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Intercultural Education (the journal)

Issues in the integration of religious education and worldviews education in an intercultural context

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Introduction

The past decade has seen an upsurge of social scientific interest in the changing religious landscape of the Western world and in the study of non-religion. Emerging issues include the implications of existing research for educators and the need for education-focused research to inform the wider field of study (e.g. Bullivant 2014; Wallis 2015; Lee 2016; Urstad 2017). In the same decade, the Council of Europe (CoE) completed a project on the religious dimension of intercultural education, culminating in a Recommendation which advocates the study of both religions and ‘non-religious convictions’ in schools, as:

...an essential precondition for the development of tolerance and a culture of ‘living together’ as well as for the recognition of our different identities on the basis of human rights (CoE 2008, appendix, paragraph 4).

Within Northern Europe, there is increasing academic interest in the inclusion of non-religious worldviewsⁱ in the school curriculum and issues raised by this (e.g. Åhs, Poulter and Kallioniemi 2016; 2017; Lofstedt and Sjørborg 2018; Oostdijk, Veugelers and Leeman 2015; Van der Kooij et al. 2013). However, in 2018, very few European countries included such a study, and there are even fewer where there is integration of the study of religions and non-

religious worldviews. Moreover, and on the basis of responses from 37 countries to a 2011 CoE questionnaire, Jackson suggests that:

The integration of non-religious worldviews into an area that previously has dealt specifically with religions is probably the biggest challenge facing educators in this field (Jackson 2014a, 139).

In *Signposts*, Jackson's guidance on the implementation of the CoE Recommendation, it is proposed that integration presents both practical and political challenges, that research is needed to address these, and that there is particular value in investigating how teachers in different countries manage integration (Jackson 2014b, 74-5).

Norway is one of very few countries in which there are several decades of experience in integrating the study of religions and non-religious worldviews within a national curriculum. In England, the process of integration is still under way. In both contexts, lack of empirical research on teachers' understandings and practice led Bråten (2018) and Everington (2018a; 2018b) to undertake independent, qualitative studies to address the gap in knowledge. A shared recognition of its value led to a comparison of the process of integration in the two countries. The aims have been to explore how each national case can offer new perspectives on the other, identify issues, and offer insights that may be of use in other contexts, and promote cross-national debate and research.

The national contexts and studies

Although there are many similarities between the Norwegian and English contexts, including widespread academic and professional support for the principles of intercultural education, there are also some significant differences.

In Norway, an integrated curriculum is taught in the national curriculum subject, Christianity, Religions, Worldviewsⁱⁱ and Ethics (Kristendom, religion, livssyn og etikk – KRLE). In current revisions of the national curriculum, the ‘core elements’ of KRLE make reference to knowledge and exploration of ‘religions and worldviews’ (see below). The integration of religions and non-religious worldviews dates back to 1997 when two separate subjects, Christian Education and Knowledge of Worldviews, were brought together. The existence of these two subjects reflected the central role of the Church of Norway in the history of the nation state, and opposition to its power and influence by labour movements and secular humanists. Opposition to a compulsory Christian education led to the introduction of an alternative secular subject in 1974 (Andreassen 2013). Throughout the pre-integration period, and since 1997, there has been continuous political debate about the subject, although the inclusion of non-religious worldviews has never been contested. There has been considerable academic interest in the development of the subject from theoretical and historical perspectives (Skeie and Bråten 2014) but, prior to Bråten’s study, there was no empirical research on how religions and non-religious worldviews are integrated at classroom level.

In England, there is no national curriculum for religious education (RE) and few legal requirements. There are periodic national, non-statutory guidance documents, but the curriculum is currently developed by a local Agreed Syllabus Conference, professional providers or schools. Since the 1970s, the development of RE has reflected the nation’s increasingly multi-faith character (Copley 2008), but it was not until 2004 that a recommendation to include non-religious worldviews first appeared in non-statutory guidance. In 2016, a non-governmental Commission on RE (CoRE) was established to undertake a national review of, and consultation on RE. Its recently published final report proposes, ‘A National Entitlement to the study of Religion and Worldviews’ for pupils of all ages (CoRE 2018, 34-37) and there is emphasis throughout on the importance of studying

non-religious as well as religious worldviews. There has been no large-scale research on the extent to which non-religious worldviews are taught in schools currently, but its promotion at policy level has been controversial.

Within these differing contexts, and during the same 2014-16 period, Bråten and Everington each conducted teacher-focused research. Bråten's extended case study, 'Worldviews in Norwegian RE' (2018) involved observing the lessons of one secondary school teacher over seven months. Everington's study, 'Including non-religious worldviews in English religious education' (2018a, 2018b), collected data from 28 secondary school teachers through qualitative questionnaires and interviews. In each case, findings were related to national policy developments, and to political and academic debates, and research at national and supranational levels. For the purposes of comparison, further documentary research was undertaken, focusing on matters related to the process of integrating religions and non-religious worldviews. Analysis drew on Bråten's methodology for comparative studies (2013, 2015). That is, a curricular issue was explored at the level of practice (the instructional level) and then at institutional and societal levels, within three dimensions – sub-national, national and supranational. A series of issues related to integration was identified and a number of these are discussed below.

Practical challenges

As Jackson notes (2014b), where curricula have previously focused on religions, the integration of religious and non-religious worldviews presents both practical and political challenges. In our separate and comparative studies, we have identified practical challenges which are made problematic by issues at the political level. One such challenge is how to present religions and non-religious worldviews so that the relationship between them is clear,

and how to organise content so that non-religious worldviews are not simply tacked on to the teaching of religions (Ofsted 2010; Everington 2018a). In short, if there is to be integration, teachers need an integrative framework.

There has been no such framework available in England, and Everington found that teachers struggled with this. Study participants gave examples of teaching non-religious worldviews and of pupils presenting their own, but there was concern that these were ‘messy’ and difficult to fit into the kind of structure used to represent and teach religions – including, for example, ‘sources of authority, teachings, beliefs, practices, rites of passage’. Lacking an integrative framework, the teachers were left to find their own ways of addressing or side-stepping the difficulties (Everington 2018a, 2018b).

However, in the recently published report of the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE 2018), there is the basis of a framework. It is proposed that the subject is re-named ‘Religion and Worldviews’ and that its subject matter should be ‘worldviews’. A worldview is defined as ‘an overarching conceptual structure, a philosophy of life or an approach to life’ (72). The term is understood to include ‘institutional worldviews’ which are ‘organised worldviews shared among particular groups’ and include both religions and non-religious worldviews. It also includes ‘personal worldviews’, defined as an individual’s own way of understanding and living in the world, which may or may not draw from institutional worldviews (4). There are clearly possibilities here for representing and integrating a wide range of worldviews and enabling connections to be made between them.

The use of ‘worldviews’ as an overarching concept is discussed in Jackson’s guidance on the development of integrated curricula in European countries. Here, he highlights the value of a distinction between ‘organised’ and ‘personal’ worldviews, as examined by Dutch scholars van der Kooij et al. (2013). In this interpretation of the concepts, an organised worldview has

developed over time as a more or less coherent system with sources, traditions, values and ideals and a group of adherents. It prescribes answers to existential questions, includes moral values and aims to influence thinking and action and provide meaning in life. A personal worldview is a view on life, identity, the world and existential questions that includes values and ideals. It may draw on a variety of sources, and it influences an individual's thought and action, usually giving meaning to life. It can be eclectic and idiosyncratic and might not involve belonging to a specific group (Jackson 2014b, 71-2).

Similar distinctions have been drawn in the work of John Valk who has described an integrated curriculum framework for 'Worldviews Education' in the context of higher education in Canada (2010). However, little attention has been paid to how such theoretical concepts and a framework built upon them appear in the practice of school teachers, prompting Jackson's call for more research to provide practical examples. Bråten's study provides one such example, illustrating how, in the context of a policy level integrative framework, one teacher sought to achieve integration in the classroom.

In this teacher's approach, 'worldviews' served as the foundational concept of a framework within which pupils explored religious and non-religious worldviews and organised and personal worldviews. Their study began with an introduction to 'worldviews' and 'religion' as key concepts and included an exploration of the similarities and differences between religious and non-religious worldviews, the diversity within these and how people form personal worldviews. Conventional subject content, such as Christian denominations, was used to exemplify, and pupils could move on to a systematic study of religions with an understanding of the diversity of worldviews and the relationship between them (Bråten 2018).

Examples such as Bråten's are needed to support the development of an integrative framework in England. However, analysis of policy level developments in each of the countries suggests that the adoption of 'worldviews' as an overarching concept may not be straightforward.

Differing understandings of 'worldviews'

Bråten's study (2018) investigated the use of the term 'worldviews' ("livssyn") at both classroom and policy levels. During classroom observations, she found that pupils were taught that everyone has a worldview and that there are religious and non-religious worldviews. As religions were classified as worldviews, it appeared that this was being used as the primary and overarching concept. However, over the course of several lessons it became clear that teachers and pupils were also using the term 'worldviews' to refer to non-religious worldviews. Similarly, analysis of current national policy documents revealed that 'worldviews' was used in some places as an overarching concept, including both religious and non-religious worldviews, while in others it was used to refer to non-religious worldviews.

One explanation of the dual meaning of 'worldviews' can be found in the historical development of the subject. In 1974, and following increasing pressure to create a secular alternative to Christian education, a new, separate subject was created. This was named 'Knowledge of Worldviews'. The term 'worldviews' continues to be associated with secular beliefs and the paired terms, 'religions and worldviews' remain the way in which Norwegians talk about the plurality of their society. In the recent 2017-2018 development of a new national curriculum, the paired terms appear in the five core elements for KRLE (as 'Knowledge of religions and worldviews', 'Exploring religions and worldviews').ⁱⁱⁱ

Bråten (2018) has argued for the use of these ‘co-dependent’ terms as a means to enabling the current plurality to be described and discussed in the context of school education. However, she recognises that there is inconsistency in the language used at policy and classroom levels. Inconsistency is also apparent in the practice of teaching worldviews as a primary and overarching concept within a subject which currently includes Christianity, religions and worldviews in its title, as if these were each separate areas of study.

In England, the terms ‘world views’ and ‘secular world views’ appeared in the 2004 non-statutory framework for RE (QCA, 2004). By 2013, a new non-statutory framework for RE was promoting the study of ‘religions and worldviews’. This phrase was used to refer to ‘Christianity, other principal religions represented in Britain, smaller religious communities and non-religious worldviews such as Humanism’ (REC 2013, 14). It appears that, until very recently, the term ‘worldviews’ has referred to non-religious worldviews. As noted above, the 2018 report of the Commission on RE proposes that the subject matter of RE should be identified as worldviews and that this concept includes *both* religious and non-religious worldviews, but this understanding is not reflected in the proposed new name, ‘Religion and Worldviews’. It is explained that the term ‘Religion’ is included ‘...to provide continuity and to signify that young people need to understand the conceptual category of ‘religion’... (7).

It appears that in both countries, inconsistencies, and the different terms used in the naming of the subject, reflect debate and disagreement about the foundation of the subject and its primary concept(s) and indicate some of the political challenges of integration, as considered below.

The naming of the subject as a political issue

In Norway, the name of the 1974 secular alternative to Christian education, 'Orientation of Worldviews', indicates the inclusive nature of this subject which covered both non-religious and religious worldviews, with a focus on religions other than Christianity. Few pupils took this subject, which was not offered in all schools. In 1987 it was revised, with more time allocated for Christianity, and re-named 'Knowledge of Worldviews'. This was offered more widely and attracted more pupils, especially from the growing immigrant population.

However, the existence of two forms of education conflicted with a long standing political commitment to a unitary education system and national curriculum that would meet the needs and reflect the backgrounds of all pupils (Skeie and Bråten 2014). In 1997, following extensive debate and negotiation, there was integration of the two subjects, 'Knowledge of Worldviews' and 'Christian education', and the creation of a new subject to be studied by all pupils (Haakedal 2000).

Although the term 'worldviews' had been understood as inclusive, and could be viewed as neutral, it had become a political symbol in the secular humanists' struggle against confessional Christian RE. As it was associated with a 'secular' and even a 'secularist' position, it was not, and never has been, considered as a name for the integrated subject. In 1997, this was named 'Knowledge of Christianity with orientation about religions and worldviews'. Since that time, on-going debates have been reflected in frequent changes of the name. From 2002-2008 it was named 'Knowledge of Christianity, Religions and Worldviews', and from 2008-2015 as 'Religions, worldviews and ethics'. Despite widespread agreement that the term 'Religions' could include Christianity and other religions, in 2015, and with a new conservative government in place, the term Christianity was re-introduced so that the current name is 'Christianity, Religions, Worldviews and Ethics'. It was argued that, without this revision, the Christian tradition would not be sufficiently represented. Moreover, Christianity should be viewed as the primary concept and as inclusive, given that all who live

in Norway share in its Christian cultural heritage. This decision does not satisfy all stakeholders and the debate continues.

The name of the subject has taken on a strong symbolic significance in Norway and analyses of developments at policy level suggest that debate over this reflects an on-going political struggle over what the foundation of the subject should be. A key aim of integration has been that the subject should be inclusive. However, inclusion had previously been a concern of both of the two subjects, 'Knowledge of Worldviews' and 'Christian Education' and each had sought to provide pupils with an education in a range of religions as well as non-religious worldviews.^{iv} A key difference was that each rested on a foundation that reflected their separate origins and values – secular in one case, Christian in the other.^v

While integration was viewed as a good compromise by some, others saw this as a loss of their foundational values and orientations (Gravem 2004). The development of a common foundation on which the new integrated subject should be based became a contentious issue. For some, Norway's Christian heritage, and (statistically) high proportion of Christians, justifies a common foundation based on Christian values of inclusion and equality. For others, a secular foundation is viewed as common, inclusive and neutral, reflecting an academic study of religions approach. A middle position was proposed by Gravem, who argued for the integrated subject to be viewed as a new kind of subject (2004).

In England, there has been no legal or policy level change to the name of the subject since 1988 when 'Religious Instruction' officially became 'Religious Education'. The lack of a national curriculum for RE means that government has little control over RE, other than to produce criteria for examination courses. Many schools are free to create their own RE curricula and there is evidence that, at secondary level, the name 'Religious Education' has been replaced by alternatives such as 'Beliefs and Values', 'Religion and Belief' and

‘Religion, Philosophy and Ethics’ (CoRB 2015). There are a number of reasons for this trend, but these undoubtedly include a desire to broaden the name so that it appears more inclusive.

A number of recent reports propose an alternative name (e.g. Dinham and Shaw 2015; Clarke and Woodhead 2015) and, during national consultation, the Commission on Religious Education sought responses to the options of Religion(s) and Ethics, Religions and Worldviews, Religion, Philosophy and Ethics and Philosophy, Religion and Ethics (CoRE 2017). However, it has been noted that, despite a proposal for the subject matter to be seen as ‘worldviews’, the new name combines this with ‘Religion’.

As in Norway, this situation can be related to on-going debate over what the foundation and primary concept of the subject should be, although there are some significant differences between the contexts and nature of the debates in the two countries. Norway has a long history of including non-religious worldviews in the curriculum, and on-going government level commitment to this. In England, much of the debate is taking place at an academic and professional, rather than government, level. Non-statutory policies which promote the study of non-religious worldviews have provoked fierce debate between those who view it as a necessity and those who view it as a damaging attempt to change the distinctive and “proper” aims and content of the subject.

Some who adopt the former position stress the importance of developing a subject that is fully inclusive and relevant to all pupils, including the increasing number who have no religious background or commitment. For others, a key issue is the need for a subject that represents the ‘real’, rather than ‘imagined’, religious landscape (Dinham and Shaw 2015).

On the other side of the debate, there are those who argue that inclusiveness and relevance are not appropriate criteria for making curricular decisions and that, in Barnes’ words,

‘Understanding and interpreting religion and religions is the central aim of RE’ (Barnes 2015,

82; see also Felderhof 2015). From this standpoint, Barnes argues that confining pupils' study to a small number of religions is necessary to ensure study in-depth learning, and to avoid superficiality. In both arguments, Barnes appears supported by Government changes to the criteria that must be used to create examination courses for 14-19 year-old students.

Controversially, these exclude a systematic study of non-religious worldviews, on the grounds that broadening the scope of syllabuses would detract from an in-depth treatment of religion and the rigour of the qualification, and could lead to qualifications that are predominantly focused on the study of Humanism at the expense of religion (DfE 2015, 23).^{vi} In a different defence of the exclusion of non-religious worldviews, Barnes (2015) has argued the need for a subject exclusively concerned with religion given that, in his view, the curriculum is almost exclusively devoted to secular knowledge.

Within the English debate, there would seem to be a struggle over whether the primary concept should be 'religion' or a broader integrative concept. Some also see themselves as engaged in a struggle against the secular foundation of the subject and the assumption that this is 'neutral', arguing for a religious foundation for the subject (e.g. Gearon 2013). This latter view is a significant position in the debate about the foundation of RE, but it is not in line with the prevailing view in England, or likely to be influential. Unlike Norway, there is not a powerful 'Christian heritage' argument at government level that could lend support.

While there are clearly differences between the influences and pressures that shape the subject, in both countries the development of that dimension of the curriculum that focuses on 'non-religious worldviews' has been heavily influenced by the Humanist associations, as considered below. This raises a number of issues and questions, including how the content of an integrated curriculum should be decided, and the extent to which powerful interest groups should play a role in such decisions.

Which non-religious worldviews and how are they selected?

In the Council of Europe's 2008 'Recommendation', and Jackson's guidance on this (2014b), there is emphasis on the need for intercultural education to provide for learning about the *diversity* of religious and non-religious worldviews. In relation to the latter, analyses of the process of integration in Norway and England raise a number of issues.

In Norway, the pre-integration subject, 'Orientation of Worldviews', included a range of non-religious worldviews such as Humanism, Communism and Existentialism (KUD 1974, 354-358). However, current policy focuses on Humanism, and it is not until the later secondary school years that an additional, unspecified, non-religious worldview must be included. In the national curriculum and in textbooks, Humanism is represented with reference to the Humanist Association and its history, principles and ceremonies (Bråten 2018). In England, non-statutory policy documents have emphasised the need to represent the diversity of religious and non-religious worldviews, but recommended content for the latter has focused on Humanism – for example, 'secular philosophies such as humanism' (QCA 2004, 14), and 'non-religious worldviews such as Humanism' (REC 2013, 14).^{vii} It appears that in both Norway and England, the diversity of non-religious worldviews has not received attention and that there are both practical and political reasons for this.

At policy and school levels, both countries face the challenge of limited time for a subject that has needed to expand curriculum content to enable integration. In Norway, at present, approximately half of the subject must be dedicated to the teaching of Christianity. The remaining time must be shared among other religions, non-religious worldviews and Philosophy/Ethics (Bråten 2018). In England, there has been no formal allocation of time, but lack of time to cover all that is required is widely recognised as a problem (Ofsted 2010;

Dinham and Shaw 2017). In Everington's study (2018a), limited time was one of the most frequently identified challenges to the inclusion of non-religious worldviews and is an issue raised by Barnes, who argues that adding non-religious worldviews to an already overcrowded curriculum would lead to superficial teaching and lack of rigour (2015, 87).

At a political level, the focus on Humanism and lack of attention to other non-religious worldviews can be related to the influence of the Norwegian and British Humanist associations and their role in the development of the subject. Relative to the size of its population, Norway has one of the strongest Humanist Associations in the world, with a current membership of over 89,000, according to their own webpage (<https://human.no/om-oss/english/> downloaded 16.9.2018). Historically, the Human-Etisk Forbund (HEF) has wielded considerable political power and its status is recognised in the statement of values (which refers to 'values in Christian and Humanist tradition and heritage') that underpins the constitution and education system (Skeie and Bråten 2014, 215). As noted above, HEF played a key role in the establishment of an alternative to Christian Education. Subsequently, it has challenged successfully aspects of policy related to the integrated subject, reflected in several reforms relating to the rights of parents and the Christian elements of the subject (Andreassen 2013). Although there have been criticisms of its campaigning, HEF's ability to mobilise the support of teachers, parents and members of the minority religions is indicative of its popularity. It could be argued that, in Norway, there is stronger national identification with Humanism than in England and this might explain, in part, why there is no evidence of concern about a curriculum focus on Humanism.

In England, there is no tradition of national identification with Humanism. Relative to population size, the British Humanist Association (BHA) is much smaller than the HEF, claiming approximately 70,000 members and supporters (<https://humanism.org.uk/about/> downloaded September 12.8.2018) and has played a less visible role in national politics.

Nevertheless, the BHA has played a key role in securing the place of non-religious worldviews in the curriculum. It has engaged in some high profile campaigns involving challenges to government policy, and is increasingly represented in local and national RE policy making bodies. It is also the main provider of classroom resources for teaching about Humanism through a dedicated schools' website and speakers, (see <https://humanism.org.uk/education/>).^{viii}

It is not difficult to see why Humanism has become the default non-religious worldview in England. However, in Everington's study (2018a), all of the teacher participants gave examples of non-religious worldviews other than Humanism, and some argued strongly that it should not be the only non-religious worldview included in the curriculum. The association's provision of resources led some participants to comment on its 'missionary zeal'. It was argued that teachers should take great care not to allow members of religious groups to proselytise through the resources used, or to determine how the religious tradition is taught, yet it appears that this is acceptable in the case of the BHA.

While the curriculum focus on Humanism may be viewed differently in Norway and England, the reasons for this raise questions about the grounds on which curricular decisions should be made for a subject in which differing and opposing interest groups have a strong investment.

Key findings in a supranational context

In our study of 'integration' in England and Norway, four key issues were identified. In this final section, we return to these issues in order to consider our findings in a wider, supranational context, and to offer some recommendations.

Practical challenges

Through comparison, we gained insights into the practical challenges of integration in our own countries, and to possible ways forward. For example, the Norwegian national curriculum for KRLE, and a teacher's classroom interpretation of this, provided practical examples of how integration can be achieved that should be of value in England as the process of integration accelerates. English teachers' concern about the dominance of Humanism, and need to represent the diversity of non-religious worldviews, raises issues that have yet to receive attention in Norway. With growing international interest in integration, there is a need for more comparative research to provide examples of how this can be achieved and to identify questions and issues for international attention.

Differing understandings of "worldviews"

We have concluded that the use of 'worldviews', as a foundational and all-embracing concept, can be helpful in the development of an integrated subject. However, we found that between and within England and Norway there are different usages and understandings of the term. The ambivalence of the language used in religious education, especially in international projects, is recognised in *Signposts* (Jackson 2014b, 27-32) and by Bertram-Troost and Miedema, who note the difficulties of attempting to translate or use imported terms when these have different connotations in different languages (2009, 29). This appears to be especially the case with the term 'worldviews' which, unlike the contested term 'religion', is not yet well established. As argued by van der Kooij *et al.* (2013), there is a need to identify an agreed definition of 'worldviews' for use by those who work in the field of education, and especially, we would argue, by policy developers who influence what is taught in classrooms. In the social scientific study of religion and belief, there is growing recognition of the need for a new vocabulary to describe and explore the present complexity, including an overarching term. For example, in a podcast <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=->

[7Cf6bQH4oQ](#) (downloaded 7.9.2018), Teves has recently referred to the absurdity of ‘talking about religion and non-religion without specifying any larger category’ and argued that combining worldviews with ‘ways of life’ would make it possible to ‘stabilise these concepts in a way that is not possible with ‘religion’ (see also Lee 2012). Within the field of education, there is body of philosophical research devoted to the concept of ‘worldviews’ which offers definitions, for instance Aadnanes (2012), Valk (2010), and van der Kooij et al. (2013). Our analysis suggests that there is significant overlap between these definitions, and between these and the definitions employed in the English CoRE report and in Jackson’s *Signposts*. Bråten (2018) also found a resonance between the meaning of ‘worldviews’ as described in *Signposts* and as taught in a Norwegian classroom.

In light of the overlap, we recommend a definition which includes non-religious and religious worldviews, personal and organised worldviews and existential questions. This might include other dimensions, such as “ways of life” (see Teves, forthcoming) and we urge further comparative research to explore contextual possibilities.

The naming of the subject as a political issue

In our study, we found that the terms included in the name of the subject, and in actual or proposed changes to this, have reflected debates about foundations and priorities and struggles over ownership. It appears that very recent policy level developments have sought to introduce (England) or reinforce (Norway) the equal status of religious and non-religious worldviews. This is in line with human rights principles and legislation. In Norway, these principles have provided the rationale for an integrated subject and, in England, they provide strong support for the new approach. However, international influences can be seen as impositions and resisted at national level. For example, in one English critique, human rights

are seen as an alternative to religious perspectives, rather than overlapping with these, and the Council of Europe is viewed as an anti-religious, actively secularist organisation which promotes the values of secular humanism (Arthur, 2011; responded to in Jackson and O’Grady 2019, this issue).

In England, it remains to be seen what the response to the new name and vision for the subject will be, but here, as in other countries where integration is a possibility, there is a need to recognise what Jackson describes as a ‘creative tension between a common approach to human rights and an acknowledgement of European diversity’ (2014a, 135). In *Signposts*, the need to work with this tension is discussed, and we support the emphasis on national contexts and the need to develop approaches to integration which recognise national challenges at both practical and political levels. Further comparative research would provide valuable opportunities to share and learn from such developments.

Which non-religious worldviews to include?

Through comparison, we found that, in both countries, there has been a stated, policy level intention to represent non-religious worldviews, but a focus on (secular) Humanism. If the intention of creating an integrated subject is better to represent present-day plurality, there is clearly a need to represent the diversity of non-religious worldviews. We suggest further research on possibilities for representing this diversity, and giving further attention to the criteria that might be used to determine what should and should not be seen as a non-religious worldview.

Our study raised questions about the grounds on which curricular decisions should be made for a subject in which differing interest groups have a strong investment. There would seem

to be value in investigating this issue in different national contexts, and in exploring the role that secular humanist associations play in the representation of non-religious worldviews.

Concluding comments

During the process of conducting our comparative research and producing this article, there have been two important national developments related to the development of an integrated subject. In Norway, the development of core concepts which appear to strengthen the pairing of religion and worldviews and the place of worldviews in the curriculum and, in England, the publication of proposals that have the potential to provide a fully integrated subject for pupils of all ages. We view these developments as indicative of a wider, though gradual, move towards the integration of religions and non-religious worldviews in Europe and anticipate that the study of integration will receive increasing attention.

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ⁱ The term 'non-religious convictions' (derived from French) is not widely used in the international discussion of this topic. We use the term 'non-religious worldviews' as this has widespread use, although 'secular worldviews' is the term commonly used in Norway.

ⁱⁱ 'Worldviews' is used as a translation of the Norwegian term 'livssyn' although the meanings are not identical. See Bråten (2018).

ⁱⁱⁱ Bråtens translation from Udir (2018).

^{iv} Noting that other religions and secular worldviews were marginal in Christian education and Christianity was marginal in Worldviews Education, but less so after the 1987 revision.

^v Since a change in the law in 1969, the school and all subjects has formally been ‘educational’ and not religiously-based. Subsequently, Christian education was formally denominational and reflected mainly a Church of Norway perspective, but was seen as non-confessional (Bråten 2013, 22).

^{vi} The requirements do state that syllabuses should aim to develop students’ knowledge and understanding of religions and non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism (DfE 2015,3).

^{vii} The CoE report (2018) refers primarily to Humanism, Secularism, Atheism and Agnosticism but, in supplementary guidance, examples include existentialism and Confucianism (75).

^{viii} The BHA is now known as ‘Humanists UK’.