Wiener Beiträge zur Islamforschung

Ednan Aslan
Marcia Hermansen *Editors*

Religious Diversity at School

Educating for New Pluralistic Contexts

Springer VS

Wiener Beiträge zur Islamforschung

Die Buchreihe „Wiener Beiträge zur Islamforschung“ beschäftigt sich mit interdisziplinären Studien aus den Fachbereich der Islamischen Theologie und Religionspädagogik sowie der Religionswissenschaft und Philosophie. Die Forschungsschwerpunkte des Herausgebers, Professor Ednan Aslan, liegen auf Themen wie Islam in Europa, der Theorie der islamischen Erziehung in Europa sowie Fragen zu Muslime an öffentlichen Schulen und Islamischer Theologie mit europäischer Prägung.

More information about this series at http://www.springer.com/series/13592

Ednan Aslan · Marcia Hermansen
Editors

Religious Diversity at School

Educating for New Pluralistic Contexts

Springer VS

Editors
Ednan Aslan
Universität Wien, Wien, Austria

Marcia Hermansen
Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, USA

ISSN 2570-222X ISSN 2570-2238 (electronic)
Wiener Beiträge zur Islamforschung
ISBN 978-3-658-31695-2 ISBN 978-3-658-31696-9 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-31696-9

Responsible Editor: Katrin Emmerich
This Springer VS imprint is published by the registered company Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden GmbH part of Springer Nature.
The registered company address is: Abraham-Lincoln-Str. 46, 65189 Wiesbaden, Germany

Contents

Editors and Contributors

About the Editors

Ednan Aslan holds the chair of Islamic education in the Institute for Islamic Studies, University of Vienna. He has directed multiple research projects on Islamic education and Muslims in Europe and published numerous books as well as book chapters and articles in international academic journals. His research focuses on Islamic identity, the future of Islamic theology, and Imam training in Europe. His books include *Migration, Religion and Early Childhood Education* (2020), *Religious Education between Radicalism and Tolerance* (2019), *Islamistische Radikalisierung* (2017), and *Muslimische Diversität* (2017).

Marcia Hermansen is director of the Islamic World Studies program at Loyola University, Chicago where she teaches courses in Islamic studies and religious studies in the Theology Department. She received her PhD in Arabic and Islamic studies from the University of Chicago, and her numerous authored and co-edited books include *Varieties of American Sufism* (2020), *Religion and Violence: Theological Reflections* (2017), *Islam, Religions, and Pluralism in Europe* (2016), *Muslima Theology: The Voices of Muslim Women Theologians* (2013), *Shah Wali Allah's Treatises on Islamic Law* (2010) and *The Conclusive Argument from God*: Shah Wali Allah's *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha.* She writes on Islamic thought, Islam and Muslims in South Asia, Sufism, Muslims in America, and women and gender in Islam.

Contributors

Sami Adwan is professor of education and teacher training in the Faculty of Education, Hebron University, Palestine. He studied educational leadership and higher education at Jordan University (BA) in Amman, San Francisco State University (MA), and the University of San Francisco (PhD). His books include the co-authored *The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Peace Building Between Palestinians and Israelis* (2000), *Victimhood and Beyond* (2001), *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in History and Civic Textbooks of Both Nations* (2003), *Dual Narratives Approach to Teaching History* (in English, Arabic, Hebrew, and German), *Empowering the voices of Israeli and Palestinian Youth* (2018 in English, Arabic, and Hebrew), a monograph *Status of Religious Education in Palestinian schools* (2001). He has received awards for his work including Alexander Langer Foundation (2001), Vic Goldberg (2005), Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation International Prize (2009), Fulbright Scholarship (2007), and Living Together Peacefully in a Diverse World (2013).

Muhamed Ali is visiting associate professor at the Sharjah University and also adjunct associate in the field of Middle Eastern Studies and Ethnology in Europe at the Mother Teresa University in North Macedonia. From 2010–2014 he was assistant professor in the Faculty of Islamic Sciences, Skopje, North Macedonia where he taught courses in the field of Islamic law and philosophy of Islamic law, then from 2014–2018 he was assistant professor at the International University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina where he taught undergraduate and graduate courses in the areas of law and political science. Besides his teaching and research activities at the International University of Sarajevo, for many years he served as a vice rector and special advisor to the rector.

Leila Almazova is associate professor at the Department of Oriental, African, and Islamic Studies at the Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Tatarstan, Russian Federation. During 2010–2011 she spent an academic year at the University of Michigan as a Fulbright scholar. In 2017 she received an "Algarysh" grant from the government of the Republic of Tatarstan to work at U. Michigan on her second doctoral dissertation on "Post-Soviet Islamic Education in Tatarstan." From 2015–2018 she served as a member of the Executive Board of the Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS). Her research expertise is in Muslim philosophy, Islamic education, and Islam in the Russian Federation. She teaches courses on these topics as well as the modern history of the Middle East, ethno-religious conflicts, and conflict resolution in Islamic societies.

Ednan Aslan holds the chair of Islamic education in the Institute for Islamic Studies, University of Vienna. He has directed multiple research projects on Islamic education and Muslims in Europe and published numerous books as well as book chapters and articles in international academic journals. His research focuses on Islamic identity, the future of Islamic theology, and Imam training in Europe. His books include *Migration, Religion and Early Childhood Education* (2020), *Religious Education between Radicalism and Tolerance* (2019), *Islamistische Radikalisierung* (2017), and *Muslimische Diversität* (2017).

Rositsa Atasonova is a legal professional who has worked for a range of NGOs in support of migrants and refugees in Bulgaria. She completed a master's in theological studies at the Harvard Divinity School, focusing on Islam, as well as a law degree at the University of Cambridge with subsequent specialization in European Law. Rositsa researches, publishes, and presents regularly on Islam and religion in Bulgaria and Europe, immigration, and human rights.

Ina ter Avest is an independent researcher who also holds a lectureship at the Islamic Theological Faculty in Amsterdam (IUA). In her teaching, as well as in her research (religious), identity development is central. Currently, she is involved in research projects on the prevention of radicalization and the role of religion in the narratives of first generation migrant women.

Aslıgül Aysel studied history and Islamic studies at Istanbul University and the Ruhr-University Bochum (RUB) from where she received her PhD in Islamic studies for a thesis on Turks living in Germany. From 2007 to 2015 she worked at various museums in the Ruhr region on topics such as immigration and Islam. In 2016 she taught at a primary school in Duisburg. From 2016 to 2020 she conducted the study "Acceptance, Formation, and Transformation using the example of Islamic Religious Education" at the professorship of Islamic theology and its didactics, Justus-Liebig-University, Giessen. Since 2018 she has been part of the DFG (German Research Foundation) project "Islamic Theology at German Universities" at the Westphalian Wilhelms-University, Münster.

Saija Benjamin is a post-doctoral researcher for the Academy of Finland funded research project "Growing up radical? The role of educational institutions in guiding young people's worldview construction." Within the larger study, her special focus is on the individual life trajectories, the socio-emotional development, and meaning making of the young informants. With a teaching background, Benjamin is especially interested in the ways that education can support children and youths' positive worldview and identity construction and the development

of socio-emotional and cognitive skills that strengthen youths' resilience against harmful trends, such as radicalization.

Julia Bradtke is junior researcher for the chair of religious education at the Friedrich-Alexander-University, Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany. She earned her master's degree in teaching from the University of Leipzig, and is now on a doctoral scholarship from the Hanns-Seidel-Foundation. In her dissertation project she is analyzing the chances and risks of individualized forms of teaching and learning and their relevance for religious education. Her most recent publication is "Individualisierung als Beitrag zu einem schüler innengerechten Religionsunterricht mit exemplarischer Betrachtung der sozio-ökonomischen Heterogenität. Kritische Reflexion" in B. Grümme & T. Schlag (eds.) *Heterogenität als Herausforderung für Religionspädagogik und Erziehungswissenschaft* (2020).

Denis Brylov is associate professor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, National Pedagogical Dragomanov University (Kiev, Ukraine). Brylov received his PhD degree in religious studies from Taras Shevchenko University, Kiev. His main academic interests are Islam and Islamic education in Ukraine, political activism in Sufism and transnational Sufi movements, religious factors in conflicts, and religion and nationalism. Brylov has authored some 50 publications in Russian, Ukrainian, Danish, Polish, German, and English. He is the editor of the volume *Islam in a Multi-cultural World* (2016) and co-editor of the volume *Sufism and the Islamic Spiritual Tradition: Texts, Institutions, Ideas and Interpretations* (2015). He is currently a member of the Ministry of Education of Ukraine's commission on state recognition of higher theological education diplomas, academic degrees, and titles issued by higher theological educational institutions.

Holger Daun PhD in political science, Lund University and PhD in comparative education, Stockholm University, Sweden is professor of comparative and international education at Stockholm University. He has led different research projects on globalization, education reform, and parents' educational strategies. He has published several books and a large number of book chapters and articles in international academic journals, including the co-edited volumes *Muslim Educational Strategies in a Global Context* (2004), (2008) School *Decentralization in the Context of Globalizing Governance: International Comparison of Grassroots Responses* (2008), and *Global Values Education: Teaching Democracy and Peace* (2012).

Areti Demosthenous is director of the Institute of Historical Research for Peace (Cyprus). She specializes in the religious family law of the monotheistic religions of the Middle East. She has taught at numerous international universities, including Haifa, Munich, Shandong (China), City University of New York, and Bogazici. She is an active member of the International Association for Intercultural Education (IAIE) and national representative to the International Association for the Studies of Southeast Europe (AIESEE). She has published extensively on religious law and intercultural understanding.

Liam Francis Gearon is associate professor of religious education in the Department of Education, and senior research fellow at Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford. He is also conjoint professor at Newcastle University, Australia, visiting professor at the Irish Centre for Catholic Studies, MIC, Limerick, Ireland, and honorary senior research fellow at the School of Education, University of Birmingham. He has held previous roles as adjunct professor at the Australian Catholic University, professor of education at the University of Roehampton, research professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Plymouth, and has authored or edited over thirty books. Founder-director of the Philosophy, Religion, Education Research Group at the University of Oxford, Liam is a specialist in the interdisciplinary study of religion in education, and as principal investigator has led funded research projects with the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the British Academy, the Leverhulme Trust, the Nuffield Foundation, the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, and the Society for Educational Studies. He is currently a co-investigator with the Academy of Finland funded research project *Growing up radical? The role of educational institutions in guiding young people's worldview construction.*

Perman Gochyyev is behavioral statistician and project manager at the Graduate School of Education University of California, Berkeley, and at the Berkeley Evaluation and Assessment Research (BEAR) Center. Prior joining BEAR Center, he was the Manager of Research and Analytics at Medallia's CX Strategy Research group and a research associate at WestEd. His research areas include psychometric and multilevel modeling, and evaluation.

Ferdinand Gjana is the rector of Bedër University. He received his BA in political science and international relations from Bogazici University, Istanbul. Prof. Gjana completed his doctoral studies in international relations and diplomacy at the Center for Strategic & Diplomatic Studies (CEDS) in Paris in 2009. He has participated in many international programs including at Harvard University, University of Iowa, Zhejiang Normal University, Temple University, the United

Nations, and various European Council and European Union Institutions. Prof. Gjana has a very active research agenda in the fields of international relations and security, international organizations, politics in the Balkans, higher education management, religious studies, violent extremism, and religious radicalism.

Marcia Hermansen is director of the Islamic World Studies program at Loyola University, Chicago where she teaches courses in Islamic studies and religious studies in the Theology Department. She received her PhD in Arabic and Islamic studies from the University of Chicago, and her numerous authored and co-edited books include *Varieties of American Sufism* (2020), *Religion and Violence: Theological Reflections* (2017), *Islam, Religions, and Pluralism in Europe* (2016), *Muslima Theology: The Voices of Muslim Women Theologians* (2013), *Shah Wali Allah's Treatises on Islamic Law* (2010) and *The Conclusive Argument from God*: Shah Wali Allah's *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha.* She writes on Islamic thought, Islam and Muslims in South Asia, Sufism, Muslims in America, and women and gender in Islam.

Sabine Hermisson is assistant professor in the Protestant Theological Faculty of the Institute of Religious Education, University of Vienna. Sabine's research focus includes fields such as attitudes research, religious diversity, theology and science, and the psychology of religion. She employs qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. One current project is a larger-scale study on attitudes towards religious and worldview diversity in cooperation with the Berkeley Center for Evaluation and Assessment Research.

Dzintra Iliško is a professor at Daugavpils University, Latvia. She is the head of the Center for Sustainable Education in the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences. She is co-editor of two international Journals: *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability* and *Discourse and Communication for Sustainability.* She is the author of more than sixty publications and participant in a number of international projects, including the 2017–2019 NORDLUS: "Innovative and Sustainable Aesthetic Methods for Citizenship Education: Nordic and Baltic Perspectives" (ISAMCE), Erasmus "Methods for ESD – competencies and curricula" (MetESD); "Local Research and Education Hubs – Key for Sustainability." Some of her international networks are the BBCC - Baltic & Black sea Circle Consortium in educational research, the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values, and the European Society of Women in Theological Research. Her research interests include religious education and reorienting education towards the aim of sustainable education.

Cem Kara holds a university assistantship (post-doc) in Alevi Theological Studies at the Department of Islamic Theological Studies at the University of Vienna. He received his PhD from the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich on the transcultural history of the Bektashi Order during the 19th century. He is currently working on the history and historical sources of Alevism, focusing on hermeneutical ambiguities in the history of Alevi religiosity.

Pia-Maria Koirikivi (PhD) is a university lecturer in worldview education at the University of Helsinki and works in the Academy of Finland funded research project *Growing up radical? The role of educational institutions in guiding young people's worldview construction* as a post-doctoral researcher. Pia-Maria is especially interested in religious and political extremism, and the ways in these issues are addressed in formal education. As a teacher educator, she wants to increase knowledge about the ways in which young people experience educational settings as places for discussing and developing their own worldviews. From 2018–2019, Pia-Maria was a visiting researcher at McGill University in Montreal on a grant provided by the Alfred Kordelin Foundation.

Michael Kramer is a doctoral candidate and lecturer at the Karl-Franzens University, Graz in the field of law and politics, specializing in Islam and religious education in Austria and Europe. Since 2015, he has been coordinating the project 'Citizenship Education and Islam' at the Institute for Islamic Theological Studies, University of Vienna, for which he produces alternative teaching materials. Since 2017, he has worked at analyzing the law of religious education and the relationship between the state and the Islamic Religious Community in Austria within the framework of the project 'Integration through Interreligious Education' at the Catholic Theological Faculty in Graz.

Genti Kruja, PhD received a bachelor's degree in sociology from Istanbul University, Turkey, and a master's degree in sociology, as well as a PhD degree in philosophy, from Tirana University, Albania. During his master's and PhD studies, he researched interfaith and intercultural dialogue. He has worked as director of culture and inter-religious dialogue for Albania's Muslim Community (2010–2016) and since 2012 he has been the editor-in-chief of the journal *Zani i Naltë*. Dr. Kruja is also the Secretary General of the Albania Inter-Religious Council and Head of the Islamic Sciences Department and lecturer in Bedër University in Tirana, Albania. He is the author of *Albanians Facing Interreligious Challenges.*

Arniika Kuusisto is Professor in Child and Youth Studies at Stockholm University, Sweden. She is also Research Director and Docent at the Faculty of

Educational Sciences, University of Helsinki, Finland, and Honorary Research Fellow at the Department of Education, University of Oxford, UK. Arniika leads the Academy of Finland funded research project *Growing up radical? The role of educational institutions in guiding young people's worldview construction* (2018–2023) based at Helsinki, Stockholm, and Oxford universities. Her research focuses on value learning along life trajectories across age stages from early childhood to professional career paths, in both formal and informal educational and social settings.

Georgios Mavrommatis was born and brought up in Komotini, NE Greece. He studied marketing (BA), pedagogy (BA), political science and history (Ph.D.), and music (Ottoman classical). He is associate professor in intercultural and minority education in the Department of Education Sciences in Early Childhood, Democritus University of Thrace. His main research interests are the education of minority and migrant children (especially Muslims and Roma) with a focus on the fields of education policy, bilingualism and language policies, the development of teaching materials, school attendance, human rights, combating racism, and teacher training.

Manfred L. Pirner holds the Chair of Religious Education at the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany. He is also director of the Research Unit for Public Religion and Education (RUPRE; www.rupre.uni-erlangen.org), co-director of the Competence Center for School Development and Evaluation (KSE; www.kse.phil.fau.de), and founding member of the Center for Human Rights Erlangen-Nürnberg (CHREN; www.humanrights-centre.fau.eu). After his career as a high-school teacher, he earned his doctoral and post-doctoral habilitation degrees at the University of Bamberg and served for eight years as professor at the University of Education at Ludwigsburg, before he took his present position in 2008. Recent major publications include the co-edited books *Public Theology Perspectives on Religion and Education* (2019) and *Public Theology, Religious Diversity and Interreligious Learning*: *Contributing to the Common Good through Religious Education* (2018).

Martin Rothgangel is the Chair of the Institute of Religious Education at the University of Vienna. Before he taught at several universities (Regensburg, Erfurt, Weingarten, Göttingen). He was Dean of the Faculty of Protestant Theology from 2015 to 2018 and among others Chair of the „Society of Fachdidaktik" (GFD e. V.) from 2013 to 2016.

Yaşar Sarıkaya is professor of Islamic Education at the University of Gießen. He studied Islamic theology at Ankara University and Oriental and Islamic Studies and Pedagogy at Bochum University before completing his doctorate on the Ottoman scholar Abū Saʿīd Muḥammad al-Ḫādimī in 2004. He habilitated in religious education from Istanbul University in 2010 after working as an Islamic studies teacher and holding several lectureships at the University of Frankfurt. In 2011, Prof. Sarıkaya joined the program in Islamic theology and its didactics at the university of Giessen. His research focuses on Islamic religious pedagogy and didactics, the history of Islamic education and thought, as well as on the biography of the Prophet and his traditions (hadith).

Zekirija Sejdini is professor of Islamic Religious Education in the Department of Islamic Theology and Religious Education, University of Innsbruck and Professor of Islam in Contemporary Society in the Department of Islamic-Theological Studies, University of Vienna. He studied Islamic theology, religious education, and philosophy at al-Azhar (Cairo), University of Marmara (Istanbul), and in Heidelberg. He has published numerous books on inter-religious education, including theoretical approaches as well as empirical studies. His work *Becoming Human. Fundamentals of Interreligious Education and Didactics from Muslim-Christian Perspective* co-authored with M. Kraml and M Scharer (German 2017) has been translated into English (Peter Lang, 2020). He was awarded the *Kurt Schubert Memorial Prize for interreligious understanding* (2016).

Henrik Simojoki is professor of practical theology and religious education in the Faculty of Theology, Humboldt University of Berlin. He received his doctorate in practical theology from the University of Tübingen in 2008, where he also completed his habilitation thesis on globalized religion in 2012. His research focusses on religious education in global society, professionalization of RE teachers, international comparative research, history of religious education, confirmation work, and ecumenical learning.

Mehmet H. Tuna is senior researcher at the Department of Islamic Theology and Religious Education, University of Innsbruck. He holds degrees in Islamic religious education and biotechnology. His research focuses on Islamic religious education, teacher education, teacher professionalization, and religious education pedagogy. From 2009 to 2018 he was a public school Islamic religious education teacher. He is the author of *Islamische ReligionslehrerInnen auf dem Weg zur Professionalisierung* [Islamic Religious Education Teachers on the Road to Professionalisation] (2019).

Wolfgang Weirer received his Ph.D. in theology and religious education from the University of Graz in 1993 and completed his 2004 habilitation at the University of Innsbruck.

Since 2004, he has been professor of religious education at the University of Graz. His writing and research focusses on basic questions of religious education, justification of and further developments in denominational religious education, biblical didactics, and interreligious education. He is editor of the journal *Österreichisches Religionspädagogisches Forum* (ÖRF) and co-editor of *LIMINA – Grazer Theologische Perspektiven.* Dr. Weirer is head of the Interdisciplinary Doctoral School of Didactics at the University of Graz and directs a research project on "Integration through interreligious education."

Zsofia Windisch studied international relations at the Corvinus University of Budapest. Her special academic focus has been Turkey and people of Turkish background in Europe. In 2006, she was an Erasmus student at the Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara, Turkey where she completed a master's thesis about Islamophobia. Then, from 2010 to 2013, she worked as a study assistant in the Department of Education, Islamic Religious Education at the University of Vienna. In 2015, she decided to conduct research on migration and asylum and, for this reason, she completed the university course 'Social work to integrate refugees' at Danube University, Krems in Austria. She is currently enrolled as a PhD student in the Faculty of Catholic Theology at the University of Vienna, where she is planning to write a thesis on the topic 'Religion in Working with Refugees.'

Almeda M. Wright is associate professor of religious Education at Yale Divinity School. She holds degrees in theology, education, and electrical engineering. Her research focuses on African American religion, adolescent spiritual development, and the intersections of religion, education, and public life. She is currently completing a book on religious education and radical social change among African Americans (particularly Black youth). She is the author of *The Spiritual Lives of Young African Americans* (Oxford, 2017) and the editor, with Mary Elizabeth Moore, of *Children, Youth, and Spirituality in a Troubling World* (2008).

Ali Yaman received his M.A. in political history and Ph.D. in international relations from Istanbul University. Both of his dissertations were on the transformation of Alevism/Bektashism. He also conducted fieldwork in Central Asia and worked at Ahmet Yesevi Kazak-Turk University as a lecturer and senior researcher in the Turkology Institute from 2002–2005. He currently works as Professor in the International Relations Department of Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University.

He is co-editor of the *Journal of Alevism-Bektashism Studies* (Cologne). His research interests include Alevism, immigration, the European Union, and political anthropology. His latest book, co-authored with with Rasim Ö. Dönmez, is *Nation Building and Turkish Modernization: Islam, Islamism and Nationalism in Turkey* (2019).

Şenol Yağdı studied educational sciences, philosophy, Islamic religious pedagogy (MA) and political education (MSc) in Innsbruck, Vienna, and Krems, Austria. In 2007, he finished his doctoral thesis on 'Educational Upward Mobility with a Migration Background' with distinction at the University of Klagenfurt. Since 2009, he has taught at the Department of Islamic Theological Studies at the University of Vienna. Moreover, since 2014 he has worked as an Islamic religion teacher at several public high schools in Vienna, and since 2017 has been conducting research on religious and interreligious education at the University of Graz.

Ali Zaimi graduated in journalism from Tirana University in 2004. He has a master's degree in political science/European studies and is pursuing doctoral studies in political science. From 2005 to 2010 he worked as an editor for the magazine *Drita Islame*, an organ of the Muslim Community of Albania (MCA). From 2010 to 2014 he was the Secretary General of the MCA and from 2014–2016 he was its vice-chairperson. Since 2016, he has worked as the director of the religious high school (madrasa) "H. Mahmud Dashi" in Tirana. Ali Zaimi is a co-author of *Ilmihali i Zgjeruar*, a current overview of Muslim communities in Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia.

Introduction Religious Diversity at School

Ednan Aslan and Marcia Hermansen

With increasing migration and ethnic-religious diversity, accompanied by the associated challenges that these developments raise in societies and institutions, it is clear that political decision-makers are faced with new questions not previously encountered in their nation's history. In industrialized countries, religious pluralism has become a normal part of everyday life. For example, in a small country like Austria, 16 religious communities and churches are recognized by the state and are thereby entitled to offer religious instruction in public schools, while in other European countries not all religious communities are recognized by the state. Still, the situation in their schools is not all that different since these schools need to take different religions and their traditions into account in the course of everyday school life.

Academic perspectives are useful in observing and analyzing reactions to these new developments in societies. During the earlier phases of migration to Europe and other industrialized countries, studies in education spoke of a "pedagogy for foreigners," which developed from around 1970 to 1980. Education for foreigners, even if this was not directly articulated, was always based upon the concept of an "other." Therefore, pedagogy tried to define the specific characteristics of this "other." In this case, the children of foreign migrants were initially perceived as being separate from the majority society due to their intrinsic differences. As part of this process, religion as a cultural feature was just one element in this difference

E. Aslan (✉)
Institut für Islamisch-Theologische Studien, Universität Wien, Wien, Austria
E-Mail: ednan.aslan@univie.ac.at

M. Hermansen
Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, USA
E-Mail: mherman@luc.edu

E. Aslan and M. Hermansen (eds.), *Religious Diversity at School,* Wiener Beiträge zur Islamforschung, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-31696-9_1

that needed to be explored so as to facilitate the process of integration. The goal was to discover the unconscious features of these children that differentiated them and to make these accessible to the public. This gave rise to the notion that the task for the school was to correct these characteristics of difference through training, or to systematize and thereby address the problems arising from difference. In various studies it can be seen that the "education of foreigners" pedagogy perceived the differing characteristics of immigrant children i.e., their language and culture, as a burden on the educational process. Thus, religion was understood as part of the problem that needed to be fixed. When education for foreigners initially began to deal with Islam, the growing presence and social infrastructure of the European Muslim population, even in metropolitan areas, was still hardly noticeable. This discipline was more concerned with the countries of origin of the migrants than the growing local religious infrastructure.

With the further sophistication of academic perspectives and a greater openness to multi-culturalism, an "intercultural pedagogy" emerged, according to which otherness was no longer seen as a burden, but rather as a potential source of enrichment. According to this approach, religion was understood as a part of cultural identity. Assuming that society is comprised of different groups and is shaped by these multiple identities, intercultural education still dealt with cultural differences. However, the concept of intercultural pedagogy was now criticized in various studies out of a concern that all problems and tensions in society would be attributed to cultural factors alone. Thus, the cultural characteristics of immigrants, especially Muslims, were often seen as the source of social problems in society. In many current discussions in Europe Islam, the religion, has come to dominate all cultural characteristics, so that one can speak of the "Muslimization" of all school-based problems of immigrant children attending public schools. In a further development, a "migration pedagogy" that emerged after 2000 criticized the previous approach of intercultural pedagogy precisely because the latter used only culture as the attribute that could explain all differences. As part of this development, deeper awareness of the immigration experience and the need for teachers to have a better understanding of diverse worldviews and experiences that shaped pupils' worldviews became integrated in teacher training programs.

All of these models, as well as other innovative approaches, are more about external attributions than self-descriptions. While religions, especially Islam, are presented in terms of varying definitions, which are formulated and employed from different perspectives, religion itself was often perceived as a single cultural feature, although the religious identities of individuals are characterized by complex references and nuances.

In addition to these academic debates and discussions, the expectations held regarding diverse religions vary widely. On the one hand, religions may be seen as a source of social problems, civil wars, and other conflicts. On the other hand, there have been growing efforts to recognize how religions can be part of the solution to society's challenges.

The introduction of Islamic religious education in public schools in various European countries is further due to awareness that the religious education of Muslim children in public schools can make an important contribution to the integration of these children into local societies. In addition to such views, we increasingly find state authorities and other institutions holding political and other social expectations of Islamic religious education.

Under current conditions, both globally and in the west, the religious education of children is of paramount importance. For example, Muslims who grow up in the west must not only learn to develop their own religious attitudes towards societal diversity, but also to critically explore their own religiosity. In this regard, in addition to their acknowledgement of internal Islamic plurality, the pursuit of pluralistic approaches to Islamic education and strategies can combat threats of extremism and fundamentalism and thereby decisively contribute to the process of creating a home for Islam and Muslims in Europe.

School is not only a place of learning for children, but also a space where they encounter new cultural, religious, and other worldviews. Regardless of family and social background, children cannot avoid this diversity. It challenges them to acquire competencies for reflecting on and processing this plurality. This is not simply a task for religious education, but rather it is an educational goal for broader private or public schools that aim to enable children and adolescents to deal with plurality, an endeavor for which the component of religious education is especially suited.

In this process, religious education has the particular task of introducing children to religious and cultural diversity and challenging them to form their own opinions. Cognitive, psychological, and ideological factors play an important role in this process. By integrating such factors, teachers can guide pupils out of a passive, observer-consumer attitude and into the role of becoming active learner-participants, thus incorporating plurality into a transformative educational paradigm. This process enables pupils to realize that plurality is not simply a given, but rather an adaptable and integral feature of their individuality that challenges them to make decisions by critically reflecting on themselves and society to formulate reasoned justifications for their choices and opinions. It is also possible that students will continue to make new decisions along the way and look at the world again and again from different perspectives. This should be

considered a human quality and a sign of maturity, because without these competencies, plurality would remain a buzzword; an empty pronouncement to which no action corresponds. Plurality requires capacities for dealing with and processing diversity, otherwise the ultimate result may be relativism, passivity, or even extremism.

The question of how an individual and dynamic religious identity can emerge must be answered in such a way that a healthy and balanced identity develops only after serious examination of one's own faith tradition, one's environment, and oneself. Religious education should, therefore, offer an appropriate atmosphere in which pupils can learn to process not only concurring, like-minded, and compatible views but also competing and divergent narratives and histories of religions and, on that basis, seek, discover, and pursue their own individual orientation.

Ultimately, full participation in a democracy requires respect for religions. An education without religious competencies is not complete and cannot count as a general education. We know from European experiences that the exclusion of religions can lead to tensions within societies. Furthermore, religious education in the public arena encourages religions themselves to dialogue and further promotes mutual understanding.

That being said, religions find themselves stretched in new ways as they undertake the task of emerging from their traditional spheres and presenting themselves as partners of the state in the center of societies. Islam, in particular, is affected by this challenge because this religion has always been considered as being at the margins of European societies. Muslims have learned to identify themselves with this marginalized position and even to defend themselves as victims in society. Muslims must now find ways to educate their next generations in a religious way that, at the same time, fits within a broadly shared European context so that Islam is perceived as a mainstream faith and is no longer excluded as a foreign or strange religion in Europe.

Introduction to the Volume's Contents

Marcia Hermansen

Religious Diversity at School: Educating for New Pluralistic Contexts contains a total of 25 chapters organized into three sections:

1. Educating for pluralism and religious education in plural settings.

2. Challenges and responses to religious diversity and pluralism in the classroom.
3. A total of 13 regional case studies that cohere around the themes of Islam, Muslims, and religious education in plural settings.

Section one: Educating for pluralism and religious education in plural settings

Many of the chapters in section one involve the application of social science methods and approaches to document and analyze the changing dynamic in today's plural classrooms. In this first section of the volume, we therefore find education considered from multiple perspectives: those of pupils, those of teachers, and, in some cases, those of parents and the broader society. All are stakeholders in the educational sphere. In the case of religion, individual state relationships with religious communities vary for clear historical reasons. Distinct forms of secularism in the range of modern nation states, from hard to softer versions, also impact whether religious education can become part of the state educational curriculum or whether it must be restricted to private religious institutions. In fact, there are further negotiations and complications in the overlap between the two. Another arena of complexity is the interface between the confessional, theological teaching of religion from a faith-based perspective, and academic approaches that study religion as part of human historical experience, i.e. studying "about" religion rather than having religion inculcated as part of the educational experience. Some contemporary systems have offered a further option for the non-confessional study of religion through offering courses based on ethics or other comparative humanistic alternatives to a religious curriculum geared to students from particular faith communities.

It is also important to recognize the concern that in recent years religion, specifically Islam, has been problematized in nativist politics and policies. Negative stereotypes about Islam specifically have been reinforced due to the actions of violent Islamist groups that have received intense media and popular scrutiny and alarm. The threat of youth radicalization has, in some instances, led to initiatives to offer Islamic religious education in state-organized, public schools as part of a strategy to promote engaged citizenship, moderation in interpretation, and pluralism.

As Sabine Hermisson and Perman Gochyyev's chapter on "Adolescents' views on religion(s) and on non-religious worldviews" notes, religious education classes and broader school environments now need to take into account not only diversity across faith positions, but also the perspectives of the growing number of students who espouse no religion. As part of this research, the authors conducted exploratory qualitative interviews, a survey employing the Acceptance of

Religious and Worldview Diversity (ARWD) instrument, and interpretative qualitative interviews to study adolescents' attitudes towards the three world religions Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as towards nonreligious worldviews. One striking finding is that the social distance between religious and nonreligious students exceeds the social distance between the adherents of the individual Abraham faiths. While most of the surveys were administered to students in the San Francisco Bay area, some of the follow up interviews were conducted in Vienna, thereby including both American and European components.

As indicated earlier in this introduction, a more nuanced understanding of the religiosity of students can allow instructors, and even the general public, to understand that while religion may be an important aspect of individual pupil's worldviews, its importance and significance can certainly vary across individuals. Especially in cases involving students from immigrant backgrounds this represents an evolution in pedagogy from constructing foreigners as "others" driven by different religions that were construed in monolithic and even totalizing ways, to more complex perspectives, and finally to a more holistic and pluralistic strategy of educating for the plural societies of the future.

The concern with understanding religiosity is evident in the chapter by Manfred Pirner and Julia Bradtke on the "significance of the religiosity and educational backgrounds of young refugees in Germany: results from an empirical mixed-methods study." As part of the research for this study, refugees from Muslim majority countries were interviewed to discover how religion had played a role in shaping their current worldviews.

The authors initially note that in German public discourse the religiosity of refugees seems to be both overestimated and underestimated. While the religiosity of refugees may be overestimated as a fear-generating factor, for example, assumptions that Muslims may bring extremist attitudes with them, religiosity is also underestimated in terms of its potentially positive effects on life coping and integration. This chapter explores nuanced and complex dimensions of religiosity among refugee populations including religious conversion after arriving in Germany and the distinctions across religious tolerance when imagined among acquaintances vs. potential marriage partners.

In the case of very young primary school children, educationist Asligül Aysel, using observation and interviews with selected children and their parents, provides insights into the perceived value and acceptance of religion education classes among Turkish migrant families in Germany. The several families documented in her cases are themselves diverse in their religiosity as well as in their expectations of the religious instruction offered at public school. This topic, while explored in a preliminary way, is important because it discloses that while experiences

and expectations of such education on the part of pupils and their parents may differ, the same Islamic religious education course may offer positive content while simultaneously satisfying diverse needs.

Following this chapter, Ina ter Avest's work on "teachers' multi-voiced identity" considers children in a slightly older cohort, namely ages 9–10. Using actual classroom examples and quoted dialogue from classes in the Netherlands, Ter Avest demonstrates how religious difference can present "teaching moments" that stimulate both teacher and pupils to genuine encounter and reflection. The conclusion is that "faith development" and "moral formation" are processes of maturation in which religious education can play a vital role during childrens' formative years.

Austria is a country in which such religious education is well established, including faculties for teacher training in Islamic religious education. Şenol Yağdı, in his chapter "The religious educational habitus of Islamic religion teachers: a reconstructive study of collective frameworks of orientation in the context of inter-religious education" provides a discussion based on an ongoing research project into the self-concepts, frameworks of orientation, and behavioral patterns of Islamic religion teachers in Austria. In this research, Yağdı draws on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus as part of his project of trying to elucidate what it is that guides the teachers of Islamic religious education in their approaches to religious and interreligious learning. In Europe, such teachers are increasingly encouraged to take on local, European attitudes and approaches to religious education in contrast to the older model of imported attitudes, instructional materials, and pedagogical approaches. It is clear that the challenges and possibilities of this transformation need to be evaluated by means of academic consideration and analysis.

In the next chapter, German educationist Henrik Simojoki also draws our focus to the role of the instructor, even in contexts such as vocational education, where the presence of religion in the classroom may arise due to students' strong religious views and commitments. In his study of "Religious sensitivity and teacher professionalism in the field of school-based refugee education: empirical findings and conceptual perspectives," Simojoki observes how, unlike RE teachers who are specifically trained to address the religious dimension in education, teachers of other subjects are, in many instances, instinctively responding based on their own experiences and perspectives. The chapter draws on a qualitative study conducted in 2017–2018 as part of a broader, state-funded pilot project on vocational education for refugees in Bavaria. The conclusions offer a more nuanced appreciation of the need for historical and conceptual considerations of "religious sensitivity" as a feature of teacher professionalism in culturally and religiously diverse

societies. For example, Simojoki recommends that such teachers be empowered and encouraged to engage in self-critical clarification of their own personal religious or worldview-based standpoints as part of their pedagogical training. The insights thus achieved will enable more productive educational interactions with their diverse pupils, who are often recent immigrants. Furthermore, such self-reflexivity is a prerequisite for the instructor to communicate his or her own position authentically, while respecting that of the student.

Four researchers from Finland, Arniika Kuusisto, Liam Gearon, Saija Benjamin, and Pia Koirikivi, authored "Re-conceptualizing radicalization: the educational research context of counter-extremism through the prism of worldviews and value learning." This chapter reviews the results of a study aiming to deepen the understanding of elements in young people's lives that have been significant in the development of their worldviews and, in certain cases, their being drawn to fundamentalism or radical interpretations of values and lifestyles. Particular emphasis is given to the role of educational institutions in the lives of children and young people. These institutions transmit values since the schools' curricula, ethos, and peer communities are important elements shaping young people's worldviews. Unlike countries such as France and the UK, Finnish schools and universities do not follow strict and abiding anti-radicalization or counter-terrorism programs and practices. At the same time, this chapter does report on the 2020 Finnish National Action Plan for the Prevention of Radicalization and Extremism. The authors conclude by emphasizing the importance of pedagogical measures to develop student resilience through encouraging reflexive and critical thinking and learning, as well as by strengthening organizational practices that engage students in cooperating and learning with and through each other.

Section 2. Challenges and responses to religious diversity and pluralism in the classroom

The six chapters in this section of the volume are grouped together due to their consideration of religious education in the light of specific challenges.

Austrian Muslim theologian and educationist, Zekirija Sejdini, in "The fundamentals of Christian-Islamic dialogue from an Islamic perspective," sets out an Islamic theology of interreligious cooperation based on interpreting Qur'anic passages regarding other Abrahamic religions. The analysis and discussion focusses on three referential points in the qur'anic text, namely recognition of previous prophets, accepting salvific elements of other religions, and the differentiated consideration of members of other religions. This chapter is therefore positioned as a resource for Islamic religious educators who are preparing pupils for engaging with pluralism from a Muslim perspective, or alternatively for educators in plural

religious education classes investigating positive Islamic teachings in this regard. The implicit challenge posed here is the need to counter stereotypes about Islamic extremism through provided resources on Islamic pluralistic teachings to both Muslim and other religious educators.

Wolfgang Weirer, in "Religious fundamentalism as a challenge for interreligious education," examines both perceptions and actualities of rising religious conservatism among some pupils in the Austrian context, whether Muslim or Christian. The chapter initially presents the temptations of fundamentalism for children and young people and then proposes aspects of a pedagogy of interreligious education that can confront fundamentalist tendencies in the classroom and thereby make contributions to deradicalization and the prevention of fundamentalism. The argument is advanced that a pedagogy of religion that is capable of integrating pluralism can help pupils to discover, in the diversity of religion(s), a resource for their own orientation and formation.

The next paper in this section also deals with the situation of Muslims in Austria, this time with a focus on the experience of refugees. Zsófia Windisch and Martin Rothgangel's work on "Combatting prejudice and discrimination: challenges for religious education in the case of refugees" pairs nicely with the chapter by Manfred Pirner and Julia Bradtke in the previous section of the volume that primarily considered Muslim refugees in Germany. The contribution of Windisch and Rothgangel is based on their research project, "Religion in working with refugees." After demonstrating how refugees in Austria experience various forms of prejudice and discrimination, the authors offer six theses from a religious educational perspective that could form the basis for a more humane and supportive approach. The research involved not only the perspectives and experiences of refugees but also of those who counsel and assist them. Religious misunderstandings and tensions in these encounters, the authors argue, can to a large extent be mitigated by religious educational strategies. While religion may not even be the most salient issue in the environment of refugee assistance, the research did find that tensions and problems arise due to religious prejudices and stereotypes, both among the refugees themselves and those designated to offer them assistance.

The final contributions to this section of the volume take us beyond continental Europe to Cyprus and the United States.

Areti Demosthenous assesses resources for pluralism found in traditional religious, in particular, Orthodox Christian teachings, and suggests how these might be integrated in religious education curricula in her chapter "Religious education as a location for encountering pluralism and for developing identity." The author observes how this project is more necessary than ever in light of the new

challenges resulting from the fact that since 2000, European schools have increasingly accepted refugees and asylum seekers from other countries and have had to modify their teaching methods so as to make them more appropriate for culturally diverse school populations. The challenge for religious education and educators is how to make the classroom a site for encountering pluralism and for developing pupils' identities so as to facilitate creative, new forms of coexistence in countries with heterogeneous populations that may espouse different values.

In the final chapter of section two, Almeda M. Wright of Yale University looks at the question of vocation as it can be addressed and cultivated by religious educators. While this essay primarily draws on research on vocation and religious education in the United States among African American youth, the "Children and youth re-imagining their future in troubling worlds" in this article may be more broadly envisioned as those growing up in a world where they cannot take for granted a stable future based simply on selecting the right career path. In our current time of precarity, many young people have to re-imagine what their futures might look like and whether they will even live to see their futures. Wright alerts us to the challenge that educators need to pay attention to the diverse and troubling experiences of youth while offering resources and strategies to help them re-imagine their futures in a supportive, meaningful, and less narrow and instrumental manner.

The third and final section of the volume gathers thirteen regional case studies that consider aspects of Islam, Muslims, and Islamic Religious Education in plural settings.

The case study chapters in this final section present instances of religious education of, and about, Muslims, whether in Muslim majority or minority settings.

As an opening overview, the diversity of models for delivering Islamic religious education across European nations is charted by Holger Daun in his review of "Islamic education in four European countries: England, the Netherlands, Russia, and Sweden."

The next three chapters consider cases where states have carved out a place for Muslim children to be educated about their own faith tradition. More regionally focused studies are offered by Yasar Sarikaya, who focuses on "Teacher training programs for Islamic education in the German state of Hesse," and Mehmet Hilmi Tuna who looks at "Pluralistic religious education in Austria."

A further study of Islamic religious education in the Austrian context is Michael Kramer's chapter on "Islamic Religious Education in Austria and its