

Challenging Teacher Training for Citizenship Education and Bildung in a World of Global Cultural Change

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Christianity, (life) Enlightenment, Citizenship
– A new discipline in Danish teacher education

- The overall aim of the research is to
 - Uncover one of the 'the invisible division practices' in teacher education
 - And specifically to analyse
 - CEC as a *contested cultural and political symbolic object* .. like a crucifix on an Italian school wall

Concrete steps of the investigation of CEC

Deconstructive analysis of the national curriculum's description of the subject Christianity, (Life) Enlightenment, Citizenship (CEC)

Overview of the presentation of the concepts and the subjects in textbooks

Discussion of CEC in the perspective of Bildung



Background: Short on Danish teacher education

- Dual teacher training system: teacher education for primary school and teacher education for secondary/ tertiary level education take place at separate institutions
- Primary school teachers are educated in teacher training colleges – now “university colleges”.
- University Colleges are *not* research universities

Christianity, (Life) Enlightenment Citizenship

Preamble -

- The subject
 - Introduced 2007/2008 as part of a general reform of Danish teacher education
 - combines the areas C E C into one coherent perspective – an interdisciplinary subject
 - "Generally qualifying" – (opposed to in-depth knowledge of a single discipline)
 - Views value- and Bildung related questions through a lens constituted by the three areas in combination

Competence goals

- The student must acquire the competence to
 - Relate to the importance of Christianity and other life perspectives for the value foundation in a European and Danish culture context
 - Relate to the school's obligation of 'Bildung' (dannelsesopgave) towards the pupil as an individual, as citizen in Denmark and in the world
 - Prepare the pupils to participate in a society identified by equality, intellectual freedom and democracy (Danish: "Ligeværd, åndsfrihed og folkestyre")
 - Develop in the pupils the ability to
 - view their environment in critical perspective and
 - Form an opinion and act when encountering new challenges
 - Live together in respect of each other's values and norms

Unquestioned assumptions, inherent in competence goals

- Christianity has played a major role in the formation of Danish and European cultures and societies
- Cultures are to be understood as coherent entities, connected to a nation and confined by its borders – or as transnational value systems shared by nations related to each other by historical bonds
- Cultures are based on values

Critical comments on the curricular culture concept

- The *'culture-based-on values' approach* is neither accepted in anthropological scholarship nor in the field of intercultural communication
- cultural manifestations are viewed as complexly related to a wide range of material, social, economic and political conditions
- Example: Barth's work on the establishment of ethnic boundaries instead of focusing on 'content' as constituting culture
- *"We broke loose from the idea of history as simply the objective source and cause of ethnicity and approached it as a form of synchronic rhetoric – a struggle to appropriate the past"*
- *(Barth 1998/1969)*

Critical comments on the curricular culture concept

- Fredrik Barth states that although ethnic categories take cultural differences into account, we can't assume a simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences. The features that are taken into account are those the actors themselves regard as significant. (Barth 1998/1969: 14)
- Barth considers culture as something characterized by variation and flux, and to think of cases of relative stability in ethnic and other social relations as being as much in need of explanation as cases of change. He therefore argues that 'the cultural stuff' has to be given less consideration, since it is *"the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses."* (Barth 1998/1969: 15)
- The ethnic boundary in teacher education is connected to a national-cultural Bildung. This Bildung defines 'a Danish teacher' and 'a pupil'. This definition process implicates a constitution of normality

Assumptions on 'Bildung'

- The Bildung Obligation is *self-evident*: The reader of the curriculum will be familiar with the 'dannelsesopgave' of the school since it does not need to be defined or explained explicitly
- The 'dannelsesopgave' establishes *a hierarchy of identities*: individual, identity as national citizen, identity as world citizen
- The text assumes a *specific socio-geographic positioning* of the child
 - The text assumes everybody to belong to a national community (and to have strong bonds to that community)
 - The text assumes that national affiliation is a constitutive part of the individual's identity and constitutes an unproblematic part of the individual's identity

Textbooks on the obligation of 'Bildung'

- The school as a *Bildung* institution finds itself in a dilemma between
 - Imparting a specific set of (culturally constitutive) values (historical, religious, social)
 - Educating the rational individual who is capable of independent, critical thinking

Textbooks on the obligation of Bildung – how democratic citizenship is constituted as a *Danish* phenomenon

- The notion of democracy anchored in the Danish constitution
- Danish democracy as rooted in Danish cultural history
- The concept of citizenship is related to a Danish historical context

Ligeværd – åndsfrihed – folkestyre (equality – intellectual freedom - democracy)

Discourse pointing to the past – not understandable without reference to Danish cultural and political history (allusion to Grundtvig as central figure in Danish political, cultural and, not least, educational history)

Ideal: "the educated peasant" – a representative of the 'folk', speaking his mind uncensored by authorities

The curriculum establishes a hierarchy of religions

- Christianity (mentioned in the title of the module): a high level of detail is required
 - Students must become familiar with the Christian narratives, its basic concepts and the history of its influence, especially on Danish society
- Judaism and Islam must be presented as 'European minority religions'
- "Other religions" are not mentioned

Culture and politics are assumed to be influenced by religion

the importance of Evangelist-Lutheran Christianity for the development of democracy, welfare state and schooling in Denmark

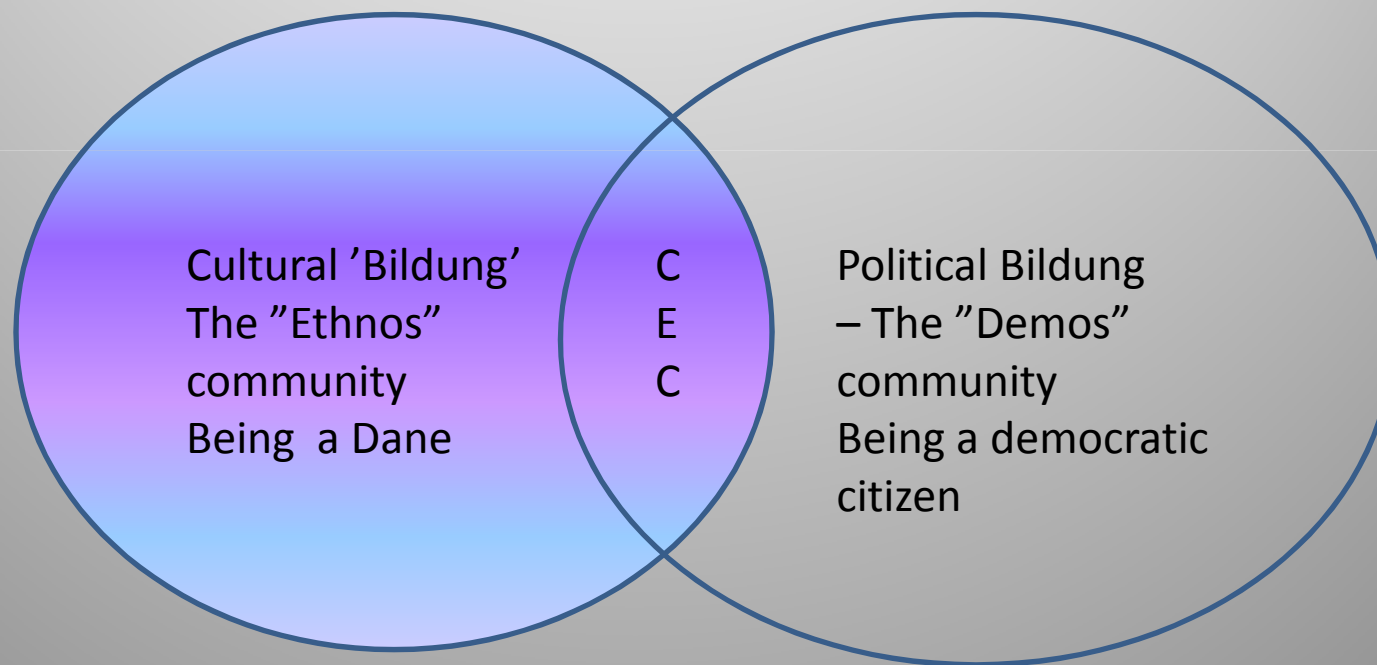
“Christian democracy – Islamic theocracy” - “CEC strengthens the ‘feel good Christianity’ inherent in Danish teacher education (Pia Böwadt & Ane Kirstine Brandt 2009)

Gap between the importance ascribed to Christianity in the curriculum and the importance of Christianity for everyday life and everyday politics

Teaching Human Rights to the teacher student:

- Human rights are mentioned in the curriculum – *in passing*:
 - Students should become familiar with European intellectual history, including 'the idea of' human rights
- The global and contemporary view on human rights, human rights as a present-day, universal, and global challenge seems to be absent from the curriculum text
- The low priority given to human rights compared to other areas (Danish and European history, Christianity) is reflected in textbooks
- *"The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.(...)"*
- (article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights).

In the curriculum and the law on the Danish
'folkeskole', political and cultural Bildung are
integrated



Wider theoretical and empirical perspectives to be explored

- The establishment of a Foucault-inspired theoretical framework for understanding culture and ethnicity as instruments of exclusionary practices in (teacher) education
- A strengthening of the anthropologically based understanding of CEC as a form of ethnic boundary maintenance
- Empirical research perspectives:

