

was a responsibility for ecclesiastical authorities, and educational philosophies were deeply founded in religious ideas. Consequently, from a structural as well as an ideological perspective, religion was of great significance for education and schooling. This applies also to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when in many European countries churches still exercised formal influence over schooling. Furthermore, some of the educational ideologies that won broad acclaim in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as the ideas developed by Friedrich Fröbel and Maria Montessori, were deeply founded in religious beliefs. And the peace education movement that grew strong in the interwar period had close connections to such religious currents as Quakerism and ecumenicalism.

To conclude, I deeply sympathize with David Käbisch's main argument: Religious matters are indeed important in the history of education and should be paid due attention. However, when evaluating the research field we have to take into account the variations stemming from different research traditions, and religious matters in educational history research should include a lot more of structural and ideological aspects than the teaching of religion.

Prof. Dr. Daniel Lindmark, Umeå University, School of Education, 901 87 Umeå, Sweden,  
daniel.lindmark@umu.se

---

## *Henning Schluß and Christine Salmen* **Religious Matters as a Mere Possibility of Educational Research**

David Käbisch argues that religious dimensions have been lost in education research, unfairly so. His conclusion points to the societal relevance of religious phenomena and attitudes, processes and discourses to education in this globalized world. At the same time he shows how “since the late 1960s, however, educational scientists and even historians of education have shown little interest in the role of religion.” We agree with this observation. Käbisch seems to find two simple reasons for this development: “On the one hand, religious education became a special research area for theologians and religious education teachers (historical religion instruction/pedagogy). On the other hand, most educational scientists became believers in the secularization thesis.”

While the first reason appears sensible in the larger context of the differentiation of scientific disciplines (Luhmann 1990), the second fails to convince. Käbisch fears that “following this rationale (...) religion has lost its authority in all aspects of economic, aesthetic, social, and political life, researchers became blind to the transformation of religion in modern societies.”

In response, we argue that the growing distance of education research to theology and to religion pedagogy, respectively, is not a result of *believing* in the secularization thesis. If secularization is understood as a transfer of its original meaning as “der Entzug oder die Entlassung einer Sache, eines Territoriums oder einer Institution aus kirchlich-geistlicher Observanz und Herrschaft”<sup>1</sup> (Lübbe 1965, 23), then examining biographies of leading educationalists as well as the relevant education paradigm is plausible. In other words, the secularization is not a matter of belief of the researchers, but rather a matter of fact. Scientific fields have developed and this is the reason why interests from the scientific education in religion education and theology have declined since the late 1960s.

## Review

A review of the last 60 years exemplifies this differentiation. It is no stretch to say that until the late 60s, a very special kind of educational science, the *geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik*, an education theory based in the Humanities and follows the “understanding sciences” opposite of the “explaining (natural) sciences” and dominated German speaking education (Oelkers 2006). German progressive education largely remained committed to this *geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik* as a humanist discipline. Scattered opposition to this domination in the German speaking area existed (ibid.) as the one by Siegfried Bernfeld who demanded already in the 1920s an empirically founded *Erziehungswissenschaft* (education science) (Bernfeld 1925). Even the times of National Socialist rule can not be regarded as an interruption of the dominance by the Humanities Pedagogy as only a few central characters of the “catheder pedagogy” lost their professorships or had to fear prosecution (Tenorth 2003; Tröhler 2003). After 1945, its effect continued in Western Germany<sup>2</sup> and Austria (Knechtel 2012) with almost no interruption.<sup>3</sup> Eduard Spranger whom David Käbisch names as an outstanding example is also a typical one of this combination of culture, nation, the people, education, theology and religion. The profile of Humanities Pedagogy as that of its central characters remains based in culture Protestantism. The Catholic counterparts are only different in their larger distance to the national state and maintain a close relation between confession and education.

This close relation of religion, state and educational science that traces its roots back to the Dilthey School up to Friedrich Schleiermacher gets lost in the 1960s. This means a double irritation. What Georg Picht and Ralf Dahrendorf diagnosed as a *Bildungskatastrophe* (educational disaster) in the 1960s abruptly made the public aware that in Western Germany, understanding itself to be a democracy, the closed elite continued to dominate societal and political as well as economic decisions. The “Catholic working girl from the country” was

1 “the removal or dismissal of a thing, a territory or an institution from ecclesiastical and spiritual observance and rule“

2 That did not apply to the Soviet-occupied Zone and the later German Democratic Republic (GDR). Representatives from the *geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik* in that area of the Soviet-occupied Zone such as Theodor Litt or those of progressive education like Peter Petersen, they left before the construction of the Berlin Wall. Even Marxist-inspired progressive education had no perspective in the GDR but functional concepts of education that followed political requirement were preferred (Wiegmann 2004).

3 The attempt to break with this line of tradition was done with the American Reeducation Program and especially with the *Amerikafahrer* (travellers to the United States) who, upon their return to the Federal Republic, were treated as unwanted strangers (Koinzer 2011).

the sum of the traits that characterized those who lose the game of education. Students rebelled against the “old dust”<sup>4</sup> that had gathered under the academic gowns.

The intellectual spokespeople from scientific education themselves still hailed from Humanities Pedagogy but had already read alternative concepts such as Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud and American sociology. They now advocated “emancipation and education” (Klaus Mollenhauer) or “inequality for everyone” (Joachim Heydorn). The new reference disciplines of the *Allgemeine Pädagogik* (General Education) surface paradigmatically: economics, psychology, and sociology. Critical Theory replaced Humanist Pedagogy.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, Heinrich Roth advocated the “empirical” or “realistic turn” (Roth 1962) that affected other terminologies as well. Instead of calling it education in all its multiplicity of meaning in science and practice, Wolfgang Brezinka argued for *Erziehungswissenschaft* (education science, Brezinka 1971) as Siegfried Bernfeld had done 50 years before him. This science ought to be empirical in nature and legitimized as such in order to finally shake off its past as a speculative discipline. The triumphant advance of this empirical version of the discipline began 1963 with the foundation of Berlin’s Max-Planck-Institute, yet peeked only in this century with the “PISA-shock” and its following comparative studies, standardization and competence movements, and the expansion of empirical education that, in 2012, led to the inception of the Society for Empirical Education Research (GEBF).

Both strands of the discipline that had called themselves education a long time ago have since then separated so strongly that communication between the two remains markedly difficult (Schluß 2010). They do agree, however, on central references not being theologian in nature anymore. Klaus Prange analyses the “relationship of religion and education” in a 1996 essay in the *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* and finds the cause for so many theologians in education: The delay of Parousia is no longer bearable for theologians and they, therefore, work towards the achievement of salvation. This is a relict of a time when the closeness of religion and education was constitutive and not merely accidental. Prange himself is surely a member of this generation in that way and not only owns but has read the Weimar edition of Martin Luther’s works. That is not anymore to be expected from the contemporary representatives of the discipline because their references are different ones.

The specialization of the sciences generally as well as education specifically shows how varied the reference disciplines of education have become. The pluralization and new focus is, therefore, not a testament to scientists’ beliefs, but an undeniable development.

## Present Challenges

Opposite to Käbisch we see that the present challenges require new answers that only in a very limited manner will be provided by the tradition of culture Protestantism. Globalization and pluralism as well as migration claim cultural and definitely also religious competencies that do not hail from culture Protestantism in its classical form but ask for interreligious and intercultural abilities.

Käbisch claims that areas of historical education research, networks, media and organization models of (religious) education need profound educational-historical as well as religious-his-

<sup>4</sup> “Muff der tausend Jahre“

<sup>5</sup> Only in the 80s, culture became a reference point again in the science of education, but from another perspective, that includes the development of the last 20 years (Mollenhauer 1983; Brumlik 2006).

torical knowledge. So whoever wishes to enquire into these areas should surely possess these qualifications and abilities. For other equally relevant research topics, theological or religious-historical competencies may be less relevant. The relation between theology and education that was naturally accepted until the 1960s at least in Western Germany cannot be claimed in this form today. It may occur and it may also prove especially helpful in researching religiously affine topics. The times, however, when this relation was a precondition for scientific education has been replaced by a variety of possible other relations. This is, we find, irrespective of education researchers' belief in the secularization thesis.

## References

- Bernfeld, Siegfried: *Sisyphos oder die Grenzen der Erziehung*. Leipzig: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag 1925
- Brezinka, Wolfgang: *Von der Pädagogik zur Erziehungswissenschaft*. Weinheim: Beltz 1971
- Brumlik, Michael: "Kultur" ist das Thema. Pädagogik als kritische Kulturwissenschaft. In: *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* 52(2006), N°1, 60-68
- Koinzer, Thomas: *Auf der Suche nach der demokratischen Schule – Amerikafahrer, Kulturtransfer und Schulreform in der Bildungsreformära der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt 2011
- Knechtel, Martin: *Das Pädagogische Seminar der Universität Wien 1938-45*. Diplomarbeit Universität Wien 2012
- Lübbe, Hermann: *Säkularisierung. Geschichte eines ideenpolitischen Begriffs*. Freiburg/München: Alber 1965
- Luhmann, Niklas: *Die Wissenschaft der Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1990
- Mollenhauer, Klaus: *Vergessene Zusammenhänge. Über Kultur und Erziehung*. München: Juventa 1983
- Oelkers, Jürgen: The strange case of German "Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik". The mental side of the problem. In: Rita Hofstetter/Bernard Schneuwly (Eds.): *Passion, fusion, tension. New education and educational sciences; end 19<sup>th</sup> – middle 20<sup>th</sup> century*. Bern: Peter Lang 2006, 191-222
- Prange, Klaus: *Lernen ohne Gnade. Zum Verhältnis von Religion und Erziehung*. In: *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* (1996), N°3, 313-322
- Roth, Heinrich: *Die realistische Wendung in der Pädagogischen Forschung (1962)*. In: Heinrich Roth: *Erziehungswissenschaft, Erziehungsfeld und Lehrerbildung*. Hannover: Schroedel 1967, 113-125
- Schluß, Henning: *Der Beitrag der empirischen Bildungsforschung zur Bildungstheorie et vice versa*. In: *Pädagogische Rundschau* 64(2010), N°3, 233-244
- Tenorth, Heinz-Elmar: *Gefangen in der eigenen Tradition – Erziehungswissenschaft angesichts des Nationalsozialismus. Eine Sammelbesprechung neuer Veröffentlichungen*. In: *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* 49(2003), N°5, 734-755
- Tröhler, Daniel: *The discourse of German Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik – A contextual reconstruction*. In: *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education* 39(2003), N°6, 759-778
- Wiegmann, Ulrich: *Über vergessene, verschwiegene und verdrängte Ursprünge des marxistischen Erziehungsbegriffs bei Robert Alt*. In: *Jahrbuch für Historische Bildungsforschung*, Band 10. Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt 2004, 75-100

Prof. Dr. Henning Schluß, Universität Wien, Institut für Bildungswissenschaft, Sensengasse 3a, 1090 Wien, Österreich, [henning.schluss@univie.ac.at](mailto:henning.schluss@univie.ac.at)

Mag. Christine Salmen, Universität Wien, Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Spitalgasse 2-4, Hof 8.3, 1090 Wien, Österreich, [christine.salmen@gmail.com](mailto:christine.salmen@gmail.com)

---

## Debatte – Discussion

### Wird Religion in der pädagogischen Forschung unterschätzt?

#### Is Religion Being Underrated in Educational Research?

---

---

Mit Beiträgen von:

Meike Sophia Baader, Rosa Bruno-Jofré, Mette Buchardt, Ezequiel Gomez Caride, David Käbisch, Lothar Kuld, Daniel Lindmark, Siebren Miedema, Fritz Osterwalder, Deirdre Raftery, Christine Salmen, Henning Schluß

*(Red.) Ein Kennzeichen moderner Pädagogik ist, dass sie davon ausgeht, sich von den religiösen Wurzeln befreit zu haben. Vor diesem Hintergrund formuliert David Käbisch eine These, die von elf Kolleginnen und Kollegen aus neun Ländern kommentiert wird und die darauf abzielt, dass diese emanzipatorische Selbsteinschätzung der erziehungswissenschaftlichen Forschung die Bedeutung von Religion und ihre Wirkungen unterschätzt.*

*(Ed.) One characteristic of modern education research is that it understands itself as modern in the sense of having freed itself from its religious roots. David Käbisch's thesis, which is discussed in this issue by eleven colleagues in nine countries, states that against the background of this emancipatory self-assessment, educational research underrates the importance of religion and its effects.*

*Keywords: Religion, education research, schooling, secularization*

*Schlagnworte: Religion, Pädagogik, Schule, Säkularisierung*