaftlichen Forschung 51), Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
Bohnsack, Ralf (1989), Generation, Milieu und Geschlecht. Ergebnisse aus Gruppendiskussionen mit Jugendlichen. (Biographie und Gesellschaft 8), Opladen: Leske + Budrich.
Bohnsack, Ralf (2000), Gruppendiskussion, in: Flick, Uwe/von Kardorff, Ernst/Steinke, Ines (eds.), Qualitative Forschung. Ein Handbuch, Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 369–384.
Bohnsack, Ralf ([9]2014), Rekonstruktive Sozialforschung. Einführung in qualitative Methoden. 8., durchgesehen und aktualisierte Auflage [1991], Opladen & Farmington Hills: Budrich.
Bohnsack, Ralf ([3]2011), Fokussierungsmetapher, in: Bohnsack, Ralf/Marotzki, Winfried/Meuser, Michael (eds.), Hauptbegriffe Qualitativer Sozialforschung. 3., durchgesehene Auflage [2003], Opladen & Farmington Hills: Budrich, 67.
Bohnsack, Ralf ([2]2011), Qualitative Bild- und Videointerpretation. Die dokumentarische Methode. 2., durchgesehen und aktualisierte Auflage [2009], Opladen & Farmington Hills: Budrich.
Bohnsack, Ralf/Nentwig-Gesemann, Iris/Nohl, Arnd-Michael (eds.) ([3]2013), Die dokumentarische Methode und ihre Forschungspraxis. Grundlagen qualitativer Sozialforschung. 3., aktualisierte Auflage [2001], Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
Bohnsack, Ralf/Przyborski, Aglaja/Schäffer, Burkhard (eds.) ([2]2010a), Das Gruppendiskussionsverfahren in der Forschungspraxis. 2., vollständig überarbeitete und aktualisierte Auflage [2006], Opladen, Farmington Hills: Budrich.

Bohnsack, Ralf/Przyborski, Aglaja/Schäffer, Burkhard ([2]2010b), Einleitung: Gruppendiskussionen als Methode rekonstruktiver Sozialforschung, in: Bohnsack, Ralf/Przyborski, Aglaja/Schäffer, Burkhard (eds.) ([2]2010a), 7–22.

Bolz, Martin/Schrumpf, Johann/Jäggle, Martin (2000), Viele Kulturen – Eine Schule. Religiöse Implikationen im Schulalltag der Volksschule. eine Studie im Rahmen der Pädagogischen Tatsachenforschung, durchgeführt im 15. Wiener Gemeindebezirk Rudolfsheim/Fünfhaus. (Theorie & Praxis. Texte zur Lehrerbildung 14), Wien: Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur.

Borck, Karin/Schluß, Henning (2009), Religion unterrichten in Brandenburg, in: Rothgangel, Martin/Schröder, Bernd (eds.) (2009), 95–109.

Boschki, Reinhold (2007), Der phänomenologische Blick: „Vierschritt" statt „Dreischritt" in der Religionspädagogik, in: Boschki, Reinhold/Gronover, Matthias (eds.), Junge Wissenschaftstheorie der Religionspädagogik. (Tübinger Perspektiven zur Pastoraltheologie und Religionspädagogik 31), Berlin: LIT, 25–47.

Bucher, Anton A. (1994), RU: von der Nordsee bis zu den Alpen? Ein Plädoyer für regionale Lösungen, in: Katechetische Blätter 119, 765–768.

Bucher, Anton A. (1996), Religionsunterricht: Besser als sein Ruf. Empirische Einblicke in ein umstrittenes Fach. (Salzburger Theologische Studien 3), Innsbruck: Tyrolia.

Bucher, Anton A. (2000a), Was wissen wir wirklich über den Religionsunterricht? Forschungsüberblick über die Empirie eines umstrittenen Faches, in: Angel, Hans-Ferdinand (ed.), Tragfähigkeit der Religionspädagogik. (Theologie im kulturellen Dialog 4), Graz: Styria, 77–96.

Bucher, Anton A. (2000b), Religionsunterricht zwischen Lernfach und Lebenshilfe. Eine empirische Untersuchung zum katholischen Religionsunterricht in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. (Mit einem Geleitwort von Bischof Karl Lehmann), Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Bucher, Anton A. (2001), Ethikunterricht in Österreich. Bericht der wissenschaftlichen Evaluation der Schulversuche „Ethikunterricht". (Mit zwei Kapiteln von Manfred Göllner. Unter Mitarbeit von Angelika Auer/Thomas Mair/Erwin Rauscher), Innsbruck: Tyrolia.

Bucher, Anton A. (2005a), Befindlichkeit und religionspädagogische Zielsetzungen von katholischen ReligionslehrerInnen in den Diözesen Salzburg und Linz, in: Bucher, Anton A./Miklas, Helene (eds.) (2005a), 30–123.

Bucher, Anton A. (2005b), Die Ergebnisse im Vergleich mit bisherigen Studien speziell aus der Bundesrepublik, in: Bucher, Anton A./Miklas, Helene (eds.) (2005a), 218–227.

Bucher, Anton A. (2011), Eine unendliche Geschichte: Ethikunterricht in Österreich, in: Österreichisches Archiv für Recht & Religion 58, 25–36.

Bucher, Anton A. (2014), Der Ethikunterricht in Österreich. Politisch verschleppt – pädagogisch überfällig! Innsbruck: Tyrolia.

Bucher, Anton A./Miklas, Helene (ed.) (2005), Zwischen Berufung und Frust. Die Befindlichkeit von katholischen und evangelischen ReligionslehrerInnen in Österreich. (Empirische Theologie 14), Wien: LIT.

Bucher, Anton A./Rothbucher Heinz (1996), Zwischen „sehr zufrieden" und „aussteigen" – Zukunft und Probleme des Religionsunterrichts in der Sicht der LehrerInnen, in: Bucher, Anton A. (1996), 117–151.

Bundeskanzleramt Österreich (2014a), Gesetzlich anerkannte Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften in Österreich, in: https://www.bka.gv.at/site/4735/default.aspx [16.04.2016].

Bundeskanzleramt Österreich (2014b), Staatlich eingetragene religiöse Bekenntnisgemeinschaften, in: https://www.bka.gv.at/site/3405/default.aspx [16.04.2016].

Bundesministerium für Inneres (2013), „Volksbegehren gegen Kirchenprivilegien" – endgültiges Ergebnis, in: http://www.bmi.gv.at/cms/BMI_wahlen/volksbegehren/vb_xx_periode/anti_kirchepriv/endg_gesamtergebnis.aspx [16.04.2016].

Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur (2012), Die kompetenzorientierte Reifeprüfung aus Religion. Grundlagen, exemplarische Themenbereiche und Aufgabenstellungen, in: https://www.bmbf.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/ba/reifepruefung_ahs_lfrel_22989.pdf?4k21fu [16.04.2016].

Bünker, Michael (2011), Statement, in: Österreichisches Archiv für Recht & Religion 58, 43–45.

Burrichter, Rita et al. (2012), Professionell Religion unterrichten. Ein Arbeitsbuch. (Mit einem Beitrag zum Referendariat von Hartmut Lenhard; Religionspädagogik innovativ 2), Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Clark-Wilson, Christine (2011), Ethikunterricht in Österreich 2010. Eine Replikationsstudie zu den Ergebnissen der wissenschaftlichen Evaluation der Schulversuche Ethikunterricht Anton A. Buchers (2001). (Dipl.-Arb.), Universität Wien.

Collmar, Norbert (2004), Schulpädagogik und Religionspädagogik. Handlungstheoretische Analysen von Schule und Religionsunterricht, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Conference of European Churches (CEC)/Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE) (2001), Charta Oecumenica. Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation among the Churches in Europe, in: http://www.ceceurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/ChartaOecumenica.pdf [16.04.2016].

Congregation for Catholic Education (2009), Circular letter to the presidents of bishops' conferences on religious education in schools, in: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20090505_circ-insegn-relig_en.html [16.04.2016].

Council of Europe (2008), White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. "Living Together As Equals in Dignity", (Launched by the Council of Europe Ministers of Foreign Affairs at their 118th Ministerial Session, Strasbourg, 7 May 2008) in: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper_final_revised_en.pdf [16.04.2016].

Dangschat, Jens S. (2011), (Groß-)Städte in der Wertelandschaft, in: Polak, Regina (ed.), Zukunft. Werte. Europa. Die Europäische Wertestudie 1990–2010: Österreich im Vergleich, Wien: Böhlau, 223–252.

Danner, Sonja (2015), KoKoRu: konfessionell-kooperativer Religionsunterricht – „das Wiener Modell", in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 23, 47–53.

Danner, Sonja/Lagger, Dagmar/Schwarz, Elisabeth E. (2005), Befindlichkeit und religionspädagogische Zielsetzungen von evangelischen ReligionslehrerInnen in Österreich, in: Bucher, Anton A./Miklas, Helene (eds.) (2005), 124–207.

Debray, Régis (2002), L'en eignement du fait religieux dans l'École laïque. Raport. À Monsieur le Ministre de l'Éducation nationale. (Février 2002), in: http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/var/storage/rapports-publics/024000544/0000.pdf [16.04.2016].

Die Deutsche Bischofskonferenz und die Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD) (1998), Zur Kooperation von Evangelischem und Katholischem Religionsunterricht, in: http://www.ekd.de/download/konfessionelle_kooperation_1998.pdf [16.04.2016].

Dienststelle Volksschulbildung des Kantons Luzern (ed.) (2011), Ethik und Religionen – ein neues Fach. Abschlussbericht 2011, in: https://volksschulbildung.lu.ch/-/media/Volksschulbildung/Dokumente/unterricht_organisation/faecher_wost_lehrmittel/faecher/ethik_rel_abschlussbericht.pdf?la=de-CH [16.04.2016].

Diözese Rottenburg-Stuttgart (2014), Hauptabteilung IX: Schulen. Konfessionelle Kooperation im Religionsunterricht, in: http://schulen.drs.de/index.php?id=13383 [16.04.2016].

Doedens, Folkert (n.d.), Religionsunterricht für alle – Hamburger Perspektiven auf das Fach „Religion und Kultur", in: http://www.pti-nordelbien.de/fix/downloads/Allgemein/zuerich.pdf [16.04.2016].

Doedens, Folkert (2005), „Religionsunterricht für alle" – Hamburger Perspektiven auf das Zürcher Fach „Religion und Kultur", in: Kunz, Ralph et al. (eds.) (2005), 181–204.

Doedens, Folkert (2010), Religionsunterricht für alle – Der Hamburger Weg, in: Braunschweiger Beiträge 131, H. 3, 19–28.

Doedens, Folkert/Weiße, Wolfram (eds.) (1997), Religionsunterricht für alle. Hamburger Perspektiven zur Religionsdidaktik. (Religionspädagogik in einer multikulturellen Gesellschaft 1), Münster: Waxmann.

Doedens, Folkert/Weiße, Wolfram (2007), Religion unterrichten in Hamburg, in: Theo-Web. Zeitschrift für Religionspädagogik 6, H. 1, 50–67.

Doedens, Folkert/Weiße, Wolfram (2009), Religion unterrichten in Hamburg, in: Rothgangel, Martin/Schröder, Bernd (eds.) (2009), 12–156.

Dresing, Thorsten/Pehl, Thorsten (2010), Transkription, in: Mey, Günter/Mruck, Katja (eds.), Handbuch Qualitative Forschung in der Psychologie, Wiesbaden: VS/Springer, 723–733.

Edelstein, Wolfgang et al. (2001), Lebensgestaltung – Ethik – Religionskunde. Zur Grundlegung eines neuen Schulfachs. Analysen und Empfehlungen, Weinheim: Beltz.

Engelbrecht, Helmut (2000), Relikt oder Zukunftsmodell? Zur Geschichte der katholischen Privatschulen in Österreich (mit Schulverzeichnis), Wien: öbv & hpt.

Englert, Rudolf (1988), Plädoyer für „religionspädagogische Pünktlichkeit". Zum Verhältnis von Glaubensgeschichte, Lebensgeschichte und Bildungsprozeß, in: Katechetische Blätter 113, 159–169.

Englert, Rudolf (2002), Dimensionen religiöser Pluralität, in: Schweitzer, Friedrich et al. (eds.) (2002), 17–50.

Englert, Rudolf (2007), Religionspädagogische Grundfragen. Anstöße zur Urteilsbildung. (Praktische Theologie heute 82), Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Englert, Rudolf (2011a), Zehn Gründe für einen konfessionellen Religionsunterricht – Ein Plädoyer aus religionsdidaktischer Sicht, in: Ucar, Bülent (ed.), Islamische Religionspädagogik zwischen authentischer Selbstverortung und dialogischer Öffnung. Perspektiven aus der Wissenschaft und dem Schulalltag der Lehrkräfte. (Reihe für Osnabrücker Islamstudien 3), Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 35–45.

Englert, Rudolf (2011b), Bloß Moden oder mehr?, in: Katechetische Blätter 136, 296–303.

Englert, Rudolf (2012a), Wenn die Theologie in die Schule geht … Inkulturationserfahrungen, die zu denken und zu lernen geben, in: Mette, Norbert/Sellmann, Matthias (eds.),

Religionsunterricht als Ort der Theologie. (Questiones disputatae 247), Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 92–105.
Englert, Rudolf (2012b), Religionsdidaktik wohin? Versuch einer Bilanz, in: Grümme, Bernhard/Lenhard, Hartmut/Pirner, Manfred (eds.), Religionsunterricht neu denken. Innovative Ansätze und Perspektiven der Religionsdidaktik. Ein Arbeitsbuch. (Religionspädagogik innovativ 1), Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 247–258.
Englert, Rudolf (2013a), Religion gibt zu denken. Eine Religionsdidaktik in 19 Lehrstücken, München: Kösel.
Englert, Rudolf (2013b), Warum kein Religionsunterricht für alle? Der besondere Reiz des konfessionellen Modells, in: Herder Korrespondenz Spezial 2, 23–27.
Englert, Rudolf (2014a), Konfessioneller Religionsunterricht – zehn Thesen zum besseren Verständnis, in: Schröder, Bernd (ed.) (2014a), 155–161.
Englert, Rudolf (2014b), Warum konfessioneller Religionsunterricht?, in: Katechetische Blätter 139, 368–375.
Englert, Rudolf/Güth, Ralph (eds.) (1999), „Kinder zum Nachdenken bringen". Eine empirische Untersuchung zu Situation und Profil katholischen Religionsunterrichts an Grundschulen. Die Essener Umfrage, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.
Englert, Rudolf/Hennecke, Elisabeth/Kämmerling, Markus (2014), Innenansichten des Religionsunterrichts. Fallbeispiele – Analysen – Konsequenzen, München: Kösel.
Englert, Rudolf et al. (eds.) (2012), Welche Religionspädagogik ist pluralitätsfähig? Kontroversen um einen Leitbegriff. (Religionspädagogik in pluraler Gesellschaft 17), Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.
Erzbischöfliches Amt für Unterricht und Erziehung in Wien, in: http://www.schulamt.at/ [16.04.2016].
Esch, Franz-Rudolf/Herrmann, Andreas/Sattler, Henrik ([2]2008), Marketing. Eine managementorientierte Einführung. 2., überarbeitete Auflage [2006], München: Vahlen.
Evangelische Kirche in Österreich (2011), Bünker, Kampits und Wagner für Ethikunterricht, in: http://evang.at/buenker-kampits-und-wagner-fuer-ethikunterricht/[16.04.2016].
Evangelische Landeskirche in Baden et al. (eds.) (2009), Konfessionelle Kooperation im Religionsunterricht an allgemeinbildenden Schulen. Vereinbarung der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz und der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland (EKD): Zur Kooperation von evangelischem und katholischem Religionsunterricht. Vereinbarung zwischen der Evangelischen Landeskirche in Baden, der Evangelischen Landeskirchen in Württemberg, der Erzdiözese Freiburg und der Diözese Rottenburg-Stuttgart vom 1. März 2005, Novellierung Verbindliche Rahmen vom 1. August 2009, Evangelisches Medienhaus: Stuttgart, 2009.
Feige, Andreas/Dressler, Bernd (2000), Zusammenfassung: „Bildungsreligion" zwischen dem Sakralraum Kirche und pluralisierter Lebenswelt. Die religionskulturelle Vermittlungssituation des Schulischen Religionsunterrichts im Spiegel der Selbstbeschreibungen der ev. ReligionslehrerInnenschaft, in: Feige, Andreas et al. (2000), 443–469.
Feige, Andreas et al. (2000), „Religion" bei ReligionslehrerInnen. Religionspädagogische Zielvorstellungen und religiöses Selbstverständnis in empirisch-soziologischen Zugängen. Berufsbiographische Fallanalysen und eine repräsentative Meinungserhebung unter evangelischen ReligionslehrerInnen in Niedersachsen, Münster: LIT.

Feige, Andreas/Dressler, Bernhard/Tzscheetzsch, Werner (eds.) (2006), Religionslehrer oder Religionslehrerin werden. Zwölf Analysen berufsbiografischer Selbstwahrnehmungen, Ostfildern: Schwabenverlag.

Feige, Andreas/Friedrichs, Nils/Köllmann, Michael (2007), Religionsunterricht von morgen? Studienmotivationen und Vorstellungen über die zukünftige Berufspraxis bei Studierenden der ev. und kath. Theologie und Religionspädagogik. Eine empirische Studie in Baden-Württemberg, Ostfildern: Schwabenverlag.

Feige, Andreas/Lukatis, Wolfgang (2000),„Religion im Religionsunterricht“ in demoskopisch auflösender Analyse: Zielvorstellungen für „gelehrte Religion“ im biografischen, weltanschaulichen, unterrichtspraktischen und schulorganisatorischen Kontext. Ergebnisse einer Repräsentativ-Umfrage in Niedersachsen unter Lehrerinnen und Lehrern des Faches „Ev. Religion“. (In Zusammenarbeit mit Ingrid Lukatis, dem Dozentenkollegium des RPI und Michael Schramm), in: Feige, Andreas et al. (2000), 205–442.

Feige, Andreas/Tzscheetzsch, Werner (2005), Christlicher Religionsunterricht im religionsneutralen Staat? Unterrichtliche Zielvorstellungen und religiöses Selbstverständnis von ev. und kath. Religionslehrerinnen und -lehrern in Baden-Württemberg. Eine empirisch-repräsentative Befragung, Ostfildern: Schwabenverlag/Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Feld, Jens/Nordhofen, Eckhard (2010), Besser gemeinsam? Zur Zukunft des konfessionellen Religionsunterrichts. Referat im Rahmen der Tagung „Besser gemeinsam? Zur Zukunft des konfessionellen Religionsunterrichts“ am 22.01.2010 in Nassau/Lahn (Heime Scheuern), Limburg/Lahn: Verlag des Bischöflichen Ordinariats Limburg.

Fiechter-Alber, Elmar (2004), Welche Ethik in der Schule? Grundlagen ethischen Lehrens und Lernens. (Kommunikative Theologie 5), Mainz: Grünewald.

Filipović, Ana Thea (2011), Der Religionsunterricht in öffentlichen Schulen in Europa. Modelle und Entwicklungen als Indikatoren für die gesellschaftliche Bedeutung des Glaubens und die Anfrage an Theologie und Kirche, in: Christlich pädagogische Blätter 124, 239–245.

Fischer, Dietlind et al. (1996), Auf dem Weg zur Interkulturellen Schule. Fallstudien zur Situation interkulturellen und interreligiösen Lernens, Münster: Waxmann.

Fischer, Dietlind (1996), Unterricht als interkulturelles Handlungsfeld, in: Fischer, Dietlind et al. (1996), 101–112.

Flick, Uwe ([3]2011), Triangulation. Eine Einführung. (Qualitative Sozialforschung 12), 3., aktualisierte Ausgabe [2004], Wiesbaden: VS/Springer.

Flick, Uwe ([4]2011), Qualitative Sozialforschung. Eine Einführung. Vollständig überarbeitete und erweiterte Neuausgabe [1995], Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt.

Forschungsstelle für Ethik und Wissenschaft im Dialog, Medienspiegel zum Ethikunterricht in Österreich, in: http://fewd.univie.ac.at/ethikunterricht/oesterreich/[16.04.2016].

Frank, Katharina (2010), Schulischer Religionsunterricht. Eine religionswissenschaftlich-soziologische Untersuchung. (Religionswissenschaft heute 7), Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Froschauer, Ulrike/Lueger, Manfred (eds.) (2009), Interpretative Sozialforschung: Der Prozess, Wien: Facultas.

Göllner, Manfred (2002), Die Bildungs- und Lehraufgaben des Ethikunterrichts in Europa im Vergleich. (Philosophie in der Schule 2), Münster: LIT.

Goßmann, Klaus (ed.) (1987), Ökumenisches Lernen im Religionsunterricht, Münster: Comenius-Institut.
Gräb, Wilhelm/Thieme, Thomas (2011), Religion oder Ethik? Die Auseinandersetzung um den Ethik- und Religionsunterricht in Berlin. (Arbeiten zur Religionspädagogik 45), Göttingen: V&R unipress.
Greiner, Ulrike (2000), Der Spur des Anderen folgen? Religionspädagogik zwischen Theologie und Humanwissenschaften. (Beiträge zur mimetischen Theorie 11), Münster: LIT.
Grimmitt, Michael (Ed.) (2000), Pedagogies of Religious Education: Case Studies in the Research and Development of Good Pedagogic Practice in RE, Great Wakering: McCrimmons Publishing.
Groß, Engelbert (ed.) (2004), Erziehungswissenschaft, Religion und Religionspädagogik. (Forum Theologie und Pädagogik 7), Münster: LIT.
Grümme, Bernhard (2007), Vom Anderen eröffnete Erfahrung. Zur Neubestimmung des Erfahrungsbegriffs in der Religionsdidaktik. (Religionspädagogik in pluraler Gesellschaft 10), Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus/Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.
Haese, Bernd-Michael (2013), Zum Stand des Religionsunterrichts für alle in Hamburg, in: Zeitschrift für Pädagogik und Theologie 65, 15–24.
Hammer, Stefan (2005), Zur Ungleichbehandlung von Religionsgemeinschaften in der neueren Rechtssprechung, in: Österreichisches Archiv für Recht & Religion 52, 209–226.
Hassanein, Diaa Eldin (2013), Der Hamburger Weg des Religionsunterrichts. Eine empirische Analyse zum Dialog im Klassenzimmer. (Religionspädagogik in Forschung und Praxis 3), Hamburg: Dr. Kovač.
Havers, Norbert (1972), Der Religionsunterricht – Analyse eines unbeliebten Fachs. Eine empirische Untersuchung, München: Kösel.
Heimbrock, Hans-Günter (2004), Religionsunterricht im Kontext Europa. Einführung in die kontextuelle Religionsdidaktik in Deutschland, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.
Heine, Susanne/Lohlker, Rüdiger/Potz Richard, (2012), Muslime in Österreich. Geschichte. Lebenswelt. Religion. Grundlagen für den Dialog, Innsbruck: Tyrolia.
Helbling, Dominik et al. (eds.) (2013), Konfessioneller und bekenntnisunabhängiger Religionsunterricht. Eine Verhältnisbestimmung am Beispiel Schweiz, Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich.
Hemel, Ulrich (1991a), Ethikunterricht in der demokratischen Gesellschaft. Eine Stellungnahme aus religionspädagogischer Sicht, in: Christlich pädagogische Blätter 104, 57–62.
Hemel, Ulrich (1991b), Ethikunterricht in Deutschland und in Österreich – Fakten und Bewertungen. Zu CpB 104 (1991) 2, 62–66 und 3,110–115, in: Christlich pädagogische Blätter 104, 248–250.
Hemel, Ulrich (1992), Standpunkte und Argumente – Ein abschließendes Wort zur Frage: „Ethikunterricht in Österreich“, in: Christlich pädagogische Blätter 105, 33.
Hilger, Georg/Kropač, Ulrich/Leimgruber, Stephan (^{6}2010), Konzeptionelle Entwicklungslinien der Religionsdidaktik, in: Hilger, Georg/Leimgruber, Stephan/Ziebertz, Hans-Georg (eds.), Religionsdidaktik. Ein Leitfaden für Studium, Ausbildung und Beruf. Vollständig überarbeitete 6. Auflage der 1. Auflage [2001], München: Kösel, 41–69.
Hilger, Georg/Rothgangel, Martin (1997), Wahrnehmungskompetenz für die Religiosität von SchülerInnen. Ein Beitrag zum religionspädagogischen Perspektivenwechsel, in: Katechetische Blätter 122, 276–282.

Hilger, Georg/Rothgangel, Martin (2000), Wahrnehmungsschulung für „Gottesbilder“ von Kindern. Ein Werkstattbericht aus der Lehrerbildung, in: Fischer, Dietlind/Schöll, Albrecht (eds.), Religiöse Vorstellungen bilden. Erkundungen zur Religion von Kindern über Bilder, Münster: Comenius-Institut, 263–279.

Hoffmann, Eva (2009), Interreligiöses Lernen im Kindergarten? Eine empirische Studie zum Umgang mit religiöser Vielfalt in Diskussionen mit Kindern zum Thema Tod. (Schriften aus dem Comenius-Institut 21), Berlin: LIT.

Höger, Christian/Arzt, Sivlia (eds.) (2016), Empirische Religionspädagogik und Praktische Theologie. Metareflexionen und innovative empirische Forschungsprojekte aus der Sektion Empirische Religionspädagogik der AKRK, Freiburg im Breisgau: OPUS-PHFR.

Holl, Anke (2011), Orientierungen von Lehrerinnen und Lehrern an Schulen in evangelischer Trägerschaft. Eine qualitativ-rekonstruktive Studie. (Schulen in evangelischer Trägerschaft 13), Münster: Waxmann.

Homburg, Christian/Kromher, Harley (^{2}2006), Marketingmanagement. Strategie – Instrumente – Umsetzung – Unternehmensführung. 2., überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage [2003], Wiesbaden: Gabler.

Hopf, Christel (^{8}2010), Forschungsethik und qualitative Forschung, in: Flick, Uwe/von Kardorff, Ernst/Steinke, Ines (eds.), Qualitative Forschung. Ein Handbuch, [2000], Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 589–900.

Hütte, Saskia/Mette, Norbert (2003), Religion im Klassenverband unterrichten. Lehrer und Lehrerinnen berichten von ihren Erfahrungen. (Unter Mitarbeit von Rainer Middelberg/Sonja Pahl; Theologie und Praxis, Abteilung B, 16), Münster: LIT.

Initiative gegen Kirchenprivilegien (2013), Das Volksbegehren 2013, in: http://www.kirchen-privilegien.at/ueber-uns/volksbegehren/das-volksbegehren/[16.04.2016].

Initiative ‚lebens.werte.schule‘ (2008a), in: http://lebenswerteschule.univie.ac.at/ [16.04.2016].

Initiative ‚lebens.werte.schule‘ (2008b), Unser Anliegen, in: http://lebenswerteschule.univie.ac.at/lebenswerteschule/anliegen/[16.04.2016].

Initiative Religion ist Privatsache (2013a), Der Ethik- und Religion*en*unterricht. Unabhängig, selbstständig, für alle Schüler verpflichtend und den Herausforderungen des 21. Jahrhunderts gewachsen. Ein Positionspapier. 22. März 2013, in: http://www.religion-ist-privatsache.at/webandco/downloads/Positionspapier_Ethik.pdf [16.04.2016].

Initiative Religion ist Privatsache (2013b), Religionsunterricht: ein Relikt aus Zeiten, als die Welt noch in Ordnung war, in: http://www.religion-ist-privatsache.at/religionsunterricht/ [16.04.2016].

Interdiözesane Berufsgemeinschaft der ReligionslehrerInnen Österreichs (ibgrlö) (1994), Stellungnahme der interdiözesanen Berufsgemeinschaft der ReligionslehrerInnen Österreichs, in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 4, 30.

Interdiözesanes Amt für Unterricht und Erziehung (ed.) (n.d.), Lehrplan für den katholischen Religionsunterricht an Allgemeinbildenden höheren Schulen (Unterstufe) und Hauptschulen. Novellierter Lehrplan 2000. (Der novellierte Lehrplan 2000 beruht auf der Fassung des Lehrplan 2000 vom März 1999; Approbiert von der Österreichischen Bischofskonferenz im Juni 2003).

International School Carinthia, in: http://www.isc.ac.at/home/[16.04.2016].

Jackson, Robert et al. (eds.) (2007), Religious and Education in Europe. Developments, Contexts and Debates. (Religious Diversity and Education in Europe 3), Münster et al.: Waxmann.

Jäggle, Martin (1992), Die Situation des Religionsunterrichts an Volksschulen in der Großstadt Wien. Eine empirische Untersuchung. 2 Bde. (Diss.), Universität Wien.

Jäggle, Martin (1993a), Der Religionsunterricht kann nicht mehr sein, was er war. Einige empirische Daten zum Religionsunterricht an Volksschulen als ein Beitrag zum Realitätsgewinn, in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 3, 52–57.

Jäggle, Martin (1993b), Dasselbe ganz anders. Der RU an öffentlichen Volksschulen. Ein Vergleich zwischen Großstadt und ländlichem Raum in der Erzdiözese Wien, in: Christlich pädagogische Blätter 106, 19–21.

Jäggle, Martin (1995), Religionsunterricht an Volksschulen in Wien, in: Christlich pädagogische Blätter 108, 169–170.

Jäggle, Martin (1999), Anstatt eines Vorwortes, in: Jäggle, Martin/Anzengruber, Grete (Red.) (1999), 5–8.

Jäggle, Martin (2000), Wie nimmt Schule kulturelle und religiöse Differenz wahr? Grundsätzliche Vorbemerkungen und Einblick in ein Forschungsprojekt in Wien, in: Porzelt, Burkard/Güth, Ralph (eds.) (2000), 119–138.

Jäggle, Martin (2003), Religionen-Didaktik, in: Figl, Johann (ed.), Handbuch Religionswissenschaft. Religionen und ihre zentralen Themen, Innsbruck, Wien: Tyrolia/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 817–833.

Jäggle, Martin (2009), Pluralitätsfähiger Umgang mit den Anforderungen an den Religionsunterricht, in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 17, 54–57.

Jäggle, Martin (2011), Zehn Thesen zum Diskurs um den (konfessionellen) Religionsunterricht in Österreich, in: Österreichisches Archiv für Recht & Religion 58, 2–12.

Jäggle, Martin (2013), Der Religionsunterricht an Berufsschulen, in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 21, 79–85.

Jäggle, Martin/Anzengruber, Grete (Red.) (1999), EIN-FACH-ETHIK. Ethikunterricht in Österreich. Hintergründe – Kontroversen – Informationen. (Schulheft 93), Wien: Verein der Förderer der Schulhefte.

Jäggle, Martin/Klutz, Philipp (2016), Religious Education at Schools in Austria, in: Rothgangel, Martin/Jäggle, Martin/Schlag, Thomas (eds.) (2016), 39–68.

Jäggle, Martin/Krobath, Thomas (2009), Schulentwicklung für eine Kultur der Anerkennung. Pädagogische, organisationsethische und religionspädagogische Akzente, in: Jäggle, Martin/Krobath, Thomas/Schelander, Robert (eds.) (2009), 23–60.

Jäggle, Martin/Krobath, Thomas/Schelander, Robert (eds.) (2009), lebens.werte.schule. Religiöse Dimensionen in Schulkultur und Schulentwicklung. (Unter Mitwirkung von Edda Strutzenberger/Heribert Bastel; Austria: Forschung und Wissenschaft. Erziehungswissenschaft 5), Münster: LIT.

Jäggle, Martin/Rothgangel, Martin/Schlag, Thomas (eds.) (2013), Religiöse Bildung in Europa. Teil 1: Mitteleuropa. (Unter Mitarbeit von Philipp Klutz/Mónika Solymár; Wiener Forum für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft 5,1), Göttingen: V&R unipress.

Jäggle, Martin et al. (eds.) (2013), Kultur der Anerkennung. Würde – Gerechtigkeit – Partizipation. Schulkultur, Schulentwicklung und Religion, Hohengehren: Schneider.

Jakobs, Monika (2007), Zur religionsdidaktisch-schulpädagogischen Orientierung des Religionsunterrichts, in: Religionspädagogische Beiträge 58, 41–52.

Jakobs, Monika et al. (2009), Konfessioneller Religionsunterricht in multireligiöser Gesellschaft. Eine empirische Studie für die deutschsprachige Schweiz. (Beiträge zur Pastoralsoziologie 13), Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich.

Jozsa, Dan-Paul (2009), Muslim Students Views on Religion and Education. Perspectives from Western European Countries, in: Alvarez Veinguer, Aurora et al. (eds.), Islam in Education in European Countries. Pedagogical Concepts and Empirical Findings. (Religious Diversity and Education in Europe 18), Münster et al.: Waxmann, 131–158.

Kahrs, Christian (2009), Öffentliche Bildung privater Religion. Plädoyer für einen „Fachbereich Religion" – obligatorisch für alle. (Religionspädagogik in pluraler Gesellschaft 13), Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus/Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.

Kappler, Ekkehard (2006), Controlling. Eine Einführung für Bildungseinrichtungen und andere Dienstleistungsorganisationen. (Studienreihe Bildungs- und Wissensmanagement 5), Münster: Waxmann.

Keast, John (^{3}2008a), How to use this reference book, in: Keast, John (Ed.) (^{3}2008b), 15–16.

Keast, John (Ed.) (^{3}2008b), Religious diversity and intercultural education: a reference book for schools. [2007], Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Keast, John/Leganger-Krogstad, Heid (^{3}2008), Religious dimension of intercultural education: a whole school approach, in: Keast, John (Ed.) (^{3}2008b), 115–121.

Kenngott, Eva-Maria (2014), Lebensgestaltung – Ethik – Religionskunde in Brandenburg, in: Schröder, Bernd (ed.) (2014a), 57–71.

Kenngott, Eva-Maria/Englert, Rudolf/Knauth, Thorsten (eds.) (im Erscheinen), Religionsunterricht im Umbruch. (Praktische Theologie heute 136), Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Kerchove, Anna van den (2011), Teaching about Religious Issues within the Framework of the French "Laïcité", in: Franken, Leni/Loobuyck, Patrick (eds.), Religious Education in a Plural, Secularised Society. A Paradigm Shift, Münster et al.: Waxmann, 55–67.

Keßler, Hans-Ulrich, Religionsunterricht für alle in evangelischer Verantwortung – der Hamburger Weg, in: Schröder, Bernd (ed.) (2014a), 45–56.

Khorchide, Mouhanad (2009), Der islamische Religionsunterricht zwischen Integration und Parallelgesellschaft. Einstellungen der islamischen ReligionslehrerInnen an öffentlichen Schulen, Wiesbaden: VS.

Kiegelmann, Mechthild (2010), Ethik, in: Mey, Günter/Mruck, Katja (eds.), Handbuch Qualitative Forschung in der Psychologie, Wiesbaden: VS/Springer, 382–394.

Kilchsperger, Johannes Rudolf, „Neugier auf das, was sie nicht glauben". Das neue Schulfach Religion und Kultur im Kanton Zürich, in: Schröder, Bernd (ed.) (2014a), 89–103.

Kirchenamt der EKD (ed.) (^{2}1995), Identität und Verständigung. Standort und Perspektiven des Religionsunterrichts in der Pluralität. Eine Denkschrift der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland. [1994], Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus.

Kirchenamt der EKD (ed.) (2014), Religiöse Orientierung gewinnen. Evangelischer Religionsunterricht als Beitrag zu einer pluralitätsfähigen Schule. Eine Denkschrift der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland. (EKD), Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus.

Klutz, Philipp (2014), Skizzierung der religiös pluralen Landschaft Österreichs. Ein Beitrag zur kontextsensiblen Wahrnehmung, in: Krobath, Thomas/Ritzer, Georg (eds.), Ausbildung von ReligionslehrerInnen. konfessionell – kooperativ – interreligiös – plural-

itätsfähig. (Unter Mitwirkung von Doris Lindner; Schriften der Kirchen Pädagogischen Hochschule Wien/Krems 9), Wien: LIT, 47–60.
Klutz, Philipp (2015), Religionsunterricht vor den Herausforderungen religiöser Pluralität. Eine qualitativ-empirische Studie in Wien, (Religious Diversity and Education in Europe 28), Münster: Waxmann.
Klutz, Philipp/Lehner-Hartmann, Andrea (2013), Philosophisch und theologisch denken (lernen). Fachdidaktische Skizzierungen zu einer ReligionslehrerInnenbildung NEU, in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 21, 71–78.
Knauth, Thorsten (2012a), Gemeinsame Anliegen und unterschiedliche Akzente, in: Englert, Rudolf et al. (eds.) (2012), 28–33.
Knauth, Thorsten (2012b), Dialogische Religionspädagogik als Weg aus dem Identitäts-Relevanzdilemma des Religionsunterrichts, in: Englert, Rudolf et al. (eds.) (2012), 34–48.
Knauth, Thorsten/Körs, Anna (2008), European Comparison: Religion and School, in: Knauth, Thorsten et al. (eds.) (2008), 397–404.
Knauth, Thorsten et al. (eds.) (2008), Encountering Religious Pluralism in School and Society. A Qualitative Study of Teenage Perspectives in Europe. (Religious Diversity and Education in Europe 5), Münster et al: Waxmann.
Knoblauch, Hubert ([3]2011), Transkription, in: Bohnsack, Ralf/Marotzki, Winfried/Meuser, Michael (eds.), Hauptbegriffe Qualitativer Sozialforschung. 3., durchgesehene Auflage [2003], Opladen & Farmington Hills: Budrich, 159–160.
Kögler, Ilse (2011), Zwischen Lust und Frust. Überlebensstrategien von/für Religionslehrerinnen und -lehrer, in: Rendle, Ludwig (ed.), „Nur wer sich ändert, bleibt sich treu". Religionsunterricht in einer Kirche im Lernprozess. 6. Arbeitsforum für Religionspädagogik. 22. bis 24. März 2011, München: Deutscher Katecheten Verein e.V., 150–151.
Kögler, Ilse/Dammayr, Maria (2015), Jugend und Religion in Österreich, in: Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society 1, 152–176.
Könemann, Judith (2011), Glauben lernen als Ziel des Religionsunterrichts? Anmerkungen aus gesellschaftlich-bildungstheoretischer Sicht, in: Bitter, Gottfried/Blasberg-Kuhnke, Martina (eds.), Religion und Bildung in Kirche und Gesellschaft. (FS Norbert Mette; Studien zur Theologie und Praxis der Seelsorge 86), Würzburg: Echter, 180–186.
Körtner, Ulrich, H.J. (2010), Laboratorium Ethik. Zum Stand der Debatte über den Ethikunterricht in Österreich, in: Zeitschrift für Pädagogik und Theologie 62, 139–148.
Kotler, Philip/Berger, Roland/Bickhoff, Nils (2008), The Quintessence of Strategic Management. What You Really Need to Know to Survive in Business, Berlin et al.: Springer.
Kramer, Jens (2013), Lebensgestaltung – Ethik – Religionskunde im Land Brandenburg, in: Zeitschrift für Pädagogik und Theologie 65, 4–14.
Kropač, Ulrich (2007), Religiöse Erziehung und Bildung in postmoderner Gesellschaft. Begründungen, Aufgaben und Formen von Religionsunterricht in der öffentlichen Schule, in: Durst, Michael/Münk, Hans J. (eds.), Religion und Gesellschaft. (Theologische Berichte 30), Freiburg/Schweiz: Paulusverlag, 94–133.
Kropač, Ulrich (2012), Religion und Rationalität. Eine ungewöhnliche Allianz im religionspädagogischen Legitimationsdiskurs, in: Kropač, Ulrich/Langenhorst, Georg (eds.) (2012), 66–83.

Kropač, Ulrich/Langenhorst, Georg (eds.) (2012), Religionsunterricht und der Bildungsauftrag der öffentlichen Schulen. Begründungen und Perspektiven des Schulfaches Religion, Babenhausen: LUSA.

Krupka, Bernd (2010), Vom Religionsunterricht zu „Religionen, Weltanschauung und Ethik" – oder: Menschenrechte versus Allgemeiner Religionsunterricht. Erfahrungen aus Norwegen, in: Zeitschrift für Pädagogik und Theologie 62, 159–164.

Kühn, Thomas/Koschel, Kay-Volker (2011), Gruppendiskussionen. Ein Praxis-Handbuch, Wiesbaden: VS/Springer.

Kuld, Lothar et al. (eds.) (2009), Im Religionsunterricht zusammenarbeiten. Evaluation des konfessionell-kooperativen Religionsunterrichts in Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Kunz, Ralph et al. (eds.) (2005), Religion und Kultur – Ein Schulfach für alle?, Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich.

Lachmann, Rainer (1997), Die Zukunft des schulischen Religionsunterrichts: Ökumenischer Religionsunterricht, in: Una Sancta 52, 13–26.

Lähnemann, Johannes/Schreiner, Peter (eds.) (2008), Interreligious and Values Education in Europe. Map and Handbook, Münster: Comenius-Institut.

Lamnek, Sigfried ([2]2005), Gruppendiskussion. Theorie und Praxis. 2. überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage 2005 [1998], Weinheim: Beltz.

Lamnek, Sigfried ([5]2010), Qualitative Sozialforschung. Lehrbuch. (Unter Mitarbeit von Claudia Krell), 5., überarbeitete Auflage 2010 [1988], Weinheim: Beltz.

Langenhorst, Georg (2016), Trialogische Religionspädagogik. Interreligiöses Lernen zwischen Judentum, Christentum und Islam, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.

Langer, Wolfgang (1993), Verbindlich oder ungebunden? Zum Problem der Konfessionalität des Religionsunterrichts an den öffentlichen Schulen in Deutschland und Österreich, in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 3, 21–31.

Langer, Wolfgang (1994), Noch einmal: Ethikunterricht oder Wahlpflichtfach Religion – Oder keines von beiden ?, in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 4, 7–11.

Lehner-Hartmann, Andrea (2014), Religiöses Lernen. Subjektive Theorien von ReligionslehrerInnen. (Praktische Theologie heute 133), Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Leimgruber, Stephan ([2]2012), Interreligiöses Lernen. [2007], München: Kösel.

Leimgruber, Stephan (2013), Von Kanton zu Kanton verschieden. Neue Ansätze im Religionsunterricht der Schweiz, in: Herder Korrespondenz Spezial 2, 48–52.

Leitner, Birgit (2012), dk:RU – Dialogisch-konfessioneller Religionsunterricht – FBS Oberwollanig, in: Amtsmitteilungen. Informationen aus dem Bischöflichen Schulamt der Diözese Gurk. Klagenfurt, 9, in: http://www.kath-kirche-kaernten.at/images/OEKE-bilder/Mitteilungen09_Stand_18_12_2012.pdf [16.04.2016].

Lex, Ekkehard/Gunacker, Ernst (1996), Religionsunterricht in der Stadt beliebter als auf dem Lande, in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 6, 41–43.

Loos, Peter/Schäffer, Burkhard (2001), Das Gruppendiskussionsverfahren. Theoretische Grundlagen und empirische Anwendung. (Qualitative Sozialforschung 5), Opladen: Leske + Budrich.

Loos, Peter et al. (eds.) (2013), Dokumentarische Methode. Grundlagen – Entwicklungen – Anwendungen, Opladen: Budrich.

Lück, Christhard (2002), Religionsunterricht an der Grundschule. Studien zur organisatorischen und didaktischen Gestaltung eines umstrittenen Schulfaches. (Arbeiten zur Praktischen Theologie 22), Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt.

Lück, Christhard (2003), Beruf Religionslehrer. Selbstverständnis – Kirchenbindung – Zielorientierung. (Arbeiten zur Praktischen Theologie 25), Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt.

Lück, Christhard (2012), Religion studieren. Eine bundesweite empirische Untersuchung zu der Studienzufriedenheit und den Studienmotiven und -belastungen angehender Religionslehrer/innen. (Forum Theologie und Pädagogik 22), Berlin: LIT.

Lüders, Christian ([3]2011), Gütekriterien, in: Bohnsack, Ralf/Marotzki, Winfried/Meuser, Michael (eds.), Hauptbegriffe Qualitativer Sozialforschung. 3., durchgesehene Auflage [2003], Opladen & Farmington Hills: Budrich, 80–82.

Luther, Henning (1992), Religion und Alltag. Bausteine zu einer Praktischen Theologie des Subjekts, Stuttgart: Radius.

Mann, Christine (1991), Ersatzunterricht in Österreich? Nüchterne Fakten zur Beruhigung der Diskussion in den CpB 104 (1991) 2, 57–66, in: Christlich pädagogische Blätter 104, 110–115.

Mann, Christine (2011), Statement, in: Österreichisches Archiv für Recht & Religion 58, 46–50.

Mann, Christine/Verweijen, Ingeborg (1993), Der Religionsunterricht an der österreichischen Oberstufenrealgymnasien aus dem Blickwinkel der unmittelbar Betroffenen, in: Christlich pädagogische Blätter 106, 21–24.

Mannheim, Karl (1964), Wissenssoziologie. Auswahl aus dem Werk. (Eingeleitet und herausgegeben von Kurt H. Wolff), Berlin: Luchterhand.

Mannheim, Karl (1980), Strukturen des Denkens, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Massignon, Bérengère (2009), Teaching Diversity in the French Secular School – Between Deontological Distanciation and Personal Commitment, in: Want, Anna van der et al. (eds.) (2009), 55–67.

Mayring, Philipp ([5]2002), Qualitative Sozialforschung. Eine Anleitung zu qualitativem Denken. (Beltz Studium), 5., überarbeitete und neu ausgestattete Auflage 2002 [1990], Weinheim: Beltz.

Mette, Norbert (1998), Praktisch-theologische Erkundungen. (Theologie und Praxis 1), Münster: LIT.

Mette, Norbert (2002), Religiöse Bildung in der Schule, in: Concilium (D) 38, 396–404.

Mette, Norbert (2007), Praktisch-theologische Erkundungen 2. (Theologie und Praxis 32), Münster: LIT.

Mette, Norbert (2009), „Gottesverdunstung" – eine religionspädagogische Zeitdiagnose, in: Englert, Rudolf et al. (eds.), Gott im Religionsunterricht. (Jahrbuch der Religionspädagogik 25), Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 9–23.

Mette, Norbert (2010), Religionsunterricht – mehr als Ethik. Sein Beitrag zum Bildungsauftrag der Schule, in: Stimmen der Zeit 228, 303–314.

Ministère de l'éducation nationale – Tous droits réservés, in: http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid73666/charte-de-la-laicite-a-l-ecole.html [16.04.2016].

Nohl, Arnd-Michael ([4]2012), Interview und dokumentarische Methode. Anleitungen für die Forschungspraxis. (Qualitative Sozialforschung 16), 4., überarbeitete Auflage [2006], Wiesbaden: VS/Springer.

Nohl, Arnd-Michael (2013), Relationale Typenbildung und Mehrebenenvergleich. Neue Wege der dokumentarischen Methode. (Qualitative Sozialforschung), Wiesbaden: VS/Springer.

Oelkers, Jürgen et al. (eds.) (2003), Das verdrängte Erbe. Pädagogik im Kontext von Religion und Theologie. (Beiträge zur Theorie und Geschichte der Erziehungswissenschaft 25), Weinheim u.a: Beltz.

ÖRF (1994), „Religionsunterricht, Schule und Gesellschaft". Perspektiven, Horizonte, Alternativen, in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 4, 27–29.

ÖRF (2010), Positionspapier des ÖRF 2009 zum konfessionellen Religionsunterricht, in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 18, 62.

OSCE (2007), Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools. Prepared by the ODIHR Advisory Council of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR.

Oser, Fritz (1996), Ruhig schlafen oder unruhig interpretieren, in: Bucher, Anton A. (1996), 155–157.

Österreichische Bischofskonferenz (2009), Wortlaut der Presseerklärungen der Frühjahrsvollversammlung der Österreichischen Bischofskonferenz, 9. bis 12. März 2009, Innsbruck, in: http://www.bischofskonferenz.at/content/site/home/article/177.html [16.04.2016].

Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum (2013), Statuten des Österreichischen Religionspädagogischen Forums. (Beschlossen in St. Virgil, Salzburg, November 2013), in: http://oerf.eu/oerf/statuten/[16.04.2016].

Orthodoxes Schulamt für Österreich, in: http://orthodoxekirche.at/religionsunterricht.html [16.04.2016].

Otto, Gert (1992), Religionskunde in der Schule. Konfessioneller Unterricht ist ein Anachronismus, in: Evangelische Kommentare 25, 31–34.

Paechter, Manuela (2012), Handbuch Kompetenzorientierter Unterricht, Weinheim: Beltz.

Parlamentarische Enquete (2011), „Werteerziehung durch Religions- und Ethikunterricht in einer offenen, pluralistischen Gesellschaft" am 4. Mai 2011, in: http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXIV/VER/VER_00006/index.shtml [16.04.2016].

Pemsel-Maier, Sabine/Weinhardt, Joachim/Weinhardt, Marc (2011), Konfessionell-kooperativer Religionsunterricht als Herausforderung. Eine empirische Studie zu einem Pilotprojekt im Lehramtsstudium. (In Zusammenarbeit mit Brigitta Heim; mit einem Geleitwort von Otto Hermann Pesch), Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Pepels, Werner ([5]2009), Handbuch des Marketing. 5., völlig überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage [1995], München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag.

Peukert, Helmut (2002), Reflexionen über die Zukunft religiöser Bildung, in: Religionspädagogische Beiträge 49, 49–66.

Pfeiffer, Matthias (2005), „Religion und Kultur" – die Konturen des neuen Faches, in: Kunz, Ralph et al. (eds.) (2005), 31–46.

Polak, Regina (2008), Lebenshorizonte: Religion und Ethik, in: Friesl, Christian/Kromer, Ingrid/Polak, Regina (eds.), Lieben – Leisten – Hoffen. Die Wertewelt junger Menschen in Österreich, Wien: Czernin, 126–213.

Popp, Daniela (2013), Religion und Religionsunterricht in Europa. Eine quantitative Studie zur Sicht europäischer Religionslehrerinnen und -lehrer. (Empirische Theologie 26), Berlin: LIT.

Porzelt, Burkard (2000), Qualitativ-empirische Methoden in der Religionspädagogik, in: Porzelt, Burkard/Güth, Ralph (eds.) (2000), 63–81.

Porzelt, Burkard (2007), „Wer wechselt, wandelt sich.“. Schulische Transformation des Religiösen im Spiegel einer Lehrererzählung, in: Religionspädagogische Beiträge 58, 53–60.

Porzelt, Burkard (2011), Weder Empirismus noch Dilettantismus noch Instrumentalisierung, in: Religionspädagogische Beiträge 66, 71–77.

Porzelt, Burkard (2012), Rolle rückwärts? Der Youcat als Versuch der Wiederbelebung erfahrungsferner Glaubenslehre, in: Renovatio 68, H.1–2, 48–51.

Porzelt, Burkard/Güth, Ralph (eds.) (2000), Empirische Religionspädagogik. Grundlagen – Zugänge – Aktuelle Projekte. (Empirische Theologie 7), Münster: LIT.

Postl, Daniela (2005), Die Situation des römisch-katholischen Religionsunterrichts an Handelsakademien in Österreich exemplarisch dargestellt an der BHAK Horn. (Dipl.-Arb.), Universität Wien.

Potz, Richard/Schinkele, Brigitte (2005), Minderheitenschutz und Religionsunterricht. Überlegungen zu § 7a Abs 1 Religionsunterrichtsgesetz, in: Österreichisches Archiv für Recht & Religion 52, 194–208.

Prawdzik, Werner (1973), Der Religionsunterricht im Urteil der Hauptschüler. Eine empirische Untersuchung auf der 9. Klasse Hauptschule in München. (Studien zur praktischen Theologie 4), Zürich: Benziger.

Prettenthaler, Monika (2004), Ökumene-Lernen im Religionsunterricht. Anspruch ohne Resonanz? (Didaktik in Forschung und Praxis 20), Hamburg: Kovač.

Przyborski, Aglaja (2004), Gesprächsanalyse und dokumentarische Methode. Qualitative Auswertung von Gesprächen, Gruppendiskussionen und anderen Diskursen. Lehrbuch, Wiesbaden: VS.

Przyborski, Aglaja/Riegler, Julia (2010), Gruppendiskussion und Fokusgruppe, in: Mey, Günter/Mruck, Katja (eds.), Handbuch Qualitative Forschung in der Psychologie, Wiesbaden: VS/Springer, 436–448.

Przyborski, Aglaja/Slunecko, Thomas (2010), Dokumentarische Methode, in: Mey, Günter/Mruck, Katja (eds.), Handbuch Qualitative Forschung in der Psychologie, Wiesbaden: VS/Springer, 627–642.

Przyborski, Aglaja/Wohlrab-Sahr, Monika (^{4}2014), Qualitative Sozialforschung. Ein Arbeitsbuch. (Lehr- und Handbuch der Soziologie), 3., korrigierte Auflage [2008], München: Oldenbourg.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) (2004), Religious education. The non-statutory national framework, in: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090903160937/http:/qca.org.uk/libraryAssets/media/9817_re_national_framework_04.pdf [16.04.2016].

Raters, Marie-Luise, Wir lassen die Kirchen im Dorf! Das Schulfach „Lebensgestaltung – Ethik – Religionskunde“ in Brandenburg, in: Herder Korrespondenz Spezial 2, 60–64.

Reese-Schnitker, Annegret (2009), Das Wachhalten der Gottesfrage als Kernaufgabe religiöser Bildungsprozesse. Empirische Erkundungen und didaktische Überlegungen zu

Gottesfrage und Gottesbildern heute, in: Zeitschrift für Pädagogik und Theologie 61, 215–226.
religion.ORF.at (2011), Russland: Religions- und Ethikunterricht an allen Schulen geplant, in: http://religionv1.orf.at/projekt03/news/1109/ne110901_russland.htm [16.04.2016].
Religionsunterricht mit Zukunft (1995), in: Christlich pädagogische Blätter 108, 65–94.
Religious Education at Schools in Europe (REL-EDU), in: www.rel-edu.eu [16.04.2016].
Rinnerthaler, Alfred (ed.) (2004), Historische und rechtliche Aspekte des Religionsunterrichts. (Wissenschaft und Religion 8), Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
Rinnerthaler, Alfred (ed.) (2007), Das kirchliche Privatschulwesen – historische, pastorale, rechtliche und ökonomische Aspekte. (Wissenschaft und Religion 16), Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
Ritzer, Georg (2003), Reli oder Kaffeehaus. Eine empirische Spurensuche nach Einflussfaktoren zur Beteiligung am und Abmeldung vom Religionsunterricht bei über 1500 SchülerInnen. Mit einer Handreichung zur Evaluierung der Einflussfaktoren an Schulen, Thaur: Thaur.
Ritzer, Georg (2010), Interesse – Wissen – Toleranz – Sinn. Ausgewählte Kompetenzbereiche und deren Vermittlung im Religionsunterricht. Eine Längsschnittstudie. (Empirische Theologie 19), Münster: LIT.
Roebben, Bert (2011), Leben und Lernen in der Gegenwart des Anderen. Autonomie und Angewiesenheit in religionspädagogischer Perspektive, in: Wuckelt, Agnes/Pithan, Annebelle/Beuers, Christoph (eds.), „Und schuf dem Menschen ein Gegenüber …“ – Im Spannungsfeld zwischen Autonomie und Angewiesensein. (Forum für Heil- und Religionspädagogik 6), Münster: Comenius Institut, 32–53.
Roebben, Bert (^{3}2012), Religionspädagogik der Hoffnung. Grundlinien religiöser Bildung in der Spätmoderne. (Forum Theologie und Pädagogik 19), 3. Auflage [2011], Münster: LIT.
Roebben, Bert (^{2}2013), Seeking Sense in the City. European Perspectives on Religious Education. (Dortmunder Beiträge zu Theologie und Religionspädagogik 7), Second enlarged edition [2009], Berlin et al.: LIT.
Roebben, Bert (2016), Schulen für das Leben. Eine kleine Didaktik der Hoffnung, Stuttgart: Calwer.
Rosenberger, Katharina (2013), Differenzfähigkeit bei Lehramtsstudierenden. Eine Vignettenstudie, Wiesbaden: VS/Springer.
Rothgangel, Martin/Schröder, Bernd (eds.) (2009), Evangelischer Religionsunterricht in den Ländern des Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Empirische Daten – Kontexte – Entwicklungen, Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt.
Rothgangel, Martin/Jackson, Robert/Jäggle, Martin (eds.) (2014), Religious Education at Schools in Europe. Part 2: Western Europe. (In cooperation with Philipp Klutz/Mónika Solymár; Wiener Forum für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft 10,2), Göttingen: V&R unipress.
Rothgangel, Martin/Jäggle, Martin/Schlag, Thomas (eds.) (2016), Religious Education at Schools in Europe. Part 1: Central Europe. (In cooperation with Philipp Klutz/Mónika Solymár; Wiener Forum für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft 10,1), Göttingen: V&R unipress.

Rothgangel, Martin/Schlag, Thomas/Schweitzer, Friedrich (eds.) (2014), Basics of Religious Education. (In cooperation with Adam, Gottfried/Lachmann, Rainer), Göttingen: V&R unipress.

Rothgangel, Martin/Skeie, Geir/Jäggle, Martin (eds.) (2014), Religious Education at Schools in Europe. Part 3: Northern Europe. (In cooperation with Philipp Klutz/Mónika Solymár; Wiener Forum für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft 10,3), Göttingen: V&R unipress.

Sajak, Clauß Peter (2005), Das Fremde als Gabe begreifen. Auf dem Weg zu einer Didaktik der Religionen aus katholischer Perspektive. (Forum Religionspädagogik interkulturell 9), Münster: LIT.

Schachtner, Nikolaus (2013), Der Kulturpflegeunterricht an der SPAR Akademie Wien und sein Beitrag zur Schulentwicklung, in: Erzbischöfliches Amt für Unterricht und Erziehung (ed.), 25 Jahre Tag des Lehrlings. 1989 bis 2013. Festschrift, Wien: o.A., 119–123.

Schambeck, Mirjam (2012), Warum Religion Bildung braucht. Konsequenzen für religiöse Bildungsprozesse, in: Kropač, Ulrich/Langenhorst, Georg (eds.) (2012), 84–96.

Schambeck, Mirjam (2013), Interreligiöse Kompetenz. Basiswissen für Studium, Ausbildung und Beruf, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Scharer, Matthias (1994), Religionsunterricht als Dienst an den Schüler/n/innen und an der Schule, in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 4, 12–15.

Scharer, Matthias (1997), Wieviel Religion braucht die Schule. Zur gesellschaftlichen Plausibilität von Religions- und Ethikunterricht, in: Theologisch-praktische Quartalschrift 145, 376–383.

Scharer, Matthias (2003), Die ‚Wozu-Falle' in der (religiösen) Bildung. Ein kultureller Grenzgang, in: Religionspädagogische Beiträge 50, 39–48.

Scharer, Matthias (2010a), Wenn das Herz am Output hängt. Kommunikativ-theologische und religionsdidaktische Überlegungen zu Bildungsstandards und Kompetenzorientierung in Religion, in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 18, 16–27.

Scharer, Matthias (2010b), Thesen zur Zukunftsfähigkeit des konfessionellen und von den (anerkannten) Religionsgemeinschaften verantworteten Religionsunterrichts (RU), in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 18, 57–58.

Schelander, Robert (2009), Religionsunterricht mit vielen Geschichten. Zur Situation des Religionsunterrichts in Europa, in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 17, 6–9.

Schelander, Robert (2011), Entwicklung der empirischen Forschung in der österreichischen Religionspädagogik der letzten 10 Jahre. Ein Literaturbericht, in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 19, 5–8.

Schinkele, Brigitte (2004), Religionsunterricht – Privileg der Kirchen und Religionsgesellschaften?, in: Rinnerthaler, Alfred (ed.) (2004), 191–208.

Schinkele, Brigitte (2007), Eine aktuelle Frage des Religionsunterrichts: Bildung von Religionsunterrichtsgruppen. Zur Bedeutung des Begriffs „Teilnahme" in § 7a Religionsunterrichtsgesetz, in: Österreichisches Archiv für Recht & Religion 54, 183–193.

Schinkele, Brigitte (2011), Religions- und Ethikunterricht in der pluralistischen Gesellschaft – Überlegungen aus religionsrechtlicher Sicht, in: Österreichisches Archiv für Recht & Religion 58, 13–24.

Schlag, Thomas (2009), „Reden über Religion" – Religionsunterricht in der Schweiz innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft, in: Meyer-Blanck, Michael/Schmidt, Sebastian

(eds.), Religion, Rationalität und Bildung. (Studien des Bonner Zentrums für Religion und Gesellschaft 5), Würzburg: Ergon, 161–176.
Schlag, Thomas (2012), Religion unterrichten – zur didaktischen Kompetenz, in: Burrichter, Rita et al. (2012), 126–139.
Schlag, Thomas (2013a), Religiöse Bildung an Schulen in der Schweiz, in: Jäggle, Martin/Rothgangel, Martin/Schlag, Thomas (eds.) (2013), 119–156.
Schlag, Thomas (2013b), Religionsunterricht in der Schweiz – Situation, exemplarische Befunde und Perspektiven, in: Zeitschrift für Pädagogik und Theologie 65, 34–43.
Schlüter, Richard (1997), Ökumenisches Lernen – ein zukunftsfähiges Lernen, in: Una Sancta 52, 2–12.
Schlüter, Richard (2000), Konfessioneller Religionsunterricht heute? Hintergründe – Kontroversen – Perspektiven, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
Schmid, Hans (1989), Religiosität der Schüler und Religionsunterricht. Empirischer Zugang und religionspädagogische Konsequenzen für die Berufsschule. (Beiträge zur Fachdidaktik und Schulpädagogik 2), Bad Heilbrunn/Obb.: Klinkhardt.
Schmid, Hans/Verburg, Winfried (eds.) (2010), Gastfreundschaft. Ein Modell für den konfessionellen Religionsunterricht der Zukunft, München: Deutscher Katecheten Verein.
Schreiner, Peter (n.d.), Religionsunterricht in Europa: Wie bleibt er zukunftsfähig?, in: http://www.comenius.de/pdfs/themen/Europa_RU-Zukunftsfaehig.pdf [16.04.2016].
Schreiner, Peter (2007), Religious Education in the European Context, in: Kuyk, Elza et al. (eds.), Religious Education in Europe. Situation and current trends in schools, Oslo: IKO Publishing House, 9–16.
Schreiner, Peter (2011a), Religion und Bildung im Kontext des Europarates, in: Bitter, Gottfried/Blasberg-Kuhnke, Martina (eds.), Religion und Bildung in Kirche und Gesellschaft. (FS Norbert Mette; Studien zur Theologie und Praxis der Seelsorge 86), Würzburg: Echter, 347–356.
Schreiner, Peter (2011b), Situation and Current Developments of Religious Education in Europe, in: Franken, Leni/Loobuyck, Patrick (eds.), Religious Education in a Plural, Secularised Society. A Paradigm Shift, Münster et al.: Waxmann, 17–34.
Schreiner, Peter (2012), Religion im Kontext einer Europäisierung von Bildung. Eine Rekonstruktion europäischer Diskurse und Entwicklungen aus protestantischer Perspektive. (Religious Diversity and Education in Europe 22), Münster: Waxmann.
Schreiner, Peter (2014), Religious Education in Europe, in: Rothgangel, Martin/Schlag, Thomas/Schweitzer, Friedrich (eds.) (2014), 161–177.
Schröder, Bernd (2009), Religiöse Dimensionen in Schulkultur und Schulentwicklung, in: Jäggle, Martin/Krobath, Thomas/Schelander, Robert (eds.) (2009), 83–109.
Schröder, Bernd (2010), Religionsunterricht an staatlichen Schulen in Frankreich? Neuere Entwicklungen und Einschätzungen, in: Zeitschrift für Pädagogik und Theologie 62, 149–158.
Schröder, Bernd (ed.) (2014a), Religionsunterricht – wohin? Modelle seiner Organisation und didaktischen Struktur. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener.
Schröder, Bernd (2014b), Was heißt Konfessionalität des Religionsunterrichts heute? Eine evangelische Stimme, in: Schröder, Bernd (ed.) (2014a), 163–178.
Schröder, Bernd/Tammeus, Rudolf (2014), Wünschenswerte Schritte zur Weiterentwicklung des Religionsunterrichts – Thesen, in: Schröder, Bernd (ed.) (2014a), 193–194.

Schulamt der islamischen Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich, in: http://www.schulamt-islam.at/[16.04.2016].
Schulte, Andrea (2008), Religion und der Bildungsauftrag der Schule, in: Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.), Religion und Bildung. Orte, Medien und Experten religiöser Bildung, Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung, 35–42.
Schweitzer, Friedrich (2000), http://www.rpi-loccum.de/material/aufsaetze/frieschw [16.04.2016].
Schweitzer, Friedrich (2006), Religionspädagogik. Lehrbuch Praktische Theologie. Band 1, Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus.
Schweitzer, Friedrich (2008), Pluralitätsfähigkeit als Bildungsziel. Der Beitrag der Theologie zu einer Religionspädagogik für Europa, in: Theologische Quartalschrift 188, 293–306.
Schweitzer, Friedrich (2013a), Kooperativer Religionsunterricht: Stand der Entwicklung – Realisierungsformen und Verbreitung – Zukunftsperspektiven, in: Zeitschrift für Pädagogik und Theologie 65, 25–33.
Schweitzer, Friedrich (2013b), Zukunftsfähiger Religionsunterricht. Zur aktuellen Diskussion in der evangelischen Religionspädagogik, in Herder Korrespondenz Spezial 2, 52–56.
Schweitzer, Friedrich (2014a), Religious education as a task oft he school, in: Rothgangel, Martin/Schlag, Thomas/Schweitzer, Friedrich (eds.) (2014), 81–93.
Schweitzer, Friedrich (2014b), Interreligiöse Bildung. Religiöse Vielfalt als religionspädagogische Herausforderung und Chance, Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus.
Schweitzer, Friedrich/Biesinger Albert (2002), Gemeinsamkeiten stärken – Unterschieden gerecht werden. Erfahrungen und Perspektiven zum konfessionell-kooperativen Religionsunterricht, Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus/Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.
Schweitzer, Friedrich et al. (eds.) (2002), Entwurf einer pluralitätsfähigen Religionspädagogik. (Religionspädagogik in pluraler Gesellschaft 1), Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus/Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.
Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz (ed.) (1996), Die bildende Kraft des Religionsunterrichts. Zur Konfessionalität des katholischen Religionsunterrichts. (Die deutschen Bischöfe 56), Bonn: o.A.
Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz (ed.) (2005), Der Religionsunterricht vor neuen Herausforderungen. (Die deutschen Bischöfe 80), Bonn: o.A.
Senat der Universität Wien (2013), Studienplan für das Diplomstudium Katholische Fachtheologie an der Universität Wien. (Version 2011. Stand Oktober 2013), in: http://senat.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/senat/Konsolidierte_Curricula/DS/DS_Katholische-Fachtheologie_Version2011.pdf [16.04.2016].
Shakir, Amena (2011), Vorzüge des Religionsunterrichtes für die Identitätsbildung junger Menschen, in: Österreichisches Archiv für Recht & Religion 58, 51–60.
Sievernich, Michael/Wenzel, Knut (eds.) (2013), Aufbruch in die Urbanität. Theologische Reflexion kirchlichen Handelns in der Stadt. (Unter konzeptioneller Mitarbeit von Ottmar John; Questiones Disputate 252), Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.
Simon, Hermann/Gathen, Andreas von der (^{2}2010), Das große Handbuch der Strategieinstrumente. Werkzeuge für eine erfolgreiche Unternehmensführung. 2. Überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage [2002], Frankfurt am Main: Campus.
Skeie, Geir (2001), Citizenship, Identity Politics and Religious Education, in: Heimbrock, Hans-Günter/Scheilke, Christoph Th./Schreiner, Peter (eds.), Towards Religious Com-

petence. Diversity as a Challenge for Education in Europe. (Schriften aus dem Comenius-Institut 3), Münster: LIT, 237–252.
Skeie, Geir (2008), Dialog und Identität – einige Gedanken zum Hamburger Modell aus norwegischer Sicht, in: Weiße, Wolfram (ed.) (2008), 213–216.
Skeie, Geir (Ed.) (2009), Religious Diversity and Education. Nordic Perspectives. (Religious Diversity and Education in Europe 11), Münster et al.: Waxmann.
Steinke, Ines (2000), Gütekriterien qualitativer Forschung, in: Flick, Uwe/von Kardorff, Ernst/Steinke, Ines (eds.), Qualitative Forschung. Ein Handbuch, Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 319–331.
Stettberger, Herbert (^{6}2010), Exkurs: Weitere Formen des Religionsunterrichts in Europa, in: Hilger, Georg/Leimgruber, Stephan/Ziebertz, Hans-Georg (eds.), Religionsdidaktik. Ein Leitfaden für Studium, Ausbildung und Beruf. Vollständig überarbeitete 6. Auflage der 1. Auflage [2001], München: Kösel, 70–75.
Strutzenberger, Edda (2012), „Dass Religion auch hier mitspielt …". Zur Bedeutung von Religion in der Schulentwicklung. Eine empirische Studie. (Diss.), Universität Wien.
Tautz, Monika (2007), Interreligiöses Lernen im Religionsunterricht. Menschen und Ethos im Islam und Christentum. (Praktische Theologie heute 90), Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.
Tenorth, Heinz-Elmar (2004), Bildungsstandards und Kerncurriculum. Systematischer Kontext, bildungstheoretische Probleme, in: Zeitschrift für Pädagogik 50, 650–661.
Themenheft Faszination Stadt (2013), in: Theologisch-praktische Quartalschrift 161/2.
Themenheft „Im Blickpunkt": Empirische Religionspädagogik (2010), in: Religionspädagogische Beiträge 65.
Themenheft Religionspädagogik und Empirie (2011), in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 19.
UNO (1948), The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Resolution 217 A (III), proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948, in: http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/[16.04.2016].
Valk, Pille et al. (eds.) (2009), Teenager's Perspectives on the Role of Religion in their Lives, Schools and Societies. A European Quantitatives Study. (Religious Diversity and Education in Europe 7), Münster et al.: Waxmann.
Verhülsdonk, Andreas (2012a), Religionsunterricht – konfessionell oder multireligiös?, in: Englert, Rudolf et al. (eds.) (2012), 15–27.
Verhülsdonk, Andreas (2012b), Identität und Dialog, in: Englert, Rudolf et al. (eds.) (2012), 49–52.
Verhülsdonk, Andreas (2013), Glaube ist mehr als ein Kulturgut. Zur Situation des katholischen Religionsunterrichts in Deutschland, in: Herder Korrespondenz Spezial 2, 2–6.
Verweijen, Ingeborg (1993), Der Religionsunterricht aus der Perspektive von ORg-SchülerInnen, in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 3, 45–51.
Want, Anna van der et al. (eds.) (2009), Teachers Responding to Religious Diversity in Europe Researching Biography and Pedagogy. (Religious Diversity and Education in Europe 8), Münster et al.: Waxmann.
Wedding, Michael (2013), Wer Visionen hat, muss nicht zum Arzt!, in: Katechetische Blätter 138, 18–22.
Wegenast, Klaus (1968), Die empirische Wendung in der Religionspädagogik, in: Der evangelische Erzieher 20, 111–125.

Weirer, Wolfgang (2011), „Religionsbekenntnis: o.B. (normal)“. Thesen zur Zukunft des Religionsunterrichtes. Wie es ist, wenn katholische Selbstverständlichkeiten zu Ende gehen …, in: Christlich pädagogische Blätter 124, 117–121.

Weirer, Wolfgang (2012), Zwischen den Stühlen? Konfessioneller Religionsunterricht in gemeinsamer Verantwortung von Staat und Kirchen, in: Österreichisches Archiv für Recht & Religion 59, 31–46.

Weirer, Wolfgang (2013), Breite Akzeptanz und neue Herausforderungen. Religionsunterricht in Österreich, in: Herder Korrespondenz Spezial 2, 44–48.

Weiße, Wolfram (ed.) (2002), Wahrheit und Dialog. Theologische Grundlagen und Impulse gegenwärtiger Religionspädagogik. (Religionspädagogik in einer multikulturellen Gesellschaft 4), Münster: Waxmann.

Weiße, Wolfram (ed.) (2008), Dialogischer Religionsunterricht in Hamburg. Positionen, Analysen und Perspektiven im Kontext Europas. (Religionen im Dialog 2), Münster: Waxmann.

Willaime, Jean-Paul (2006), Unterricht über Religionen in der öffentlichen Schule in Frankreich. (Übersetzung aus dem Französischen von Heidrun Weber; bearbeitet von Peter Schreiner/Volker Elsenbast), in: Schreiner, Peter/Elsenbast, Volker/Schweitzer, Friedrich (eds.), Europa – Bildung – Religion. Demokratische Bildungsverantwortung und die Religionen, Münster: Waxmann, 227–244.

Willaime, Jean-Paul (2009), Religion im Klassenzimmer, Die Herausforderung einer europäischen „laïcité d'intelligence“ und die Ergebnisse des REDCo-Projekts, in: Jozsa, Dan-Paul/Knauth, Thorsten/Weiße, Wolfram (eds.), Religionsunterricht, Dialog und Konflikt. Analysen im Kontext Europas. (Religious Diversity and Education in Europe 15), Münster et al.: Waxmann, 435–440.

Willems, Joachim (2011), Interreligiöse Kompetenz. Theoretische Grundlagen – Konzeptualisierungen – Unterrichtsmethoden, Wiesbaden: VS/Springer.

Wölfel-Ternes, Martina (2013), Wie Religion unterrichten Freude macht, in: Katechetische Blätter 138, 33–35.

Ziebertz, Hans-Georg (1995), Lehrerforschung in der empirischen Religionspädagogik, in: Ziebertz, Hans-Georg/Simon, Werner (eds.), Bilanz der Religionspädagogik, Düsseldorf: Patmos, 47–78.

Ziebertz, Hans-Georg (2002), Grenzen des Säkularisierungstheorems, in: Schweitzer, Friedrich et al. (eds.) (2002), 51–74.

Ziebertz, Hans-Georg (^{6}2010a), Warum die religiöse Dimension der Wirklichkeit erschließen?, in: Hilger, Georg/Leimgruber, Stephan/Ziebertz, Hans-Georg, Religionsdidaktik. Ein Leitfaden für Studium, Ausbildung und Beruf. Neuausgabe. Vollständig überarbeitete 6. Auflage der 1. Auflage [2001], München: Kösel, 123–141.

Ziebertz, Hans-Georg (^{6}2010b), Woraufhin geschieht religiöse Erziehung? Aufgabe und Ziele religiösen Lernens, in: Hilger, Georg/Leimgruber, Stephan/Ziebertz, Hans-Georg, Religionsdidaktik. Ein Leitfaden für Studium, Ausbildung und Beruf. Neuausgabe. Vollständig überarbeitete 6. Auflage der 1. Auflage [2001], München: Kösel, 155–173.

Ziebertz, Hans-Georg (ed.) (2011), Praktische Theologie – empirisch. Methoden, Ergebnisse, Nutzen. (Empirische Theologie/Empirical Theology), Berlin: LIT.

Ziebertz, Hans-Georg/Heil, Stefan (2005a), Kompetenzen der Profession Religionslehrer/in, in: Ziebertz, Hans-Georg et al. (eds.): Religionslehrerbildung an der Universität. Profession – Religion – Habitus, Münster: LIT, 65–77.

Ziebertz, Hans-Georg/Heil, Stefan (2005b), Reflexivität als Schlüsselkompetenz, in: Ziebertz, Hans-Georg et al. (eds.): Religionslehrerbildung an der Universität. Profession – Religion – Habitus, Münster: LIT, 78–95.

Ziebertz, Hans-Georg/Kalbheim, Boris/Riegel, Ulrich (2003), Religiöse Signaturen heute. Ein religionspädagogischer Beitrag zur empirischen Jugendforschung. (Unter Mitarbeit von Andreas Prokopf; Religionspädagogik in pluraler Gesellschaft 3), Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus/Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.

Ziebertz, Hans Georg/Schmidt, Günter R. (eds.) (2006), Religion in der Allgemeinen Pädagogik. Von der Religion als Grundlegung bis zu ihrer Bestreitung. (Religionspädagogik in pluraler Gesellschaft 9), Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus/Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.

Ziebertz, Hans-Georg/Riegel, Ulrich (eds.) (2009), How Teachers in Europe Teach Religion. An International Empirical Study in 16 Countries. (International Practical Theology 12), Münster: LIT.

Zonne, Erna (2006), Interreligiöses und interkulturelles Lernen an Grundschulen in Rotterdam-Rijnmond. Eine interdisziplinäre religionspädagogische Studie des Umgangs mit der Pluralität der Weltanschauungen. (Religious Diversity and Education in Europe 15), Münster: Waxmann.

Zulehner, Paul M. (2011), Verbuntung. Kirchen im weltanschaulichen Pluralismus. Religion im Leben der Menschen 1970–2010, Ostfildern: Schwabenverlag.

Zulehner, Paul M./Polak, Regina (2009), Von der „Wiederkehr der Religion" zur fragilen Pluralität, in: Friesl, Christian/Polak, Regina/Hamachers-Zuba, Ursula, Die Österreicher/-innen. Wertewandel 1990–2008, Wien: Czernin, 143–206.

Zur Zukunft des Katholischen Religionsunterrichts in Österreich (1996). Vorauer Erklärung, in: Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum 6 (1996), 44–46.

Legal foundations (http://www.ris.bka.gv.at/):

B-VG (1930), Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz BGBl. Nr. 1/1930 i.d.j.g.F.

RelUG (1949), Religionsunterrichtsgesetz BGBl. Nr. 190/1949 i.d.j.g.F.

SchOG (1962), Schulorganisationsgesetz BGBl Nr. 242/1962 i.d.j.g.F.

Statistik Austria (http://www.statistik.at/):

Statistik Austria (2002), Volkszählung 2001 Hauptergebnisse I – Österreich (Standardpublikationen).

Statistik Austria (2007), Bevölkerung nach dem Religionsbekenntnis und Bundesländern 1951 bis 2001.

Statistik Austria (2013), Bevölkerung 2001 nach Religionsbekenntnis, Staatsangehörigkeit und Bundesländern.

Statistik Austria (2016a), Bevölkerung zu Jahresbeginn 2002–2016 nach Gemeinden (Gebietsstand 1.1.2016).

Statistik Austria (2016b), Volkszählungen, Registerzählung, Abgestimmte Erwerbsstatistik.

Statistik Austria (2016c), Bevölkerung am 1.1.2015 und 1.1.2016 nach detaillierter Staatsangehörigkeit und Bundesland.

Statistik Austria (2016d), Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund nach Bundesländern.

Statistik Austria (2016e), Bevölkerung zu Jahres- und Quartalsanfang.

7. List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Ethics education in Austria 20
Table 2: Austria's and Vienna's population according to religious affiliation 57
Table 3: Austria's and Vienna's population according to religious affiliation and nationality 58
Table 4: Ratio between population and religious affiliation in Vienna. 59
Table 5: Overview of selected schools 62
Table 6: Group discussion overview. 66

Figure 1: RE in Europe. 30
Figure 2: Guideline for group discussions 68
Figure 3: "Levels of meaning and their empirical ascertainability" 70
Figure 4: Religious affiliation (ORG) 82
Figure 5: Attendance of RE and ethics education (ORG) 83
Figure 6: Religious affiliation (HASCH/HAK) 141
Figure 7: Attendance of RE (HASCH/HAK). 142
Figure 8: Procedure for discussion and for formulating the perspectives 201
Figure 9: Empirical findings and perspective (perception and assessment of religion and religious diversity in schools) 214
Figure 10: Empirical finding and perspective (perception and assessment of RE at school) 224
Figure 11: Empirical findings and perspective (acceptance of RE for all, jointly organised by the churches and religious communities). 236

8. Abbreviations

A.C.	Augsburg Confession (= Lutheran)
AHS	Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule (= secondary academic school; 5th to 12th form)
BMHS	Berufsbildende mittlere/höhere Schule (medium- and high-level vocational school; 9th to 11th/13th form)
BORG	Bundesoberstufenrealgymnasium (upper-secondary academic school; 9th to12th form)
B-VG	Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz (= Federal Constitutional Law)
CCEE	Consilium Conferentiarum Episcoporum Europae (= Council of European Bishops' Conferences
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EKD	Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (= Evangelical Church in Germany)
GG	Grundgesetz (= Basic Law)
HAK	Handelsakademie (= higher-level secondary vocational school for commercial professions; 9th to 13th form)
HASCH	Handelsschule (= medium-level secondary vocational school for commercial professions; 9th to 11th form)
H.C.	Helvetic Confession (= Reformed)
CEC	Conference of European Churches
ÖRF	Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum (= Austrian Forum for Religious Education)
ORG	Oberstufenrealgymnasium (= upper-secondary academic school; 9th to 12th form)
OSCE/OSZE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe/Organisation für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa
RE	Religious Education as a subject in schools
REDCo	Religion in Education. A contribution to Dialogue or a factor of Conflict in transforming societies of European Countries
REL-EDU	Religious Education at Schools in Europe
RelUG	Religionsunterrichtsgesetz (= RE Act)
RET	Religious education teacher
SCC	School community committee (= Schulgemeinschaftsausschuss; a school's elected panel of teachers, parents, pupils and the headmistress/-master)
SchOG	Schulorganisationsgesetz (= School Organisation Act)
TRES	Teaching Religion in a multicultural Europe Society
UNO	United Nations Organisation

9. Appendix

Position Paper of the ÖRF 2009 on Denominational RE

Schlierbach, 20.11.2009

The human being as a religiously open agent and the discussion about religion in the general public challenge all educational institutions – including schools – to address religion constructively.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, school – as a venue of general education – is obliged to offer religious education. Churches and state-approved religious communities support the school's educational mandate with denominational RE. This is understood to be a service for all individuals involved in school activities, as it opens perspectives for a successful and meaningful life. This is not a service that merely informs about religion and religions; teachers and pupils with their convictions, attitudes and beliefs are brought into play, so that existential orientation as well as critical reflections on religion and churches are possible in a wide variety of worldviews. Thus RE opens up a framework for authentic encounters with religion, learning religious language and growth of a religious identity.

As pupils increasingly bring religious diversity into school, they need a place of reassurance and understanding in order to be able to cope with dissimilarities and diversity productively. Therefore, RE keeps an eye on the development of children's and young people's identities as well as on an appropriate handling of the diversity of religions and beliefs. RE teachers rooted in their churches or religious communities are experts qualified to further pupils in their subject-specific, social and personal skills without any encroaching ideologies. Dealing competently with religion at school requires constant and specific training and continuous professional development to ensure lasting quality.

If denominational RE is stretched to its limits in some places – e. g. because of insufficient participation – context-sensitive models, differentiated according to school type and location, have to be developed in the framework of RE that churches and religious communities are responsible for, so that schools are able to fulfil their obligation to offer religious education. To that end RE teachers make their expertise in research, teaching and practice available.

Denominational RE is fit for the future and prepared to face challenges.

Transcription Guidelines according to TiQ ('Talk in Qualitative Social Research')[1]

⌞	The 'little hook' either marks the beginning of overlapping speech, or it shows that a new speaker starts immediately after the previous one has finished.
(.)	Short hesitation; a little under a second
(3)	The number of seconds a silence last for. From 4 seconds onwards this is marked in a separate line. In this way the reader of the transcript can assign silences to particular participants in the interaction. (to the interviewer or the to interviewer and the interviewees in equal measures or the whole group), in longer silences this usually corresponds with what has been heard. This has the technical advantage that the little hooks can only shift due to corrections until there is a silence.
No	Emphasis
No	Spoken loudly as compared to the speaker's usual volume.
°no°	Spoken very quietly as compared to the speakers usual volume.
.	Strongly descending intonation
;	Slightly descending intonation
?	Clear questioning intonation
,	slightly ascending intonation
proba-	The speaker stops in the middle of a word. This shows that one has not just forgotten something.
oh=no	Two or more words are spoken as one. (fusing together of words).
ne::ver yes:::	Exaggeration of a syllable. The number of colons indicates the length of the exaggeration.
(yet)	Uncertainty during transcription and utterances that are hard to understand.
( )	Utterances that cannot be understood. The length of the brackets roughly indicates the length of the incomprehensible utterance.
((coughs))	Comment on para-lingual, non-verbal, or external events. As far as this is possible the length of the brackets indicates the length of the auditory phenomenon.
@no@	Words uttered while laughing
@(.)@	Short burst of laughter
@(3)@	Longer period of laughter with its duration in seconds in brackets.
XXX	Symbol for people, places etc. that are named by members of the group during the discussion.
Af/Lm	Symbol for group members. Each group member was assigned two letter; a capital that belongs exclusively to one person, and a lower case letter that indicates the persons gender (f = female; m = male).

1 All transcript guidelines, with the exception of the annonymisation of people and places etc. 'XXX', come from Przyborski/Wohlrab-Sahr [4]2014, 168 f.

?m	The contribution to the conversation cannot be assigned to a particular person, but to a gender.
?	The contribution to the conversation cannot be assigned to anybody.
Y1/Y2	Annonymised symbols for interviewer 1 and interviewer 2.

The Use of Capitals and Lower Case Letters

After punctuation characters lower case letters are used to show that they are not used grammatically but in order convey intonation. Only words that would always be capitalised (e. g. 'I') are capitalised even after punctuation characters. When a new speaker joins the conversation, the first letter is capitalised. This means that the first letter after a little hook is always capitalised.

Line Numbering

Lines are numbered so that sections of the transcript can be found and quoted. When a section of the transcript is quoted the corresponding line numbers are put in brackets after the quote, this shows where the in the transcript the quotation comes from.

universität wien

Faculty of Catholic Theology

Letter of Information

Department of Practical Theology
Religious Education and Catechetics
MMag. Philipp Klutz
Schenkenstraße 8–10
A–1010 Vienna

T +43–1-4277–319 04
F +43–1-4277–93 19
philipp.klutz@univie.ac.at

Mrs/Ms/Mr
XXX
XXX
XXX Vienna

Subject: Research Project 'RE in Discourse' Vienna, day month 2012

Dear Mrs/Ms/Mr XXX!

As part of the doctoral dissertation project 'RE in Discourse' at the University of Vienna denominational RE (Catholic, Protestant, Islamic, Orthodox etc.) in secondary academic schools (AHS) and middle/higher vocational schools (BMHS) in Vienna will be investigated. The study is focused on denominational RE and its organisational structures.

For the empirical-qualitative part of this paper group discussions with members of the SCC, as well as with RE teachers are planned. Because of the social and religious composition of your pupil body, amongst other things, your school is of great importance for this project. The empirical work at the school includes the following key points:

- A group discussion with the entire SCC.
  It would be possible to have the group discussion on the topics mentioned above as part of an SCC meeting (duration: about one hour).
- A group discussion with the RE teachers of the school (duration: about one hour).
- If necessary an additional group discussion with pupils representatives in the SCC (duration: about one hour).
- Analysis of the transcribed discussion contributions. The discussion will be written down with the help of tapes and videos – for an unambiguous allocation of the spoken contributions – and subsequently analysed.
- Anonymisation: In the transcribed group discussion all persons, proper names and clear references to the school will be anonymised.
- The school will be informed about the results if it so wishes.

A cooperation with your school would be a valuable contribution to the success of this research project. MMag. Philipp Klutz will gladly answer any questions you might have about this study.

With kind regards

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Martin Jäggle, Dean MMag. Philipp Klutz

universität wien

Faculty of Catholic Theology

Department of Practical Theology
Religious Education and Catechetics
MMag. Philipp Klutz
Schenkenstraße 8–10
A–1010 Vienna

T +43–1-4277–319 04
F +43–1-4277–93 19
philipp.klutz@univie.ac.at

Declaration of Consent

Vienna, day month 2012

Declaration of Consent to the Participation in the Research Project
'RE in Discourse'

I have been sufficiently informed about data collection and analysis of the research project 'RE in Discourse'. Based on audio and video recordings transcripts will be made. I agree that my spoken contributions to the group discussions may be used for research purposes **anonymously** and that excerpts may be quoted in the doctoral dissertation.

A Checklist of Key Issues and Questions for Self-Reflection and for Action[2]

This checklist of key issues and questions for self-reflection is meant to help different partners to identify their role in the creation the right environment for teaching and learning.

1. Ethos and values

2. Educational policies
   - Does the admissions policy of the school take account of diverse needs of pupils and the community?
   - How far do the policies on behaviour, bullying, personal and social development promote the values of intercultural education, the value of religious diversity and respect?

3. School governance and management
   - How far does school governance and management reflect the value of diversity?
   - How far is the school's tradition based on the dominant religion in the state?
   - How far does the school calendar reflect religious diversity?
   - To what extent do holidays reflect the diversity of religious holy days?
   - Are the common days of celebration, based on common humanity, for example UN day?
   - How does the selection of holidays reflect the religions represented by the teachers and the student body in the school?
   - How does the school organise the need for the different religions' holy days?
   - To what extent does the food provided in school reflect the diversity of cultures and needs?
   - How is the wearing of particular clothing or religious symbols dealt with?
   - To what extent does it reflect the diversity of pupils in the school?
   - How is conflict resolution achieved if necessary?

4. The curriculum
   - Has the school conducted an audit of its provision of intercultural education, and its religious dimension?
   - Is the curriculum one where tradition dominates over modernity?
   - How far does the curriculum cater for the future need of the children?
   - How is cultural diversity studied? In what areas? How effectively?
   - Does philosophical or/and ethical study provide for religious diversity? How effective is this?
   - How is the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of each pupil provided?

2 Chapter numbers where removed from this check list. Keast/Leganger-Krogstad [3]2008, 119–121.

- How far does citizenship deal with intercultural education and religious diversity?
- Whose language dominates the education provided?
- To what extent does the history taught in the school mirror all the cultures present?
- Whose music is played during the school day?
- Whose games are played in the school yard?
- Whose sports are part of the school curriculum?

5. Religious education (where provided)
   - Is religious education offered as a separate school subject? How effective is this?
   - Is religious education integrated into other school subjects? How effective is this?
   - Which religions are presented in religious education? Why?
   - Is religious education a responsibility of the school or given in cooperation with religious communities?
   - How far is the dominant religion viewed as the only truth and as a normative perspective?
   - To what extent is the child's own religious background seen as normative?
   - To what extent are all religions viewed as equally searching for truth?
   - Is every child's spiritual development seen as the purpose for religious education?
   - Are the common features between religions emphasized?
   - Is there a critical attitude to religions?
   - Are religions taught and discussed in separate classrooms?
   - Are all religions presented side by side without preferences of any kind (multi-religious systematic approach)?
   - Are all the religions presented side by side without preferences in quality but in quantity?
   - Is comparative religious education based on common themes for the religions?
   - Is interreligious dialogue based in respect for difference?

6. Training
   - To what extent have teachers been trained to provide a religious dimension in intercultural education?
   - What opportunities are there for teachers to gain such training? To what extent are these opportunities taken up?