

# **Different Forms of Religion in Secularised Countries and Some Implications for Education and Social Work**

Josef Freise

---

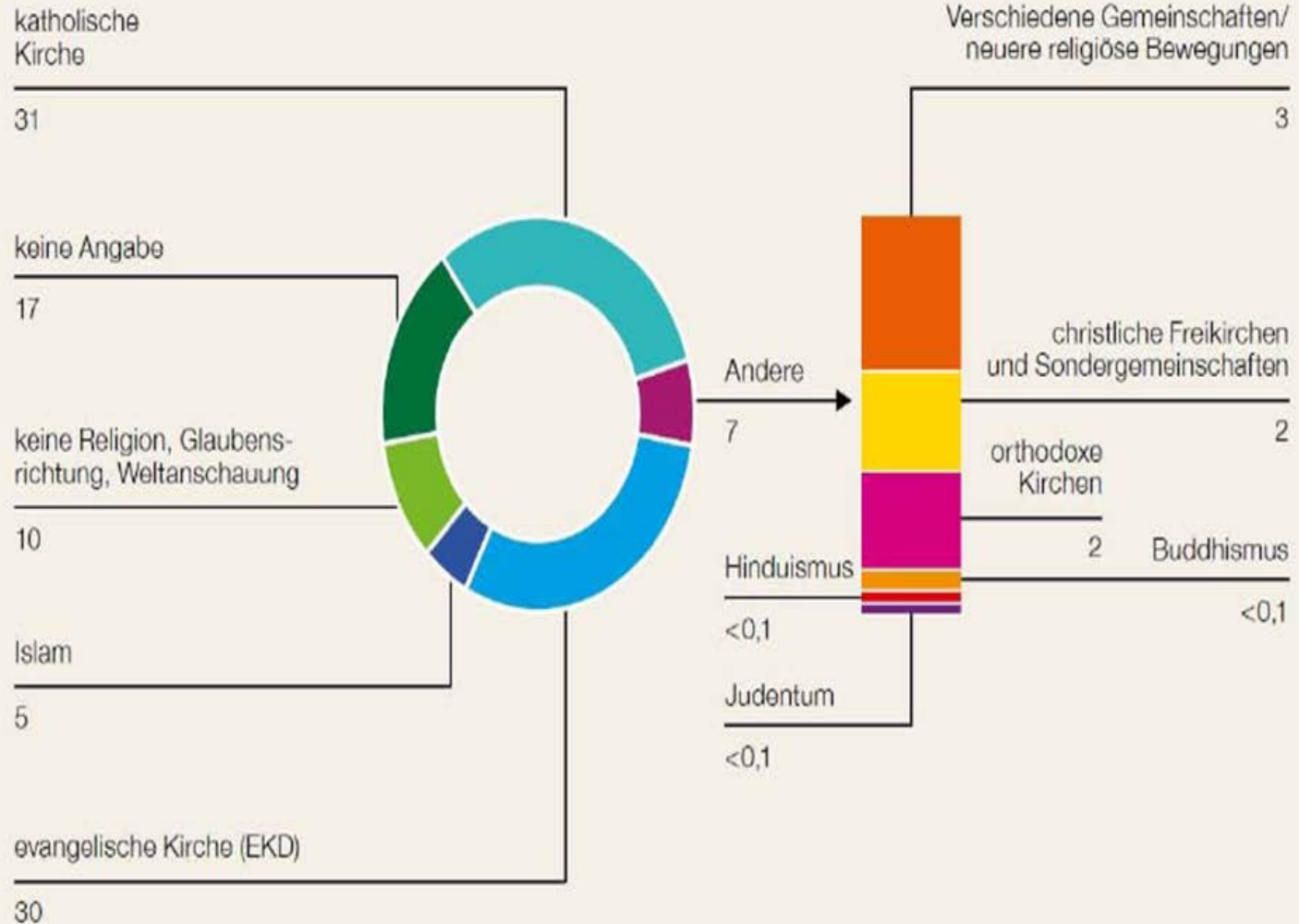
# Outline

- Religious situation in Germany
- Different forms of religion (exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism)
- The religious pluralistic approach of Perry Schmidt-Leukel
- The need for religious and interreligious sensitivity and diversity in social institutions

# Religious situation in Germany

- less than one third are Catholic
- less than one third are Protestant
- more than one third without religious affiliation
- around 5 % are Muslim
- less than 1% are Buddhist, Hindu ...

► Abb 1 Zensus 2011 – Religion in Deutschland in Prozent



Quelle: Thomas Großbölting/Markus Goldbeck, Religion, in: Thomas Rahf (Hg.), Deutschland in Daten. Zeitreihen zur Historischen Statistik, Bonn 2015, S. 175

Lizenz: Creative Commons by-nc-nd/3.0/de | Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2015 | www.bpb.de

# Religious situation of the refugees and asylum seekers in Germany in 2015

- 73,1 % Muslim,
- 13,8 % Christian
- 4,2 % Ezidi (BAMF 2016).

# Short Definition of Religion

- Religion is a container-notion
- Religion is part of the „Lebenswelt“ (life-world“), the world-view transmitted by sozialisaton, institutions and culture (Habermas) – linked with transcendency
- Religion can be spirituality and ideology.
- Religion can strengthen identity and religion can be a barrier to emancipation

Religion is ambiguous - like a  
candle: With a candle you can  
enlighten a house and you can burn  
it down



# Different forms of religion

- Exclusive understanding of religion
- Inclusive understanding of religion
- Pluralistic understanding of religion



# Exclusivism

- Silent exclusivism
- Political exclusivism
- Violent fundamentalism

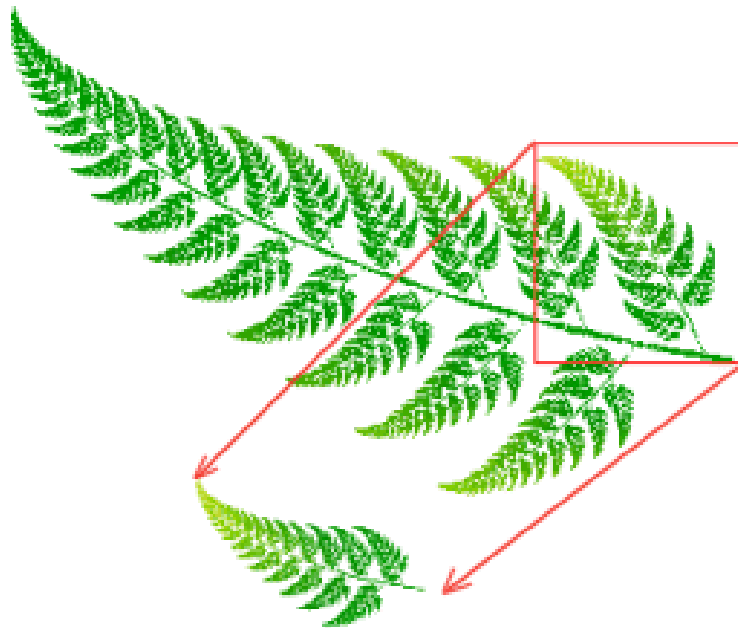
# Inclusivism

- Superiority oriented inclusivism
- Empathic inclusivism

# Pluralism

- Professing pluralism
- Dialogical pluralism
- Relativistic pluralism

# Branch, twig and leaf have similar structures



Perry Schmidt-Leukel

# WAHRHEIT IN VIELFALT

Vom religiösen Pluralismus  
zur interreligiösen Theologie



# Theses concerning the religious pluralistic approach of Perry Schmidt-Leukel

Every religion reflects the totality of religious experience in a specific form (p. 238). In the foreign culture (religion) there is always something of one's own culture (religion) (quoted from Waldenfels).

One's own religion changes through interreligious discourse. There is often fear of syncretism, but all great religions have emerged from syncretic processes.

Separate typological profiles of religions cannot be confirmed. Religions are diverse in themselves (p. 347).

One and the same person can go through different forms of religiosity in the course of his or her life (p. 354).

A fractal interpretation presupposes that the religious other is never wholly other. The otherness lies in the different unfolding of individual characteristics that are less or differently developed within one's own tradition (p. 356).



„Pluralism and diversity of religion, colour, gender, race and language are a wise, divine desire with which God created human beings.“

(Pope Francis, Rom, and Grand Imam Al Tayeb, Kairo)



# Conclusion: Aspects concerning education and social work

- 1. There is a danger of overemphasis on religious issues and a danger of exclusion of religious issues.



# Conclusion

- **2. Religion is an important issue for education and social work**, because many students in school and participants in social work – especially immigrants – are religious and we have to be aware of their religious attitudes. Their religious belief can be an important source for processes of empowerment and healing and it can be a barrier to emancipation and a source of violence.

# Conclusion

- 3. All teachers and social workers should **be aware of their own spiritual sources** and should look for a clear humanistic or religious identity. They should know and reflect their values. They should know about the religious background of their values and they should have a clear stand point: What do I believe? What is my vision, my hope?

# Conclusion

- 4. All teachers and social workers should look for religious sources or humanistic sources - sources which give them strength and prevent them from burn-out. **These sources have to be trained,** and that is why every social worker needs an ongoing practice of reflection, supervision, contemplation or meditation.

# Sources

- Freise, Josef 2011: Interreligiöse Dialogkompetenz, in: Genkova, Petia/Ringeisen, Tobias (Hg.), Handbuch Diversity Kompetenz, Band 2: Gegenstandsbereiche, Wiesbaden, 565–579.
- Freise, Josef 2021: Religious Competences in Social Work: A Necessary Approach in the German Context of Diversity, in: Ralf Roßkopf, Katharina Heilmanns (eds.): International Social Work and Forced Migration. Developments in African, Arab and European Countries, Opladen, Berlin & Toronto, p. 266-275.
- Freise, Josef 2017: Kulturelle und religiöse Vielfalt nach Zuwanderung. Theoretische Grundlagen – Handlungsansätze – Übungen zur Kultur- und Religionssensibilität, Schwalbach i. Ts.
- Schmidt-Leukel, Perry 2019: Wahrheit in Vielfalt. Vom religiösen Pluralismus zur interreligiösen Theologie. Gütersloh.