

## FROM SECULAR EPISTEMOLOGY TOWARDS THE PEDAGOGY OF ‘INTER-KNOWLEDGES’

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the epistemological foundation of education in the widely secularized ‘West’. The study suggests that education based solely on secular knowledge can be unjust and discriminative if different knowledge-systems are silenced or ridiculed by the hegemonic liberalist and secularist episteme. Using postcolonial critique as a theoretical framework, I approach religion in the educational space, questioning the possibility of value neutralism as a pedagogical ideal. I will ask if there is a place for different ways of knowing and relating to the world in schools. I am critical of any form of ‘totalitarianism’ in education that teaches children that there is only one metanarrative that they, as citizens-to-be, are expected to consider ‘true’. Through reflecting on different incidents concerning religion in the public space, I discuss schools where the unquestioned practices of the knowledge construction of the majority create a privileged standpoint over minority worldviews. I will ask how education can create the possibility of stepping outside the prevalent mode of knowing and favour epistemological pluralism, where all views are considered equal in terms of their knowledge or take on reality. However, pluralism should not lead to blind relativism where “anything goes”. I will also outline what it would mean to have a dialogue of ‘inter-knowledges’ where religion is an equal partner in the search for the ‘real’ and the ‘true’.

**Keywords:** secularism, religion, epistemology, postcolonial critique, ‘inter-knowledges’.

### **1. Introduction**

*“Secular education is clearly intended to socialize children into a powerful set of naturalistic political assumptions, affections and practices. It uncritically initiates children into secular ways of thinking by using secular categories of explanations that exclude or ignore alternatives.” (Arthur, Gearon & Sears 2010, 41)*

School as a public institution is a place where identities as public and private citizens are negotiated. School is also a place for the production and redistribution of knowledge. In many senses, school cannot avoid being a politically and morally

charged public place. Across Europe, different incidents concerning religion demonstrate the pressure to remove religion from the public space to create a supposedly democratic, neutral and equal frame of reference for school education (e.g. Kalliala 2005; Poulter 2013). This study argues that absolute secularist principles fail to treat citizens with a religious worldview in a just way in a pluralist society. I will start my theoretical analysis with an epistemological reflection on religion, secularism, liberalism and the public sphere.

This study mainly draws on my thinking on postcolonial theory, in particular with reference to the work of Vanessa Andreotti (2010, 2011), Walter Mignolo (2009), Richard King (2009) and Sousa Santos (2007). Postcolonial theory is a critical approach to the construction of knowledge and reality that is epistemologically bound to the colonial nature of modernity. Using the postcolonial approach as an intellectual tool, I attempt to pinpoint the difficulties that are interwoven into the Western epistemological structure when it comes to the question of education and religion. The Western intellectual tradition, in its 'epistemic blindness' (Sousa Santos 2007), does not recognise non-European ways of thinking and knowing (Maldonado-Torres 2004; Andreotti 2011). A school that visibly celebrates multiculturalism and a plurality of values is not necessarily a place where difference is recognized at the level of knowledge and power, and a plurality of life styles does not necessarily translate into plurality at the epistemic level. The epistemic blindness of schools, which is caused by the colonization of the imagination through education, often promotes injustice and exclusion instead of equality and inclusion (Sousa Santos 2007).

The danger in the misrecognition of the universalistic foundation of secular epistemology is the production of an epistemically neutral, objective, public, secular subject. Education in the secularist, ideologically "empty" space is considered value-neutral and free from political and doctrinal influence, and it thus runs the risk of becoming a form of totalitarian education that ignores alternatives and denies the very essence of education, which is to do with the question of a good life, to which no educator can have absolute answers. What is needed in order to avoid 'totalitarian' education is to take the following questions seriously: *What counts as knowledge? Whose knowledge counts? Whose epistemologies are silenced or absent in education* (Andreotti 2011)?

## **2. The Epistemological Binaries of 'public', 'liberalist', 'religious' and 'secular'**

*"However, there is a need to recognize both the historical absence and invisibility of certain knowledges in important debates in education and in society, and the resulting ethnocentric blindness and arrogance in mainstream knowledge systems in the belief that only one knowledge system can 'get it right'."* (Andreotti, Ahenakew & Cooper 2012, 235)

Liberalism is a philosophical tradition that promotes not only the ideas of individualism, freedom and equality but also state neutrality and secularism. The liberalist conviction is that people do not need a common historical background to form a commune, but certain liberal values are imperative to form a functional political unity (Modood 2007, 24; Olssen et al. 2004, 77). The form of political liberalism propounded by John Rawls (2005) has been widely considered the ideal

philosophical basis for a pluralist society that allows, in the name of respecting the freedom of the other, individual freedom with few limitations. Liberalism has also been used as an argument for protecting the individual's right to 'a free public space'. However, what is considered "public" and "private" is a political and epistemological category that must be questioned.

The public space is an essential category of the modern civic state, a forum for the construction of the social and private identities of its citizens (Fraser 1995, 287). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the birth of a social space differentiated from the state, economy and family was important because it offered a space for the rational argumentation of individual citizens without the control of the state or tradition (Huttunen 2005, 93). Based on the secularist reading of the philosophy of the Enlightenment, the public sphere has been interpreted as radically secular (Taylor 1995, 267). People have been expected only to use language and justifications that are common to all, language that is secular. Habermas (2011), however, questions the extent to which people in the public sphere are required to "translate" religious language into secular language. He concludes that in the informal public space people are free to use any language when communicating together (Habermas 2011, 26). However, in formal public debates he proposes that a "filter" is used that "translates" particularist languages into a common language through which arguments can be measured (Habermas 2011).

Bader (2009, 112) and Hurd (2007) argue that such control of speech is problematic because secular language presents itself as the solution after all other voices have spoken. The precondition that the public space be secular is based on an idea of modern Western thinking that has been described as abyssal thinking by Santos (2007). The 'abyssal line' is the idea of an invisible colonial line that illustrates how ideas, 'knowledges' and bodies from 'this side of the line of thinking' are distinguished from those on 'the other side of the line of thinking'. The abyssal line is characterized by the mutual exclusivity of the two sides of the line. In an epistemological sense, the abyssal line also relates to Western self-understanding, which is built upon a binary distinction between the this-worldly/secular sphere and the spiritual/transcendental sphere that denies alternative categorization or the possibility of no categories at all (cf. Andreotti, Ahenakew and Cooper 2012, 222–224). The criterion for full humanity relates to one's capacity for intellectual creativity and rationality and is defined in Western terms (Maldonado-Torres 2004). On the other side of Western knowledge there is no real knowledge; instead, there are beliefs, opinions and intuitive or subjective understandings (Santos 2007, 32).

Secularism is defined here as an ideological reference to value neutralism, which is the ideal of a universal and common base for all social behaviour in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Secularism is an integral part of European social imagery; it is also a *lingua franca*, a language that everyone is supposed to speak. In relation to the concept of the liberalist public space, secularism represents reason, objectivity, democracy and justice (Hurd 2007, 36–37). However, I will contest the meanings of secularism and challenge the widely held view that it is ideologically neutral and universal. In this study, secularism is understood as an internally inconsistent and diverse worldview. I suggest that more focus is needed on the ambivalence and contradictions of the concept, especially on the different etymological roots of *laïcité* and *saeculum*, from which different interpretations arise.<sup>1</sup>

Secularization is a historical process that illustrates societal change in the modern state in relation to religion. Since the 1960s, secularization has been used in sociological studies to refer to the decline of religion, both in institutional forms of religiosity and in its presence in secular matters (Lyon 2000, 140). Secularization has played a central role in forming Western liberal societies, alongside other processes of modernity like individualism and democratization (Casanova 1994). Secularization has also been interpreted as the “natural” developmental of a historical religion, as a fulfilment of Christian faith in Jesus Christ, which paradoxically meant the loss of absolutist power, God, and the secularization of religion (Vattimo 1999, 51).

Secular (*saeculum*) originally referred to an age or a century (Taylor 2007, 54). It has also been used to mark the division between temporal and spiritual time (Taylor 1995, 270; 2007, 54–55). Secular has also referred to a clergy separate from the religious priesthood living in a monastery (Keane 2000, 6; Kääriäinen 2003, 88). Secularism as a state philosophy (*Laïcité*) refers to the nondenominational stance of a state that aims to treat all worldviews equally and exclude religious matters from public life (Bruce 1996). From the secularist perspective, the public sphere of society should be kept free of religious influence. Thus, from the secularist position, it is possible to set criteria for the acceptance of other worldviews in the public sphere (Keane 2000).<sup>2</sup>

Abeysekara (2008, 14–15, 36–37) and Asad (2003, 12–15) complain that many secularist theorists assume that modernization and secularism are co-dependent. The “Eschatology of Enlightenment” (Wright 1992) was based on the romantic view of the end of the era of religious thinking and the beginning of a new, scientific age. This kind of progressivistic thinking neglects the complexity of history and rather takes the Western tradition as a steady evolution from superstition to knowledge, from ambiguities to accuracies, from myths to science.<sup>3</sup> Modernity is based on the secularist narrative of the redemption that awaits humanity when conflicts between rival worldviews are ended (Nandy 2002, 73, 81). Habermas (2006a) notes that this is an example of a “narrow secular consciousness” (see also Arthur 2008, 312) that sees religion as an outmoded form of thinking, as univocal and corrupted, from which secularism has saved humanity (Asad 2003, 191). When presenting itself as the end of all ideologies, the secular worldview offers an invisible and “eternal” ideology. That is why Hurd (2007, 16) argues that secularism as an all-encompassing authoritarian discourse legitimates the construction of unjust social and power relations.

King (2009) uses the metaphor of a customs desk to describe the colonial Other, who is believed to have “something to declare” before entering public life. Asad (2003) and Abeysekara (2008) call secularism a ‘doctrine of modernity’, as secularist principles regulate speech in the public space. The assertion that religious truth claims need not be taken seriously or that they are inappropriate in public discourse can, in the words of Richard King, be interpreted as a form of ‘intellectual apartheid’ (King 2009). Using Maldonado-Torres’ (2004) concept of “epistemological racism”, I suggest that secularism is a form of epistemological colonialism. The universalistic episteme of Western liberal-secular knowledge ridicules claims of religious truth. Knowledge based on religion is considered traditional, less evolved, or erroneous, subjective ‘nonsense’. The world is to be perceived by the naturalistic approach and morally measured by individualistic truth.<sup>4</sup>

When religion is defined as the binary opposition of secular, religion is equated with the private, irrational, violent, anti-democratic 'other' in modern scientific discourse.<sup>5</sup> A deep distinction made between religion and non-religion creates the illusion that only religions—especially those with visible differences—have a value-laden stance, while non-religious positions are interpreted from an objective and neutral standpoint.

The abyssal line in Western thinking (Santos 2007) also functions between religious worldviews and discriminates against religious minorities on 'this side of the line'. A narrow interpretation of religion pays little attention to the differences between religions and the different dimensions of any given religion, and the Christian root of *religio* is left unexamined (Komulainen 2011, 52). The 'Christian West' remains a hegemonic worldview from which other religions are defined. In many places, Christianity goes hand in hand with the secularist agenda of modernization, but Islam is created as its antithesis: Islam is theocratic, anti-democratic and anti-Christian (Hurd 2007, 7).

According to Nandy (2002, 62–63), separating religion into two dimensions, *religion-as-ideology* and *religion-as-faith*, is a way of analysing the category of religion that we are dealing with. He states that religion-as-faith is multidimensional, by nature always plural and open to different interpretations. On the contrary, religion-as-ideology identifies with pure forms of religions rather than with the ways of life of believers and connects religion uncritically to indoctrination, backwardness or fundamentalism. The post-colonial approach challenges us to look at the categories of 'secular' and 'religious' differently. Religion that is fixed to the cultural and political history of the West is not a convincing intercultural category and thus represents an ethnocentric concept of religion (King 2009, 44). Taking the postcolonial critique seriously also means admission of the epistemological racism of Christianity and re-thinking its implications (Maldonado-Torres 2004; Mignolo 2009, 278).

### 3. Three Cases of Religion

In the following section I will briefly analyse three European cases where the school as a public space has been an arena for the conflict between secularist views and religion. In each case, the clash is not just at the political level; it is also at the epistemological level, which makes it hard to recognize the roots of the conflict. The first two legal cases were first handled at the national level but later taken to the European Court of Human Rights. The third case is based on strong public debate at the national level, where it has also been discussed in parliament but not in court.

The case *Dahlab v Switzerland* (42393/98 [2001]) concerns a female Muslim teacher's right to wear traditional Islamic clothing with a hijab in a Swiss primary-school. According to the European Court of Human Rights, the hijab can be seen as a "powerful religious symbol", and thus it is in conflict with the secular nature of the Swiss state and the institutions representing its values. Because the children in the class were very young and at a vulnerable stage of development, they were seen to be at risk of being influenced by their teacher's religious clothing (*Dahlab v Switzerland* 42393/98 [2001]). The Court's stance was that protecting children from questionable religious influence takes precedence over a teacher's right to religious freedom.

What makes the case interesting is the idea of a “naked public square” (Neuhaus 1984), which is manifested in the demand for a withdrawal of the expression of a worldview or identity. There have been several issues concerning the use of the hijab, niqab and burqa in Europe during the last few years, and they all relate to the idea of ‘undressing’ before entering the public realm. According to secularist epistemology, the public space is understood as a sphere free from religious messages, and according to European law, clothing is one of the most powerful ways of conveying such messages.

King (2009, 45) complains that democratic states justify discrimination against people on epistemological grounds. Strictly restricting religious expression to the private sphere is a form of secularist monoculture. A person labelled outside ‘our way of thinking’ is either totally ignored or forced to give up the backwardness in her thinking and join the intellectual paradigms of ‘this-side’ knowledge. When democracy is understood purely in secularist terms and when religious worldviews are withdrawn from political life in the name of “democratic neutralism” (Arthur, Gearon & Sears 2010, 23) the “empty” or “naked” space means an epistemologically colonial place.

What is notable in the decision of European Court of Human Rights is the argument that the hijab threatens the freedom and safety of other people. A Muslim woman wearing a scarf can be seen as a threat to the secular order in the public sphere and a form of subtle indoctrination of small children. It is hard to imagine the court’s rationale being the same if the teacher were a Catholic nun or a Christian woman wearing a scarf as a fashion statement. Furthermore, it is interesting in general to consider what the limits are for a teacher being dressed for example in a radical, personal or sexy way. As a broader question, we have to ask whether the ideal of a teacher as a totally neutral agent is desirable and pedagogically convincing if we aim to educate children to become morally knowledgeable and responsible individuals.

The second case, *Lautsi v Italy* (30814/06 [2009]), was raised in Italy by Finnish-born Soile Lautsi, who claimed that crucifixes in Italian classrooms were against the principle of state neutrality and violated the human rights of non-religious students. In its first ruling, the European Court of Human Rights directed the state to refrain from influencing people in a religious sense, both directly and indirectly, especially if they were people in a vulnerable position or small children still incapable of critical thinking (*Lautsi v Italy* [2009] 30814/06, para 48).

However, upon appeal the Court ruled that the crucifix was a symbol that—in addition to its religious significance—is closely connected to the history of Western civilization and democracy (*Lautsi v Italy* [2011] 30814/06). Thus, the Court did not accept that a crucifix in the classroom discriminated against non-Christians (cf. Pirjola 2011, 53; Arthur & Holdsworth 2012, 142–144). In a statement that left much for interpretation, the crucifix was seen as a “passive religious symbol”, which did not discriminate against minorities or violate the rights of non-religious people (*Lautsi v Italy* [2011] 30814/06).

It is interesting to compare the case of the crucifix as a passive religious expression to other issues of religious symbols. The European Court of Human Rights took the stance that cultural and national expressions of religiosity are neutralized and collectivistic forms of religiosity, which makes them harmless. A crucifix on a

classroom wall does not point to the values of a single citizen but represents the wider ideological values of the majority worldview. Thus, it remains an invisible and unquestionable part of the hegemonic representation of 'us'. In contrast, what makes an individual citizen wearing a religious symbol problematic and unacceptable in the secular public sphere is the "active" personalization of religious values in an individual body. An individual wearing a religious symbol in the public space is in conflict with the idea of private religion and the unquestioned collectivistic assumptions of the principle of neutrality (even though these assumptions ultimately refer to religion).

Even if it were reasonable to assume that wearing a large crucifix as a pendant made the crucifix an "active" religious symbol, and it were consequently banned, it is unlikely that the Christian hegemony of Europe would be limited.<sup>6</sup> Thus, in the European context the "culture of cutting away" (Kalliala 2005) seems to specifically apply to non-Christian worldviews. The case may also be a sign of Islamophobia, since European Court of Human Rights wished to emphasize the Christian identity of Europe by accepting the crucifix as a "natural" part of the public sphere.<sup>7</sup>

The third case refers to the long-held tradition in Finnish schools of singing a certain summer hymn (*Suvivirsi*) at their annual spring celebration. The hymn is a powerful school ritual that symbolizes the beginning of the summer vacation. The public debate over this tradition arose in tandem with growing multiculturalism in Finland in the 1990s. According to statements from the Finnish Government (Sivistysvaliokunnan lausunto 14/2002; Perustuslakivaliokunnan mietintö 10/2002) the hymn has nothing to do with practising religion; rather, it is an element of Finnish culture and tradition. Thus, the argument continues, it is appropriate to continue singing the hymn in schools.

For me, the debate over the singing of a hymn at school is a signal of the unquestioned hegemony of the Christian-secular epistemological standpoint. Finnish nationalism as "secular-Lutheranism" is banally present in schools (Riitaoja, Poulter, Kuusisto 2010, 88–89). However, I feel it becomes problematic when the hymn is understood solely as an element of Finnish tradition and not as a symbol of religion. When religion is "tamed" into being simply a part of culture and "normalized" as a natural part of education without proper debate, Lutheranism is preserved as the normative worldview that forms the basis of Finnish citizenship. Furthermore, the differences within Lutheranism are not recognized and the idea of there being only one way to be a secular-Lutheran Finn remains unchallenged.

In the Finnish context, the majority position of Lutherans and the privileged historical position of both the Lutheran and Orthodox Church need to be problematized. Questioning the role of religion in national imagery does not necessarily mean that religious symbols should be removed. Pluralist, multicultural schools are never an "empty space", nor are they ideologically neutral. Rather than hiding or silencing religion, I would like to see many kinds of symbolic representations present at school if they can help to reflect the worldview and values behind them and the different epistemological positions and tensions that they bring along. Accordingly, the solution here is neither to ban the singing of the hymn nor to sing it without due reflection on its values. The conflict should be understood as a possibility to reflect on the roots of one's own worldviews and accept the presence of paradoxes in education without the need to find definitive answers.

#### 4. From a Secular Monologue towards a Polylogy of Knowledges?

*“Should we stop searching for universal principles, like secularism, through which to regard religion? Must we instead give priority to context-bound judgments that recognise that all morality—including all religious discourse and that of its secular opponents—arises in particular contexts?”*(Keane 2000, 18)

Finally, I will challenge the secular canon of education by suggesting a more diverse and open model that acknowledges uncertainty and contextuality as a starting point for the philosophy of education. Through this, the aim is to challenge any monologue built on a single knowledge system and propose a polylogue of knowledges where religious views do not need to be judged in secularist terms.

Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the aim of modern education and nation-state building might be described as a form of totalitarianism. As with the political answers of the time, education has been a conduit for one thing at a time: one virtue, one hope, one God, one morality, one people, one language, and so on. *Epistemological pluralism* (Santos 2007; Andreotti, Ahenakew & Cooper 2012) suggests the possibility of the co-existence of many knowledges. It points to new possibilities for thinking, seeing, knowing, relating and being. As Andreotti et al. (2012, 235) put it, it is hardly convincing to think that “only one knowledge system can ‘get it right’”. The idea of epistemological pluralism is related to the idea of *dialogical pluralism* (Wolterstorff 2008), which claims that if science is based on a radically open and fair reflection on the basic assumptions behind every worldview, then there is no reason to exclude religious arguments, *a priori*, from scientific debate (Wolterstorff 2008, xi). The aim of a pluralistic dialogue is neither to reject nor accept the opposing view; rather, it is to challenge dominant views and promote learning and the reinterpretation of conflicting views.

In education we have to raise awareness of historical complexities and the diverse processes of knowledge formation. All knowledge systems are interdependent (Santos 2007, 17). This poses a more general question for the way the modern project has understood the aim of education: is it to promote independency or, rather, awareness of interdependency? Living in an era characterized by a plurality of lifestyles and worldviews, the richness of the co-presence of many knowledge-systems must be recognized both in history and the present day.

A ‘*critique of roots*’ (Maldonado-Torres 2004, 30) requires stepping outside the framework of colonialist modernity. As educators we have to ask if there is space in education for thinking and acting differently. Education has to equip children with a transformative attitude towards their own learning, strengthen their willingness to challenge epistemic privileges, and admit the positive potential of different epistemologies that are present in the world around us. Through such a transformative attitude, one can acknowledge the particularity of all knowledge systems. Education should be about helping to respect the contribution of different knowledge systems, recognizing the full spectrum of human history and valuing the co-existence and interdependency of many systems of knowledge.

It is important to note that the recognition of a plurality of ‘knowledges’ should not lead to blind relativism where value positions cannot be measured. A dialogue between ‘knowledges’ means taking different epistemic claims seriously rather than rejecting or ignoring them. Andreotti (2011, 390) notes that learning from other

knowledge systems does not mean forgetting one's own faith or god. One has a right to stay loyal to the principles that one values and cares for the most. Ultimately, what we share as human beings is a common concern for truth.

James Arthur (2008) suggests '*religiously informed pedagogical approaches*' that take religion seriously in all arenas of education. My Finnish implementation of Arthur's approach, '*katsomustietoisuus*', is more than just an awareness of worldviews or a recognition of difference. It applies to the epistemological, discursive and structural views of education and calls for a change in the way we think about educational theory and praxis. Transformativity (e.g. Pashby 2008, 15–16, 18) and critique require reflection on knowledge and the way it is constructed and justified. For education to be transformative, it has to help people think, act and imagine 'otherwise'. Thus, knowing is based on a critical reflection of one's own basis for thinking and knowledge construction. Transformative education means challenging prevailing norms rather than finding absolute answers. It means 'wrestling' (cf. Wright 2004, 219; 2007, 57) with truth claims, not ignoring them or passing on unquestioned essentialist truths. It starts from a reflection on one's own value-laden ways of looking at the world and using that as a mirror to reflect other worldviews.

The critique of religion should be used as an intellectual resource for analysing the unequal power position of worldviews. Living in a multicultural society means living among a plurality of values instead of in liberal uniformity. Neither a universalistic Christian or liberalist worldview nor secular monoculturalism can get to the core of epistemological racism because they try to find the solution using the tools that have created the problem: the colonial nature of knowledge does not unravel the core of modernity and the cultural hegemony of the West. Concepts related to modernity, such as reason, history and rationality, are cognitively unjust and discriminative, since they are taken as naturally born in the context of Western understanding (Andreotti 2011, 387, 396; Mignolo 2009, 281). Instead of the anarchy of relativism, I argue for education taking a stance that is not the same as educating in a single blind truth. Transformativity is about respecting self-criticism as a means of liberating education from totalitarian attempts. True liberal education is the freedom to imagine the world 'otherwise'.

## Notes

1. "Contextual secularism" (Bhargava 2009, 106) highlights the local, social and cultural reasons that explain the way religion is differently present in different contexts.
2. One has to be careful with the different contextual meanings of secularism. For example, Indian secularism differs greatly from French or American secularism (Casanova 1994, 25; Modood 2007, 72–78).
3. I use the term 'post-secular' to refer to the increasing significance of religion in social and societal matters instead of as a metaphor for the return of religion, since it never really went away (Woodhead & Catto 2012, 7). In this light, 'religion' is understood as continuously changing, internally diverse and complex, constantly mixing traditional elements with new religious movements and contemporary secular philosophies (Cush 2013, 121).
4. The individual Self becomes the center of universal personal truth and growth. The biblical message, "I am the way, the truth and life" (*John* 14:6) is re-interpreted and

misinterpreted in individualistic terms. Moral relativism promises that reality is the way one wants it to be. Truth is something that is constantly changing, which makes constructivism a viable pedagogical answer to any educational issue of our time.

5. Jackson (1997), as a scholar in Religious Education, points out how the notions of 'religion' and 'religions' are problematic because they are the constructs of post-enlightenment Western rationalists and imperialists. Day (2011), Woodhead and Catto (2012) and Asad (2003, 25) suggest that contemporary societies are so diverse that categorization into 'religious' or 'secular' no longer makes sense. People can be religious and secular at the same time (Komulainen 2011). Day (2011) claims that scholars in Religious Studies consider some forms of religiosity "incoherent" and "illogical" because they cling to a traditional and stereotypical image of religion. Thus, a person identifying herself as a Hindu-Christian is not necessarily an individualist "pick-and-mix" believer in the market of religion; rather her "illogical" thinking has not been properly understood by scholars (yet).
6. In a recent case at the European Court of Human Rights (*Eweida v. the United Kingdom* [2013] 48420/10), a British Airways employee complained that her employer placed restrictions on employees visibly wearing Christian crosses around their necks while at work. The Court emphasized the right to the expression of religion at work but stated that it must be balanced against rights of others. The court held that freedom of religion was an essential part of the identity of believers and one of the foundations of pluralistic, democratic societies.
7. There has been a lot of criticism towards European Court of Human Rights (e.g. Martínez-Torrón 2012; Pirjola 2011) because of its inconsistency in cases concerning religion, according to which freedom of religion is interpreted in a narrow secularist way without taking into consideration the right of an individual to follow collectivistic moral principles and traditionalist lifestyles (Martínez-Torrón 2012, 3).

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