

Multiculturalisms, identity politics and citizenship education in Denmark

Claus Haas

The Danish University of Education

haas@dpu.dk

Document analyses

- Legal frameworks of primary and lower/upper secondary schools
- Curriculum
- Policy discourses

Research questions

- What kind(s) of multiculturalism(s) and indentity politics underlie the new interest in citizenship education, articulated within official educational discourse of the Danish nation-state?

Legal framework 1960

The school should - through its activities - both transmit knowledge and bring up children and form their character. It should develop and strengthen the children's awareness of ethical and Christian values, give them a sense of respect for human life and for nature, love of their home, and our people and country, respect for other people's opinions, a feeling of community between peoples, and a feeling of togetherness with the other Nordic peoples

Legal framework 1975

The “Folkeskole” prepares pupils for participation in a democratic society and responsibility for the solution of shared tasks. The teaching and the daily life of the school should therefore be based on freedom of thought and democracy.

Legal framework 1993

The “Folkeskole” should make pupils familiar with Danish culture and contribute to their understanding of other cultures and of man’s interaction with nature. The school prepares pupils for participation, responsibility, rights and duties within a society based on freedom and democracy. The teaching and daily life of the school should therefore be based on freedom of thought, equality, and democracy.

Legal framework 2006

The “Folkeskole” should - in cooperation with parents - give pupils knowledge and skills that prepare them for further education and motivate them to learn more, make them familiar with Danish culture and history, and give them an understanding of other countries and cultures, contribute to their understanding of man’s interaction with nature and promote each pupil’s general development

Martin Henriksen, The Danish Peoples Party

- "The Danish primary schools are not supposed to make pupils with a different ethnic background confident with the culture of their parents. The primary school should reverse the integration. The recent agreement pulls in another direction, towards a school based on a clear set of values. The upgrading of Christianity (...) and history (...) with the intentions to make the pupils confident with the Danish cultural heritage, the purpose is clear (...) Ömer and Serdil live in Denmark, therefore their culture has to be the Danish one"

The Danish Minister of Education, Bertel Haarder

“Love of homeland is something universal, which cannot and should not be wiped out (...) Nationalism and feelings of nationality is not only necessary evils, but constitute (...) the fundamental substance without which modern democracies cannot exist. The peoples want to have their homelands, where they decide for themselves and exercise shared responsibilities through democratic institutions” (2005)

Reform of Danish Teacher education, 2007

A new obligatory subject

- Christianity
- Life enlightenment
- Citizenship

”Democracy”, White Paper, The Danish Ministry of Education 2006

- Young people don't have a clear concept about democracy
- Create problems that have surprised all of us.
- Does not only concern immigrants, but also Danish children. They are suffering from democracy blindness,
- In the 1930s and 1940s we experienced influences for instance from Germany and Italy, where Danish intellectuals were blinded by strong leaders.
- In the 60s and 70s it was the blindness caused by communism

Definition: Multiculturalism

- Two different meanings.
 1. As a descriptive concept, to describe the existence of different cultures and communities within a society.
 2. To designate the normative and political response - a set of responses - to pervasive and increasing socio-cultural diversity in contemporary society (Hartmann & Gerteis)

The political strategies, discourses, normative doctrines, institutional and organisational arrangements which different social agents consider to be adequate in dealing with cultural diversity.

Defintion: Identity politics

- Citizenship education = to become a political subject
- To adopt and construct individual and collective identities as members of one / several political and/ or cultural communities.
- Where do I/ we come from?
- Where am I / are we now?
- Where am I / are going in the future?

Dealing with diversity (Hartmann & Gerteis, 2005)

1. Assimilationism

- cultural diversity is to be removed or minimized
- differences constitute a danger in relation to uphold mutual responsibilities within the social whole
- = the nation = the normative centre
- Basic core values which outsiders have to assimilate to in order to be full members.
- Individuals are expected to shed of their previous group identities and adopt those of the nation
- The melting pot.

Dealing with diversity (Hartmann & Gerteis, 2005)

2. Comopolitanism

- Tolerance and individual choice.
- Group identities are not supposed be the source of public rights or obligations
- No pressure to identify with specific communities, or with core values of the nation
- Cultural communities have vague internal boundaries and external boundaries.
- Cultural belonging based on voluntarism.
- Ethnic hyphenation.
- Every individual is free to choose her or his place within the ethnic mosaic.

Dealing with diversity (Hartmann & Gerteis, 2005)

3. Fragmented pluralism

- The social whole is dissolved into its component collective units.
- Belonging to more or less autonomous and discrete groups essential
- The culturally neutral state mediate between groups claims
- Respect for group rights and collective self-determination
- At macro level no clear cut division between outsiders and insiders
- At micro level groups have a clear idea about who belongs to the group and who does not.
- “The standard vision” of multiculturalism.
- Segmented assimilationism

Dealing with diversity (Hartmann & Gerteis, 2005)

4. Interactive pluralism

- “The cousin” of fragmented pluralism.
- Distinct groups and cultures is recognized and celebrated in and of themselves.
- Sub-national group belonging the primary source of identity and moral bonds.
- But stresses groups in action.
- Cohesion at the macro level something emergent as a result of the interaction, or constant dialogue inside and between different cultures,. The moral bonds / the social whole a “fusion of horizons”
- Something constantly re-invented and re-interpreted

**Individual in
Society**

**Mediating
Groups**

**Substantive
Moral Bonds**

**Procedural
Norms**

Assimilationism	Cosmopolitanism
Interactive Pluralism	Fragmented Pluralism

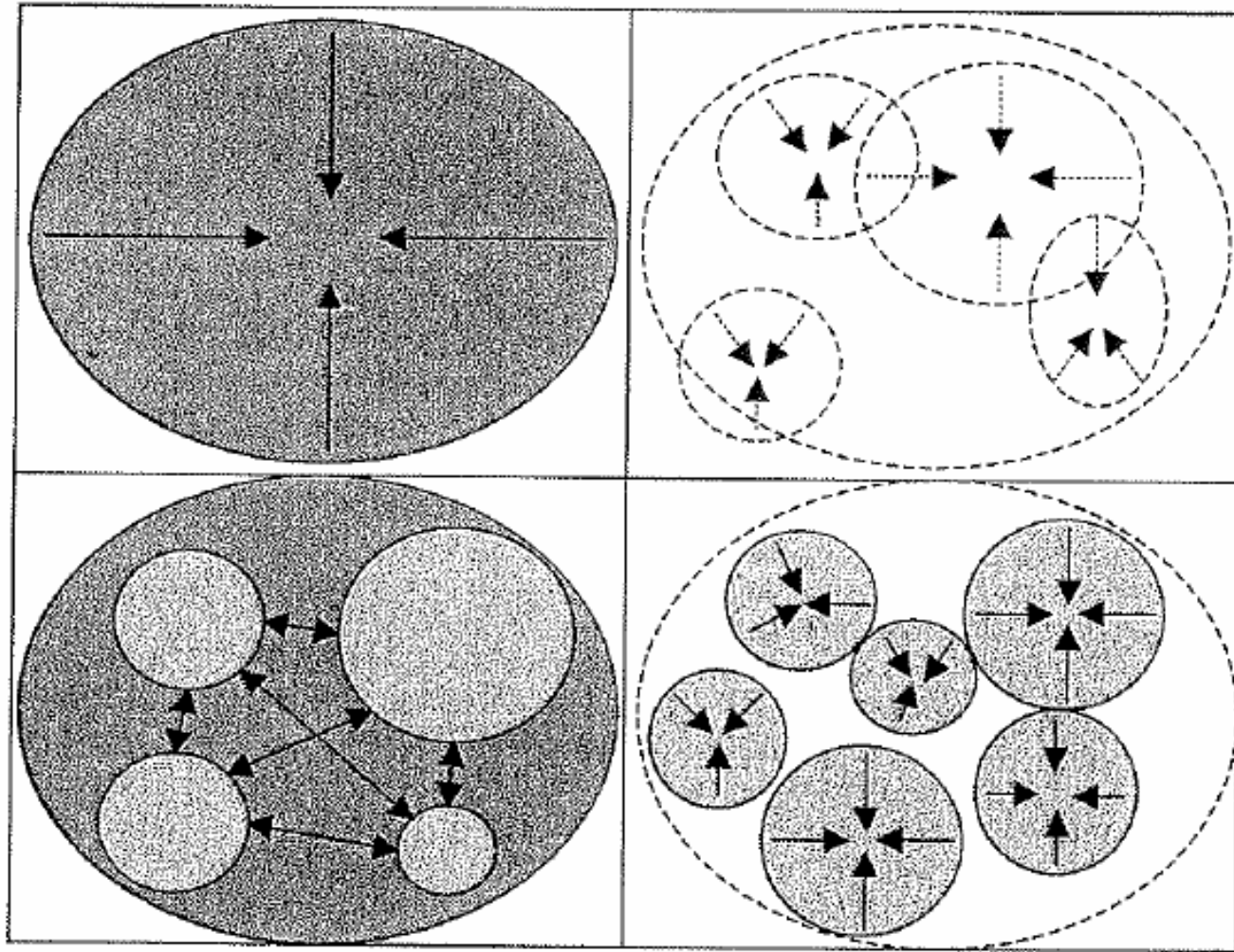


Figure 3. Structural images of social order.

Community and Education, Ministry of Education 1999

- “(...) The educational system must strive to give new life to the concept of citizenship, in that we by the notion citizen mean the empowered person that feels obliged to engage in the life of fellow human beings and the community. It is within the community that we learn to handle the problems and crises that occur. Personal freedom is not meaningful until you are part of a community.” *ibid.* (p. 2).

Community and Education, Ministry of Education 1999

- “We are developing a multicultural identity in Denmark. That doesn’t mean that we lose a Danish identity, but that the Danish identity develops and becomes something different than it was – as it has always done. The Danish educational system has to open up to the world in order make us conscious about the fact that our welfare depends on the rest of the world, so that we can understand and respect other cultures.”

Values in Practice, The Danish Ministry of Education, 2000

- “Getting a dialogue on equal terms
- No parties have taken control in advance owing to a certain position of power”,
- The future the Danish school system should be characterised by “openness and inclusiveness”,
- Space for pupils of “another ethnic background”.
- Wrong to “force a uniform Danish nationality on everybody”.
- Offering these pupils (of another ethnic background) “elements of the Danish identity which are so essential that they can feel at home in Danish society without any difficulties”
- “It should be done in full consideration of their own cultural values”.

Values in Practice, The Danish Ministry of Education, 2000

- democratic values that would be the same as for the past 100-150 years, such as intellectual and spiritual freedom, tolerance, freedom of expression and other political rights”
- “in our human and Christian heritage, also gather these values under the designation of "love yourthy neighbour".

Values in Practice, The Danish Ministry of Education, 2000

- “The Danish education system must continue to be Danish with the characteristics that are typical for it. The school offers the pupils knowledge about our culture, literature, history and the development of society. Here, the language – the mother tongue – plays a fundamental role. It is through the mother tongue that we make our history, traditions and myths about ourselves, our people and its history come alive. The language is in itself a living symbol of the community. It links us together across social and age barriers. We contribute to keeping it alive ourselves, we are all part responsible for how it develops. When we were children, we hurt our knees in Danish, we were comforted in Danish, we were given our first kiss in Danish, and we had love troubles in Danish. At school we felt sorry for the ugly duckling in Danish, we shivered at the thought of schoolmaster Blomme in Danish and laughed our heads off at the Olsen Gang in Danish. They are all memories which make up a major part of our very identity. They are in our hearts and are based on our mother tongue”

The Governments visions and strategies for improved integration (2003)

- “that foreigners, who come to live here, have to learn our often different, points of view.
- we, who belong to the majority, should make an effort to understand other cultures and other outlooks on life” (p. 4)
- “To create a societal framework within which diversity and personal freedom thrive,
- A community of fundamental values.
- Room for cultural and religious conduct
- The individual contribute as an active citizen. (p. 6)

The Governments visions and strategies for improved integration (2003)

- “A coherent and open democratic society within which basic values are that citizens demonstrate a responsible citizenship, and an active respect for the values, that are fundamental in a free and democratic welfare society, leaving room for difference and individual freedom” (p. 8).
- “Our values”
- “Our concept of democracy”
- “Respect for basic values of the Danish society”
- “The foundational values of society”
- “Fundamental values”

The Future of the subject Danish (2003) (Fremtidens Danskfag)

- No return to a mono-cultural or mono-lingual Denmark
- An illusion
- “(...)the particularly Danish” was already influenced by previous currents (from the outside”),
- The particularly Danish the result of the history of this geographical region.
- The aim of the subject is not to articulate a Danish culture
- A meeting place for all cultures living in Denmark.
- Culture is not something you have but something you doThe concept of culture is rapidly becoming more relative and dynamic.

Conclusion document analyses

- ”In fact multiculturalism is not a single doctrine, does not characterize one political strategy, and does not represent an already achieved state of affairs. It is not a covert way of endorsing some ideal, utopian state. It describes a variety of political strategies and processes, which are everywhere incomplete. Just as there are different multicultural societies so there are very different multiculturalisms” (Hall, 2000)

Conclusions document analyses

- Only a few examples of or references to an intercultural dimensions of citizenship education
- The homogenous Danish nation is more or less taken for granted, but challenged
- The core values/normative core of the social whole / the nation
- Assimilationism = the hegemonic vision of multiculturalism.

**Individual in
Society**

**Mediating
Groups**

**Substantive
Moral Bonds**

**Procedural
Norms**

Assimilationism	Cosmopolitanism
Interactive Pluralism	Fragmented Pluralism