GENDERED SUBJECTIVE THEOLOGIES
Dutch eenage girls and boys on the role of religion
in their life

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ABSTRACT

*'When I refuse to listen to how you are different
from me, I am refusing to know who you are'*
Linda Martín Alcoff. 2006. *Visible Identities,
race, gender and the self.* Oxford University Press.

In this presentation of the Dutch contribution to
the REDCo[1] sub-project on the role of gender,
related to religion in/and school, we start at the
characteristics in the answers girls, respectively
boys give to our questionnaires. Their reactions
give us an insight in their perception of religion
as a contribution to dialogue or as a factor of
conflict. Qualitative as well as quantitative
methods are used in our research. We draw upon
recent gender theories where gender is seen as a
position a person occupies against a horizon of
shared values. Our research findings show that
girls and boys in general position themselves in
the same way to religion. However, in girls'
subjective theologies we see, more than in boys'
theologies, an openness to the other religion,
girls are in favour of religion as a school
subject, want to know more from other religions and
are more positive about the possibilities to live
together in the society. In our research population
we find that boys are more clear in demarcating the
boundaries of their subjective theologies. Societal
gendered practices apparently mirror actual ideas
on femininity and masculinity in different Western

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[1] REDCo is the acronym for the European project on
'Religion in Education, a contribution to Dialogue
or a factor of conflict in transforming societies
in European countries?'

societies and apparently shape teenagers'
subjective theologies. We present a possible
pedagogical strategy for classroom conversations,
accounting for (gendered) diversity in subjective
theologies.

INTRODUCTION

For a long time in research researchers tended to
ignore gender differences and by consequence
implicitly male development has been seen as normal
and used as the standard. In the REDCo-research we
take an other position. In our sub-project on the
role of gender, related to religion in/and school,
we start at the characteristics in the answers
girls, respectively boys give to our
questionnaires. Their reactions give us an insight
in how boys and girls these days perceive religion
and how they relate to religion, contributing to
dialogue or as a factor of conflict in the Dutch
society. This knowledge is informed by the pupil's
perspective, and constructed in a specific
situation at a specific time. The pupils' knowledge
we see as 'situated knowledge' and as a result we
have to pay attention to the educational and
classroom context of the pupils.
    In this contribution we explore the role
gender plays in the 'situated knowledge' on
religion, of pupils of 14 - 16 years. By reading
carefully the texts written in the qualitative
research project of REDCo, we will borrow their
gendered glasses and faithfully take their
perspective, elaborating on the questions regarding
religion's role in dialogue and/or conflict in the
changing Dutch society. In the first paragraph we
give a description of the REDCo project. In the
second paragraph we describe the broader context
the pupils live in. We will elaborate on the role
of religion in the educational system in the
Netherlands, coined as a 'pillarized system'. In
the third paragraph gender is central in our
presentation of the theoretical frame work. We will
describe the research design, the population and
the research method in the fourth paragraph. The
fifth paragraph presents the first preliminary
results of the data analysis of the Dutch sample.
In the last paragraph (the sixth) we will reflect
upon the results, discuss them and present a
possible model for classroom conversations,

accounting for (gendered) diversity in the construction of teenagers' subjective theologies.

REDCo – A EUROPEAN PROJECT ON RELIGION IN EDUCATION

In these days, many European countries are experiencing a transformation process towards greater cultural and religious pluralisation. Neighbours are no longer those who are 'just like us'. For this process the concepts of 'multiculturalisation' and 'multiculturalism' are coined. The multicultural character of changing European societies is mirrored in the classroom. While in the beginning of the 20th century it was rather easy for students to identify with each other's story - since they all were socialised in more or less the *same* context - at the start of the 21st century - resulting from the last waves of immigration from the 1950s onwards - being culturally and in particular religiously *different* became normal in European classrooms.

In the European REDCo-project the focus is on the different perceptions on the role of religion The question is whether - in the life of youngsters in the age of 14 – 16 years - religion's role is one of causing conflicts or whether religion might contribute as well to dialogue. To answer this research question youngsters in eight European countries participated in this comparative research project. In England, Estonia, France, Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, Russia and Spain in total more than five thousand students were interviewed and/or filled in questionnaires. In the period 2006-2009 European REDCo project was being carried with a team of approsimately thirty researchers of eight different European countries.

RELIGION IN EDUCATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Netherlands gave a picture of a static monocultural society. What seemed to be a homogeneous culture at first glance, on closer inspection requires a more shaded description[2]. In the first place because on the one hand Dutch

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[2] See for a more detailed description: Avest K.H. ter, C. Bakker, G. Bertram-Troost and S. Miedema (2007).

society was homogeneous in the field of ethnicity, and on the other hand a certain degree of heterogeneity was discernible as several (sub-)cultures existed alongside each other. The concept of 'pillarization' is coined to describe and to cope with the heterogeneity within a monocultural society. Not explicitly included in the 'pillarization' was the rather strict division of labour between men and women. Women taking care of hearth and home; men going out for their work as breadwinner. This division mirrored the ideas on womanliness and manliness in the post war era in the Netherlands. It must be said that the 'pillars' distinguished themselves mainly by difference in religious (sub)cultures.

As a consequence there is denominational education in for example Protestant and Roman Catholic schools and just a few Jewish schools. Protestant and Roman Catholic schools each count for about 60 % of the primary schools (fully financed by the government), public schools account for only 30%, the rest being private schools, providing education from a specific religious background or a specific pedagogical or philosophical concept. The arrival from the sixties onwards of guest workers, has brought Islam to the Netherlands, this new religion now being the second religion after Christianity. The identity of denominational schools with a homogeneous or heterogeneous population of pupils (and very often a homogenous population of teachers!) is extensively researched (eg. Wardekken & Miedema 2001, Ter Avest 2003, Ter Avest&Bakker 2005, 2007). The relation of school identity and the religious development of pupils, in particular the development of the 'God' concept was subject of a longitudinal qualitative study at the one and only interreligious primary school in the Netherlands, the Juliana van Stolberg school in Ede (Ter Avest 2003). Gender appeared to be related to the development from a literal understanding to a metaphorical understanding of the 'God' concept.

Schools mirroring society, in schools in a variety of ways femininity and masculinity are represented. In orthodox Christian as well as in orthodox Islamic schools gender roles are more explicit than in schools with a secular Christian or Islamic identity. The dress-code (the obligation for girls

to wear a skirt or a head scarf respectively[3]) is one of visible aspects of orthodox school identity, that does reveal 'the material inscription of the social reality a person lives in', and as such it contributes to the development of the identity of the person.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON GENDER

In this paragraph we will touch upon a diversity in concepts of womanliness and manliness, respectively femininity and masculinity, as they have been developed in the last decades.

For girls and boys gender identity development has a different start. For girls the process of development is situated in the continuation of the relationship with the mother. Girls in identifying with womanliness, take their mother as a role model. Identity development for girls is intertwined with the continuation of a bonding relationship For a boy however to identify with manliness he has to separate from his mothers since they are poles apart (Gilligan 1985). Not only is the start different, also further in their development we see a difference in for example play activities. Boys show a fascination for rules and their differentiation and further articulation, in order to settle conflicts in a just way. Girls prefer to avoid conflicts, they tend to accept new aspects in the situation and are willing to create exceptions. In puberty boys and girls take different positions in competitive behaviour. Boys either are motivated for success or they are afraid to fail. Girls however show an other position in the competitive situations. In some situations girls are afraid to have success, since success in their view isolates them form their classmates – boys as well as girls. The conclusions from the foregoing might be that next to differences in orientation towards the first care-taker, girls also take a different position in their differing towards success in puberty and as young adolescents, which is underpinned by their moral development. Elaborating on these differences,

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[3] It is remarkable that not only in Islamic schools, but also in the Jewish schools in the Netherlands for girls as well as for boys, there is a strict dress code.

Gilligan points at the different perceptions of girls and boys, and perspectives they take exploring their environment. Whereas boys look at the world from the perspective of binding regulations constructing a network of logical relations, girls see the world as a network of bonding relationships kept together by mutual responsibilities to keep the network undamaged intact. Boys and girls have different glasses and look at the relationships in their context from a different point of view. They have gendered[4] glasses.

Gilligan's view shows relationship with the psychoanalytical point of view of Nancy Chodorov (1995). So do the writings of recent theorists, opposing to essentialists views on womanliness and manliness, rooted in evolutionary theories.
        In our contribution on the concept of womanliness and femininity we rely on the writing of the Latin American cultural anthropologist Linda Martín Alcoff (2006), and on the work of German theologians Thorsten Knauth (2006) and Annebelle Pithan (2007) for the concept of manliness. The views of both rely on the work of Nancy Chodorov. Following their line of thought, children are raised according to a cultural constructed 'mental scheme of masculinity or femininity' (De Beauvoir 1949, 1967; Knauth 2007; see also Phuong-May and Ngyen cs 2006). In the work of Riegel and Ziebertz (2001) both concepts, femininity as well as masculinity, are explored, in particular with reference to classroom situations. We will elaborate upon the specific educational context of the classroom and the (re)presentation of gender in the next paragraph.

Martín Alcoff in her research articulates the difference; not only the difference in colour and race, although that is an important part of her work, but also the difference in gender. Martín Alcoff is interested in visible differences and the effect(s) on identity development, sex being one of the visible differences in its relation to gender

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[4] We follow Sunderland (2004) in her definition of gender. Gender, according to Sunderland 'entails any differences between woman and man being socially or culturally learned, mediated or constructed' (Sunderland 2004, 14).

differences. Although the visible does not reveal the ultimate truth, according to Martín Alcoff the visible does reveal 'the material inscription' of the social reality a person lives in, and as such it is part of the self, of the identity of the person[5].

womanliness
In her study on visible identities Martín Alcoff (2006) elaborates extensively and in a thorough way on the history of feminism and its influence on concepts of womanliness. Leaving behind earlier interpretations of gender related to differences in sexes, she introduces the concept of 'positionality'. Martín Alcoff's approach can be seen as a contribution to a new approach of womanliness, expressed in the concept of femininity.

Martín Alcoff's short overview of the development from womenliness to femininity starts with the reappraisal by women of assigned characteristics by males, for example women's conservative attitude and passivity was named as peacefulness. Following this biological point of view, manliness is characterized by activity and competition, and females are conservative and tend to wait and see. In accordance with this biological standpoint girls are stimulated in peaceful, friendly and polite behaviour and encouraged in helping activities. The above mentioned essentialist definitions of womanliness, make her identity independent of her external situation and the cultural context. The effect of this line of thought is that they 'reflect and reproduce dominant cultural assumptions about women' (Echols, in: Martín Alcoff, p 138). However, this

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[5] Martín Alcoff's point of view is similar to the line of thought of Donna Haraway's writings on situated knowledge and diffraction, rejecting the ideal of objective knowledge (Haraway and Schneider 2005). Haraway's contribution to feminist research is 'a located, embodied vision: a partial perspective that, in coming from a specific place [*and position, ita*] can never pretend to be all-seeing' (Llewelyn 2007). According to Haraway a person's perspective on reality is shaped by the personal [*gendered, religious, ita*] identity and his or her social position – what is called 'material inscription' by Martín Alcoff .

reappraisal did not critique the fact that this new understanding of womanliness still was strongly linked to female biology.

In recent theories on feminity characteristics of behaviour that were ascribed to men in earlier days, are presented as possible identity aspects for women. What is striking is that it is in particular the attitude of an active orientation to the context they live in - related to the notion of 'autonomy' -, that is brought to the foreground as an important characteristic not only for boys, but also for girls in particular with respect to their future professional development and participation in the labour force (Gilligan 1985) .

manliness
As in the previous section we followed the line of thought on femininity of Martín Alcoff, so we will follow in this paragraph Pithan's view on masculinity. Already in early childhood in socialisation processes parents and educators in Kindergarten not only offer children a model of appropriate behaviour according to their sex, they also steer the child's behaviour to culturally approved behaviour according to currently accepted ideas on womanliness and manliness. For boys, in the concept of manliness is included being a great guy putting on a brave face and when showing emotions at least not with tears. Boys are expected being strong, not showing feelings of uncertainty or fear. As a result boys are afraid of fear, but won't show this emotion, but repress those feelings and hide them behind a masquerade of coolness and behave like heroes (Schnack and Neutzling in: Pithan 2007, 10).

The recent developments on a more feminine interpretation of manliness leads to a variety of types of masculinity. Following the dynamic theory on masculinity of the Australian sociologist and pedagogue Robert Connell (opposing an essentialist view on manliness), Pithan distinghuishes four types of masculinity (Connell in: Pithan 2007, 12 ff). Hegemonic masculinity points to a cultural practice in which the dominance of men as well as the subordination of women is taken for granted on the basis of their sexual characteristics. With the concept of 'subordinated masculinity' the hierarchy is described between men, for example between hetero- and homosexual men; a subordination that shows itself for example in exclusion and

violence. For the situation that men passively take their advantage of the current traditional gender roles, although they not actively represent that role, the concept of 'compliant masculinity' is used. 'Marginal masculinity' is seen in men living at the border of society, in our European societies being the migrant (future) workers. The four categories however seem to rely heavily on the physical difference of men and women. Pithan is in favour of a differentiated approach of boys and girls, opening the space for boys as well as girls to develop their qualities according to their natural characteristics in dialogue with traditional views, which might be coind as 'education in difference' (cf. Roebben 2006). Riegel und Ziebertz as theologians give examples of and elaborate on RE in difference, rooted in biblical narratives (Riegel und Ziebertz …).

In the above mentioned recent theories it is stated that the individual is 'a construct mediated by social discourse well beyond individual control or intervention' (Martín Alcoff 2006, 140). Nowadays we are convinced of the culturally related characteristics of male and female behaviour. As Simone de Beauvoir already in 1949 stated: a child is not born as a girl, but educated to behave like a girl. Manliness and womanliness somehow is related to the physical appearance, but it is not exclusively determined by it. Gender is a position one occupies against a horizon of shared values. However, the hermeneutics of 'the social reality a person lives in' changes over time. Not only do we see a difference in social context dependent on the era a person lives in, also there is a difference depending on the perspective of the person, be it a male or a female perspective. People use so to speak 'gendered glasses' colouring their perspective in reality.

Although in recent years in the debates on education, due to the so called 'feminisation of education', gender issues are articulated, it is mainly the gender of the teacher that is focused upon (Timmerman 2003, Geerdink 2007). In a recent publication the British researcher Julia Ipgrave elaborates on the teacher's awareness of her femininity and the construction of meaning of this subjective experience, as well as the students' perception (Ipgrave 2003). When it comes to the

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gender of the students (a visible and decisive aspect of their identity development) it is less usual that gender is seen as an important variable in the role of religion in education. It is on the aspect of gender of the students and its relation to their reactions on religion(s) in/and education (in its broadest sense – at home as well as in school), that we focus in the next paragraph. But only after we have looked at the relation of religion and gender in general.

GENDER AND RELIGION

The mother is said to be 'the cradle of belief'. This saying points to the role of the mother in religious socialisation. Does this saying make religion a feminine subject?[6]

Religiosity: a female trait?
In 1997 according to Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle, the social reality in those days is expressed in their challenging statement that 'it is well known that women are on average more religious than men'. In a British and an American population Beith-Hallami and Argyle researched the meaning of the 'minor difference' between men and women in the field of religion. According to them women more often say a daily prayer; women more than men hold the central and traditional beliefs in for example God and Jesus as the son of God; women more often state that they feel 'close to God', a result that is found as early as the age of 9-10 years (Tamminen 1991, Beith-Hallahmi and Argyle 1997, p 140); religious experiences are written in 'receptive' terms by women; women attend rituals more often than men and name themselves more often than men as supportive members of a religious community. To what extend are the above mentioned relations on

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[6] In the description of the Spanish qualitative research it is explicitly stated that 'it is particularly Catholic mothers who transmit their belief to their children … as a consequence talking about religion is still frequently reported as a 'feminine' issue. This is the reason why many male interviewees reject talking about these issues with their peers' (Dietz, Rosón Lorente & Ruize Garzón 2008).

gender and religion represented in the classroom?

Gender in the classroom
From their extensive 'practical wisdom' as well as from empirical research on teacher behaviour in education, Riegel and Ziebertz (2001) present as a summary the following remarkable findings on gender in the classroom. In every day language the 'minor difference' between boys and girls is reflected in teachers' talk about boys' dominance and aggressive behaviour, and girls' conformative attitude. The difference between boys and girls is presented as an opposition. The 'minor difference' shows itself in the classroom as a difference in behaviour. Girls don't like to attract too much attention ('success anxiety') and tend to be conformative; boys tend to show more competitive behaviour and don't give up easily. This gendered behaviour is related to the gender of the teacher. Girls perform better with female teachers (cf the work of Ipgrave 2003).

Girls tend to be better in language skills, however boys don't take no for an answer. In the classroom girls behave quiet, boys ask more attention. As a result boys compared to girls attract twice as much teacher's attention. At all levels of education an overall picture is seen of teachers talking more to male than to female students (see also Kelly, in Sunderland 2004, 80). Teachers present girls' quiet and well adjusted behaviour to the boys as an 'example of good practice'. Teachers honour boys because of their intelligent remarks, and praise girls for their efforts mastering the subjects.

As teachers, females are overrepresented, in particular in primary schools. In the management of schools or departments (in secondary education) females are underrepresented. Research on the content of school books shows that the last decades the representation of women has changed: they also show up in professions that formerly were typical male professions. However, the crossing of the boundaries between man and woman, between male and female behaviour is fairly well limited: man hardly show up in typical female professions (see also Sunderland 2004, 89).
Given the above sketched broader educational and particular classroom context, in the next paragraph we present our research design to explore the role of religion in/and education, in relation pupils'

gender.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODS

To research the question on gender and religion in religion in/and education, qualitative as well as quantitative methods were used. Pilot interviews in one Christian secondary school in the Netherlands improved the item list for the qualitative research. Interviews were held by a member of the research team, with pupils of one secondary school. The item list contained questions like: 'If you hear the words religion and God, what comes to your mind?'; also questions were formulated on experiences pupils have with (talking about) religion(s), how important religion is in their personal life and what they think of the school subject of religion. The 'voice of the pupils' helped us to improve the list of items; they were so to speak co-constructors of the knowledge needed for the construction of the definite item list of the qualitative research. The questions of the questionnaire of the quantitative research were based on the findings of the qualitative research.

the Dutch sample
The qualitative questionnaire on 'religion at school' was filled in by a total of 71 pupils in the age group of 14 – 16 years. The fact that there are many more girls in this sample (50 out of 71) probably results from the way classes are grouped: some (combination of) subjects are more popular amongst girls than amongst boys. In the same age group to 565 pupils (325 females and 240 males) of eight secondary schools (higher vocational training and pre-university training, in Dutch 'havo' and 'vwo' respectively) questionnaires were distributed in classes by members of the research team, in co-operation with the teachers. Christian, Islamic and state schools participated in the research, mainly from the metropolitan Western part of the Netherlands.

To answer our research question triangulation is applied, and the data of the qualitative and quantitative research are used in a complementary way. In the following paragraph we present the research findings of the Dutch sample.

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this paragraph we present the findings of the qualitative research en de results of the quantitative research in the Dutch sample of the REDCo research population. We limit ourselves to the items related to 'God', 'religion', 'God and/or religion as a topic to talk about', and the role of religion in education as well as in living together in society. We notice in our data some findings with regard to gender that give food for thought.

Qualitative research
In general in the qualitative research, female as well as male students are represented in every category of answers. For a majority of the pupils however, girls as well as boys, God and religion are of low importance in their personal life[7]; they do not feel themselves committed to a particular religion. For example one pupil states:

> *'I have grown up with it. I am baptized also but don't go to church every week. At this moment it is not really of any use to me, maybe later it will be'(girl)*

An other pupil underpins the unimportance of religion in life in the following way:

> *'All this, it isn't yet clear to me' (boy)*

With regard to gender, the associations on the concepts of 'God' and 'religion' do not differ in a significant way[8]. Both groups write down their associations with God like the following answers of two students. A boy relates God to 'Jesus', 'crucifixion' and 'omnipotence'. An other boy writes down 'Jesus, belief, heaven, church, bible' as associations with God. With religion a girl associates 'how you want to live' and a boy relates religion to 'opinions, politics, a way of life'. In general the concept of religion seems to relate

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[7] In general we learn from the population of this European research project that religion is often said to be a 'non-issue'.
[8] See for the complete presentation of the research Avest, K.H. ter, G.D. Bertram-Troost, A. van Laar, S. Miedema en C. Bakker (2008).

more to life in general, the concept of God to symbols and rituals.

Contrasting or conflicting experiences very often invite a person to rethink her or his own religious concepts. In this sense it is remarkable that, although living in (the midst of) difference in today's world of contrasts, a large majority of the respondents, girls as well as boys, state that they do not talk with friends about religion. The main reason they put forward is that they mainly think it is pointless and not interesting to have religion as a subject in peer group chats. Some students mention that they have never thought about religion as a subject to talk about with their friends, since most of the time 'other things keep us busy'.

In the group of pupils that do talk with their friends about religion (more than a quart of the population), girls are overrepresented. Most of the students that wish to discuss religion, do so because they wish to learn from each other what and how they believe, and are interested in an exchange of thoughts on religion. This may be a sign of an open attitude towards the other, but also a sign of a need for a deeper inner reflection upon one's own stance with respect to God and religion. The following quotations express the above mentioned perspectives on discussing religious themes:

> *Everybody just wants to know what others think about it, how it will be after your death and in what way you believe in God (girl)*

> *'… we do not like the behaviour of someone else. Since you still want to know why somebody acts like that (girl)*

> *Nice to refine your own opinion (boy)*

Before we take a look at the characteristic way boys and girls express themselves in their wordings on God and religion, we turn to the results of the questionnaire that was distributed in the quantitative REDCo research.

Quantitative research
Based on the experiences with and the findings of the qualitative research as described above, the items of the quantitative research were

constructed. Statements pupils had written down in the qualitative research, or had said in the interview following the filling in of the qualitative questionnaire, turned into statements pupils could agree or disagree with[9]. Whereas in general girls and boys do not differ in their statements on the importance of religion (22% not important; 56% important), the agreement on the item 'religion determines my whole life' is significantly stronger for girls than for boys. That God exists is clear for 62% of the pupils, be it girls or boys. Some of the pupils prefer to speak of 'some sort of spirit or vital energy'. The item 'religion is nonsense' is disagreed stronger by girls than by boys (f=4.3 versus m=3.9).[10]

Girls seem to have a more positive attitude towards religion in school than boys have. This we learn from the significant[11] stronger agreement of girls on statements like 'I find religions as topic important at school' and 'I find topics about religions interesting at school'. Next to that, girls are also more positive about the content of the subject of religions. Girls agree significantly more with 'At school, I learn to have respect for everyone, whatever their religion' , 'Learning about different religions at school helps us to live together' and 'Learning about religions at school helps me to learn about myself'. The agreement upon the last two statements points at an open attitude towards 'learning religion' as a mean to learn about the other as well as learn about one self.

Significantly less than boys, girls agree with the statement that religious education should be optional. With regard to the aims of RE, the samples shows some significant differences between girls and boys. Girls more than boys agree with items related to the aims of RE, like '…learn to understand what religions teach', '…be able to talk

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[9] The following items were based on statements of pupils: 'Religion for me is important because I love God'; 'Sometimes I doubt: does God exist or not?'.
[10] Scores from 1 to 5; the higher the score, the stronger the disagreement on this statement.
[11] In the following presentation of findings all the mentioned differences are statistically significant. For detailed information see G.D. Bertram-Troost c.s. 2009 (in press).

and communicate about religious issues' and '…get an objective knowledge about different religions'. This is also the case for items on learning about different religions. Girls more than boys agree that learning about different religions helps to 'understand others and live peacefully with them', 'learn about my own religion' and 'gain a better understanding of current events'.

Talking about religions with friends and classmates is appreciated more by girls than it is by boys. We see this in the results on the items like 'Talking about religions helps me to live peacefully together with people from different religions' and 'Talking about religion helps to shape my own views'. Next to that, girls stronger disagree with statements like 'For me talking about religious topics is boring', 'I and my friends talk about how stupid religion is and what cruelties are carried out in its name' and 'In my view, talking about religion is embarrassing'.

The consequence of differences in meaning attributed to 'God' and 'religion', according to girls more than boys, not necessarily leads to conflicts. This we learn from the girls' disagreement with statements like 'disagreement on religious issues leads to conflicts', 'people with different strong religious views cannot live together' and 'I don't like people from other religions and do not want to live together with them'. Girls agree significantly stronger with the statement 'Respecting the religion of others helps to cope with differences'.

Finally, there are some differences in boys' and girls' opinions on what would help people to live together in peace. For girls it is more important to know about each other's religions (51% of the girls says that this is very important, whereas 43% of the boys say so). Twelve percent of the boys states that it is very important that everyone keeps to their own religion in private, whereas only five percent of the girls has this opinion. Girls and boys opt for different ways of coping with a probably problematic encounter of differences.

In general we learn from the analysis of the data of the Dutch REDCo sample that girls more than boys show a open attitude towards 'the other', and the other's religion. They seem to be more willing to talk to 'the other' and listen to the other's point

of view, whereas boys show a tendency to withdraw or opt out. Or, to put it in an other way: boys more than girls make use of the possibility to retire from facing differences. More than girls boys seem to be able to demarcate clearly their own (and by consequence: the other's) room in the space of encounter.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From our findings as presented in the previous paragraph, in general we can conclude that the findings of the quantitative research are in line with the findings of the qualitative research. In both research projects in the Dutch sample we find that in general there is no difference between the answers of girls and boys. Religion for them is not a 'hot' topic, though in some cases reflected upon in an articulated way.

Girls tend to be more positive towards religion than boys, inside the school as well as outside the school, in the society as a whole. RE should be optional, is the opinion of both girls and boys, expressed in the qualitative research as well as in the quantitative research. The content of the subject should be knowledge: pupils, girls more than boys, like to learn about religion(s). Girls more than boys, we learn from the quantitative research, adhere to the point of view that learning about the other helps to live peacefully together. Next to gaining knowledge, pupils state that they want to learn to respect the other.

discussion
We should be well aware of the context in which the pupils answered the open questions of the questionnaire of our qualitative research, as well as filled in the questionnaire of the quantitative research. The positive evaluation of the subject of RE might have been influenced by the fact that in both cases it was during RE classes that pupils worked on the questionnaire, the teacher being around. The knowledge the pupils share with us on the topic of religion is 'situated knowledge'. We know from the social sciences that people tend to accommodate their speech and behaviour to the

context, an aspect Ipgrave (2003) describes in the expectations of pupils of the (female) RE teacher.

The finding that girls are more positive towards religion than boys, might have to do with the fact that the subject of religion belongs to the group of subjects that is preferred by girls. As Riegel and Ziebertz (2001) mentioned, girls are more in favour of humanities, whilst boys prefer the technical and natural sciences. This might have been a hindrance for boys to explore the questions of the qualitative questionnaire in full depth. Striking is that the boys' answers in the qualitative research in general count less words than the reactions of the girls (see also Hoare 2007). The finding that girls are more positive towards religion than boys, is in line with previous findings of Beith Hallamy 1997. Probably the gender role expectations of the societal system are too strong to oppose to for the pupils, living in between commitments their parents and society approve of, and their own explorative behaviour (Marcia 1993).

The reactions with regard to the subject of religion in school, its content and relation to learning to live together' show that girls are more in favour of the possibility of living in peace together. We read an acceptance of the otherness and bonding commitment to the other in a girls reaction on the qualitative questionnaire: 'Yes, of course those people can live together. Everybody already has an other worldview'. Whereas a boy mentioned as a precondition for living in peace together that people should 'leave the other in peace and allow other people to confess their own beliefs in their own way', a statement in which we see reflected a male preference for binding rules in a society characterized by (gender) diversity.

Recommendations
We are fully aware of the need for further research on the underlying qualities of girls and boys that motivate their points of view with regard to religion in/and education. Or to put it more bluntly: more research is needed on the variables that are related to the 'gendered glasses' of the pupils. Next to that we need a dialogue on the different perceptions and expectations of gender on religion in/and education and society, articulating female and male characteristics resulting in the flexible interaction of female and male

characteristics in a bonding power of the articulation of demarcations. However, anticipating future discussions on religious citizenship education in changing European contexts, we like to present in the last paragraph an outline for a possible pedagogical strategy with regard to the role of religion in education.

Provocative pedagogics
Starting point in our model of provocative pedagogics is '*the voice of the pupil*', her/his life view, the way h/she formulates it in the context of her/his life. The pupil's life view is wrapped in expressions that were written down on the questionnaires and that can be found in every teacher's dairy; remarks like 'Religion is a family thing', or 'Why should we learn about religion in school?', or 'What the hell has sex to do with religion?'.
In classroom interaction as a space of encounter, 'I' as well as 'the other' explore each other's perspectives on religion by 'walking in the shoes of the other'. According to the Flamish philosopher such an encounter is far from harmonious, the confrontation with the other's otherness may shake a person out of his familiar frame of reference (Visker 2005, 141-142). In Visker's view the difference with the other, however, should not result in in-difference. In provocative pedagogics the teacher is response-able to answer the need of the pupil to explore the alterity of the other. 'The other' in the encounter may be a class mate, but also can be a male or female character in a biblical or qur'anic story. The process of identification with one of the characters of a story urges the pupil to take the other's perspective, at the same time anticipating the response of the one who is 'the other' in the biblical or qur'anic narrative – the other possibly being God (cf. Sundén 1966). In provocative pedagogics the teacher invites and heartens the pupil to reflect upon her/his own perspective taking the perspective of the other. The provocation answers the pupil's developmental need to explore contrasting and possibly conflicting interpretations and meanings (cf Marcia 1993,and clarifies the boy's or girl's actual and situated life view. Dialogical conversations in trialogical classroom discussions (pupil, classmates and teacher, religious narratives) stimulate the

process of the development the pupil's awareness of her/his situated knowledge. From this reflective process emerges the pupil's subjective theology. The teacher being a provocative pedagogue needs to be competent in listening to what pupils say, at the same time not being restricted by the literally utterances of the pupil. A teacher proves to be a good listener when s/he understands not only what is said, but even more so what is not worded but included in non-verbal communication. This way of active listening should be followed by questioning – questions that allow for acknowledging gendered glasses and gender differences; questions that trigger to shift one's ground and de- and reconstruct one's position. Provocative pedagogy articulates gender differences in order to facilitate developmental processes on the role of religion in the life of pupils being future citizens. Teenagers today live in a world in which it is not taken for granted to be surrounded by people with whom the easily identify, people with whom 'they share the same faith, a tradition, a way of life, a set of rituals and narratives of memory and hope.' Learning ín gendered differences provokes students into living ín difference in changing European societies.

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