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## Non-binary worldviews in education

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### ABSTRACT

In this article, I discuss the potential of developing a kind of worldview education that has the purpose of enabling teachers and students to understand how worldviews are formed. I explore how suggestions of Ann Taves can be helpful towards such an aim and pay special attention to research into self-defined 'non-religious people'. It seems their worldviews can defy the secular-religious divide and be categorised as non-binary. Taves have suggested to use worldviews as an overarching rubric, that encompasses both religious, non-religious and non-binary views, which I see as corresponding with suggestions towards worldview education in schools. It signals a need for a new language for certain parts of human activity related to meaning-making. A kind of Worldview education is already a part of school subjects in Norway, Sweden, England, Finland, Netherlands and beyond, and scholars are now exploring possibilities in this. I review some recent discussions among educationalists against the suggestions of Taves, who define worldviews in terms of Big Questions, draw upon a global meanings system theory used by psychologists, and biological and evolutionary grounding of the concepts which, according to Taves would make the worldview concept more stable than the highly contested concept of religion.

### KEYWORDS

Non-binary worldviews; education; religious studies; the studies of religions and worldviews in schools

### Introduction

As a preparation for three cross curricular themes in the new National Curriculum in Norway (UDIR 2019)<sup>1</sup> the Social Studies section of the teacher education department had invited guest lecturers from The 22<sup>nd</sup> of July Centre; a memorial and educational centre in Oslo, to talk to students about mastery of life.<sup>2</sup> With them, they had survivors from the terror at Utøya, where Anders Behring Breivik shot 67 young people. Hearing their stories made a deep impression, and an issue was how the survivors could cope under and after this crisis. Students had also learned how Breivik's worldview which leads him to believe that his acts were right, was feeding on isolation/'othering' and conspiracy theories found on the internet. Others share his views if not his acts. Students had been engaged in discussing how they as teachers could contribute to preventing it from happening again. In the end of the session, one student asked how people's worldviews are formed, but no one could answer. Having been working with worldviews in education for a while at the time, I saw a potential of worldview education which is not yet realised in Norway. It could be developed to enable teachers and students to understand how worldviews are formed.

A proposal from scholars of religion, Ann Taves and co-researchers (Taves 2018; Taves, Aspren, and Ihm 2018; Taves and Aspren 2019; Taves 2019), to use worldviews as an overarching rubric where religion is subsumed as an aspect of some of them, is signalling a need for a new language for

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certain parts of human activity related to *meaning-making*. I see this as corresponding with discussions among educationalists, for instance in the recent international anthology *Challenging Life: Existential Questions as a Resource for Education.*, (Ristiniemi et al. 2018) which celebrates a 40-year long tradition of research in Sweden of the concepts 'lifeviews'. 'Worldviews' defined in terms of Big Question (BQs) as Taves and co-researchers do, offer a possibility of conceptualising meaning-making in education that is not exclusively linked to religion, but still includes religions.

Inclusion of non-religious worldviews in Religious Education (RE) is encouraged in *Signposts* (Jackson 2014), published by the Council of Europe as this is seen as necessary to better reflect the societal realities today. Worldview education has been advocated by 'pioneers' like Valk (2007); (Canada); Hartmann (1985) (Sweden); Smart (1983) (England); and Aadnanes (2012) (Norway). More recently this is discussed by Miedema (2014); van der Kooij (2016) (The Netherlands); Everington (2018a, 2018b); Freathy and John (2019a, 2019b); Shaw (2020) (England); Gustavsson (2020) (Sweden); Bråten (2018) (Norway); and Åhs, Poulter & Kallioniemi (2017, 2019) (Finland), among others.

In this article, I will explore if/how the suggestions of Taves and co-researchers could be helpful towards a kind of worldview education that help explain how worldviews are formed, and reviews this against recent discussions connected to Religious Education. I will pay special attention to reports from research into the increasing group of people who define themselves as 'non-religious' ('nones') which suggests that worldviews can defy the secular-religious divide and be categorised as 'non-binary'.

## Worldviews as an overarching rubric

Pew Research Centre (2017) has published some widely cited reports that an increasing number of people worldwide now identifies as non-religious, and that this tendency is stronger among younger people. This is also noted in censuses, for instance as cited in the book series *Religious education at schools in Europe* (e.g. Rothgangel, Jackson and Jäggle 2014).

Research into 'nones' has revealed a range of different kinds of worldviews within that category (Wallis 2015; Lee 2015; Murphy 2016; Urstad 2017). Non-religious and secular is not necessarily equal in meaning. Murphy (2016, 7) claims that 'Non-religion is not a lack of religion/spirituality or belief (when understood broadly), but rather a rejection of particular forms of religion/spirituality/belief.' Lee (2015) demonstrates a shift from 'hollow secular' to 'substantively non-religious'. This indicates that a further distinction between secular and non-religious is needed. From the point of view of the person who is doing the meaning-making Urstad (2017) distinguishes between *affiliated* and *unaffiliated*.

The worldviews of the 'nones' as described here is, in my view, mirroring long-standing reports from sociology of religion, of a change of people's relationship to religion (in parts of the world/population), which is characterised by subjective individual choices which would aid their personal quest to making sense of the world, and which would help them find ways of life. While Bellah (1985) was one of the first to describe this kind of individualist syncretistic worldviews, as 'Sheilism', Woodhead (2012) distinguishes between 'old style religion' characterised by national hierarchical structures, passive membership and formal practice, and 'new style' religion which is less structured and more individualistic and not particularly interested in authorities. Commenting on the 'nones' Bråten (2014) notes that 'It might be the case that some young people are simply less interested in those "mainstream" religions which survey forms tend to list as alternatives, or are formulating more complex personal worldviews that might relate to several religious or spiritual or humanistic ideas'. It is in response to studies into 'nones', that Ann Taves (2018, 2019); Taves, Asprem, and Ihm (2018); Taves and Asbrem (2019); Taves (2019), have argued to *conceptualise an object of study that includes religions and non-religions*. Studies of 'non-religion' they argue, have the conceptual problem of being defined in contrast to religion, while studies into the worldviews of those who identify as non-religious have put such binary categories into question. To study these phenomena effectively, Taves

and co-researchers claim a larger rubric that encompasses both, are needed and suggest using 'worldviews' as a main rubric. This, she argues, would release scholars of the problem of defining either religion or non-religion and allow them to go on to study answers to Big Questions (BQs) across space and time.

It is 'worldviews' defined in terms of BQs, which they see encompassing both religious and non-religious outlooks. Taves (2018) refer to Vidal (2008) who summarise these as: 1. What is (ontology: what exists), 2. What is true and what is false (epistemology), 3. What is good and what is evil? (axology), 4. How should I act (praxeology), 5. Where does it all come from? (explanations), and 6. Where are we going? (prediction). These questions can be applied to organised worldviews, such as religions, or to the meaning-making of a person, for instance related to a situation she finds herself in.

In 'Scientific Worldviews Studies: A programmatic proposal', Taves and Asprem (2018) take a naturalistic perspective. They see humans and other animals, and even some forms of artificial intelligence as having worldviews, meaning a sense of the world, which enables them to act in the world. Viewed from an evolutionary perspective, 'organisms make worlds based on their evolved capacities to sense their environment.' Even though humans evolved capacities are vast greater than those of other animals and can be dramatically enhanced by new technologies, even human ability to make worlds is constrained by 'our evolved nature' (Taves 2019, 8).

Taves (2018) emphasises the benefits of melding the philosophical and religious discussions of worldviews with a generic global meaning systems (MS) framework, used by psychologists. A distinction is made between meaning of life and meaning *in* life. Mostly it is used in situations of trauma, but also more broadly about the 'world-making capacities of humans' (see also Paden 1988). She draws attention to a distinction between 'Global Meaning Systems' (GMS) and 'situational meanings' (SM): encompassing the world, and the self in world.

Typically search for meaning *in life* happens in situations of crisis, through *experiences* that may or may not have a religious character, but that is, somehow 'profoundly meaningful' for individuals. From a naturalistic point of view, it makes sense to think of worldviews as something which is articulated on a need's basis. If a person experience having a sense of purpose in her daily life, she may not need religion, and typically don't undertake a conscious searching for meaning. If this is the case persons could be recognised as 'existentially indifferent', something Gunnarsson (2008) seems to have documented with his thesis entitled '*I don't believe the meaning of life is all that profound*'. It is not that the 'existentially indifferent' are not 'meaning making' at all, rather they have non-reflective answers to BQs embedded in the way they live. From a naturalistic point of view meaning-making is not a philosophical activity, but something that happens in lived lives of people. Meaning-making *may* be conscious and reflective but needs not be. It may draw on religious sources but needs not to.

Taves and Asprem (2019) even suggests renaming the field of Religious Studies and this is repeated in Taves (2019) article 'From religious studies to worldviews studies'. Taves claims she can 'stabilise' the concept of 'worldviews' more than was possible with the highly contested concept of religion. As opposed to religion(s) which are cultural products, making sense of the world one lives in is grounded in biology, and is not unique to humans. The capacity of humans to construct worldviews, are panhuman. Acknowledging problems with the proposal such as baggage from its history of use (Taves 2019, 3), she focuses on the advantages that would occur from conceiving the discipline more broadly, as Worldviews Studies. This includes to highlight BQs and ways of life, provide a panhuman basis to study meaning-making and world-making, providing an even-handed basis for comparisons of religious and non-religious worldviews, and to embrace an overarching rubric to undercut polarisation in the field (Taves 2019, 9). An interdisciplinary space is needed to reflect even-handedly upon the relationship between religion and non-religion, including discussions of 'secularity' (Taves 2019).

An original usage of the term 'worldviews' is thus carved by linking it to naturalistic perspectives combined with ideas of Meaning-making Systems (MS) from Psychology and Vidals BQs. I would say this approach would have the potential to explain how a worldview is formed, for instance, the

worldview of the terrorist Breivik, by asking (Taves 2019, 7): What exists in the world as he had evolved to perceive it? What is he and what is he not? What is the good or goal for which he strives? And, based on that, what actions should he take? Similarly pupils and teachers could explore their own worldviews, and that of characters from history or present societies. Further, I see arguments to include the rubric of non-binary worldviews in education, worldviews as framed by Taves looks past the secular-religious divide.

## Recent discussions of worldviews in education

In the following, I will review to what extent the idea of worldviews according to Taves and her co-researchers is corresponding with discussions among educationalists. I am also interested in seeing whether recent suggestions of how to implement worldviews education is relevant for the aim of being able to explain how worldviews are formed.

As part of her study, Van der Kooij (2016, 9–10) from a review of literature, makes an overview of domains of usage of the concept. Originating with German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1790) and later Dilthey and others, domains of use include in anthropology: with a meaning similar to ‘culture’, in psychology: clients understanding of the world. In philosophy of science: the scientist’s ‘worldview’/ paradigm represent a level of meta-theory for applied theory in an analysis. A shift of paradigm means the view of the world changes for the scientists involved (Kuhn in van der Kooij (2016, 10). While van der Kooij discusses the concept as ‘contested’, Taves through her naturalistic perspective claim to be able to stabilise it. Van der Kooij’s overview highlights that Taves has picked certain aspects from the concept’s history of use, from psychology and anthropology, and added the twist of evolutionary and biological grounding. However, Taves calls for an interdisciplinary space for studying worldviews, corresponds with the way Kooij shows it has been used in different disciplines of academic study. Kooij (Van Der) (2016, 19–20) consider four elements as necessary in a worldview: ‘existential questions, moral values, influence on peoples acting and thinking, and providing meaning in life’. Kooij does not tap into the biology argument but except from that, her definition corresponds with that of Taves.

Kooij makes a distinction between personal and organised worldviews, which we see reflected in the English Commission on Religious Education report (CoRE 2018). This is a distinction we also find in Aadnanes 2012, 13–16) who explains the term in relation to ‘individual lifeviews’, ‘lifeviews formation’ and ‘lifeviews traditions’, referring both to the process of formation and worldviews as traditions, including religions. Aadnanes uses the term Lifeviews (‘livssyn’) and refers to the Swedish tradition for studying people’s answers to big questions called ‘livsfrågor’ (Life Questions) (Gustavsson 2020). In a Nordic tradition, the term lifeviews (livssyn/livsåskådning) has mostly been used, sometimes translated to English as ‘philosophy of live’. This corresponding to the German ‘lebensanschauungen’ which is arguably different from ‘weltanschauungen’, worldviews, as noted by Jackson (2014, 29, 70) and Bråten (2018, 163–164). Being aware of nuances in terminology as developed in different languages, however, here the point is that distinction between personal and organised worldviews, and worldviews traditions and the process of formation of, seems to correspond to the ideas of Situational Meaning-making (SM), as something personal, and Meaning-making Systems (MS), which is organised and can be religions.

Van der Kooij and other Dutch researchers, such as Miedema (2014) have pointed to gains from changing the concept from ‘religion’ to ‘worldviews’ in some educational contexts. This seems to correspond to Taves arguments that gains could be won in Religious Studies from changing the main terminology to Worldviews. CoRE (2018) has also suggested changing the name of the subject in England, from ‘Religious Education’ (RE) to ‘Religions and Worldviews Education’ (RW). In Norway ‘lifeviews’ (Livssyn) has been part of the name of the school subject since the integrated model in 1997, but was used before that, as name of a subject alternative to Christian Education, that existed from 1974 to 1997.

Taves (2019) refers to a crisis in Religious Studies, and Shaw (2020) refers to a crisis in English RE, having to do with keeping up with changing societal landscapes. In theory integrated forms of Religious Educations could be the kind of interdisciplinary space to study worldviews that Taves calls for, however, school subjects are contested, disputed, and changing in Europe, as for instance the book series *Religious Education at schools in Europe* (e.g. Rothgangel et al. 2014) documents. A growing gap between provision of education about religion and worldviews and the changing worldviews landscape in Europe, is the main point in a comparative article in that book, called 'New social patterns: old structures? How the countries of Western Europe deal with religious plurality in education' (Bråten 2014). It is thus interesting that it is in crisis, according to psychologists referenced by Taves, that meaning-making happens.

Shaw (2020) explores the idea of religious literacy as a way forwards for RE, as a way of preparing young people for a life in diversity (Dinham and Shaw 2017). However, she concludes that application in classrooms now requires the modification to expand it to 'religions and worldviews literacy'. Shaw (2020, 14) notes that there has been a shift in vocabulary in her article-based PhD, from 'religions and beliefs' to 'religions and worldviews' reflecting shifts of language in policy and research, as summarised in Bråten & Everington (2019, 292):

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

In a similar way as CoRE (2018), Shaw (2020, 14) 'keep religion to denote a focus on the conceptual category of religion and employ worldviews to mean religious and non-religious ways of life and ways of understanding life that shape the experience of individuals, groups and communities'. With reference to Bråten's (2018) studies into classroom practices in Norway, she finds that it is used by teachers and students with overlapping meaning with 'religion'. Sometimes it is used as an overarching rubric, as in 'all have a worldview, some are religious some are not'. However, Bråten (170) also argues that both concepts are needed 'as part of a vocabulary where the current plurality can be better described and discussed in school education.'

In her study, Shaw investigated views of stakeholders, pupils, parents and teachers, which is a parallel to Åhs, Poulter, and Kallioniemi (2017, 2019) Finnish study. Both are interested in what 'Religions and Worldviews' education might look like in the classroom, as is also an interest of Everingtons (2018a, 2018b), Bråten (2018) and Freathy & Johns (2019a, b). Shaw suggests a model for exploration of religions and worldviews as category in the classroom which draws the attention to the construction of knowledge and foregrounds reflexivity. Shaw (2020, 56) suggests the need for situated knowledge and increased epistemic awareness". I see how Shaw's term 'worldviews literacy' could be acquired to explain how worldviews are formed.

Åhs, Poulter, and Kallioniemi (2017, 2019) is reporting from case studies into partially integrative religions and worldviews education facilitated within the segregated model in Finland. This study would be particularly interesting for other context with segregated systems, because a partially integrated model could accommodate both those who argue the importance of nurturing into 'own' tradition to enculturate a safe own position within the plural society, and those who argue that learning to live in a diverse culture is dependent on possibility of dialogue, of meeting 'others'. Most pupils in the study, however, see few reasons not to learn together, and Åhs and co-researchers regard this as mirroring the lifeworld of the pupils better. The heterogeneity and lived dimensions of pupil's worldviews are noted, included the point that worldviews do not conform to secular or religious, but are more diverse. Pupils lifeworld makes 'worldviews reflexivity' paramount as the positionality of all starting points will become pertinent in an integrated model. This would make the

personal positions and meaning-making as process more central in relation to the traditional 'learning facts' about traditions of a World Religions paradigm.

The Swedish tradition is interesting when it comes to personal worldviews, or situational meaning-making (SM), as it starts from an interest to explore children's answer to life-questions (Hartmann 1985; Alberts 2007; Gunnarsson 2008; Gustavsson 2020). A characteristic of the Swedish scene is another vice the early shift to an integrated Religious Study model. However, this subject has been criticised for reflecting a secular normativity, or rather perhaps an epistemic horizon where an oft taken for granted Swedish post-Christian positions becomes a non-reflected starting point (Kittleman Flensner 2015). However, Gustavsson (2020) research describes also how young adults include both religious and other worldviews in their 'existential configurations', which take place in these individuals' social context. Shared configurations she notes, refer to shared framework, such as having a Christian outlook on life. The idea of shared framework is also found in Aadnanes, who in his 2012 edition of *Livssyn*<sup>3</sup> ('Lifeviews') account for three main areas or context (in Norway) for formation of worldviews, acknowledging that there are others. This is Christianity as cultural framework, ideas of secular worldviews and ideologies, and worldviews characterised by new religious perspectives (spirituality).

What Religions and Worldviews education might look like in a classroom is also an interest of Freathy and John (2019a, 2019b), who launch as a Big Idea *about* RE, that it should be relabelled as 'the *study of religions and worldviews*' (SORW). Big Ideas *in* Education refer to a trend to foreground understanding more than learning of facts. Originating in the natural sciences Wiske (1998) these ideas characterise also the new curricula in Norway (UDIR 2019; Bråten and Skeie 2020). Big ideas for learning *in* RE have been developed especially by Wintersgill (2015), and by adding big ideas *about* RE Freathy and John (2019a) are pointing to the process of learning, of methodological awareness where knowledge is not given to pupils but produced in an enquiry-based style of learning. As in academic studies, findings/produced 'knowledge' is seen as dependant on who the researchers/learner is. Clearly, they are aiming towards a kind of epistemic awareness, which is connected to BQs, especially 2. What is true and what is false (epistemology).

Freathy and John (2019a, 2019b) suggested methodology, RE-searchers, highlights a symbiotic relationship between knowledge and the knower, and rejects a false dichotomy between the object of study and the method of study. Here, 'religion/s' are approached in a non-essentialist way, a point being that there is no agreement over the meaning of the term 'religion'. They subsume 'worldview/s' under the same kind of thinking, thus the 'jungle' from which pupils, as researchers, are to harvest their 'knowing', consists of religions *and* worldviews. While Shaw (2020, 16) call for clarity of the concept, Freathy & John rather suggest embracing the plurality of understandings. They want to invite pupils into the kind of deliberations we find in scholarly disputes. Neither is corresponding to Taves call to distinguish between religion as dependant on culture, and therefore having multiple meanings and worldviews/meaning-making as a pan-humanistic and even transhumanistic phenomenon grounded in (human) nature.

There are several points of correspondence between the intent of Taves and co researchers and discussions of worldviews in education, such as linking it to existential or 'big' questions and attempting to establish worldviews as a main rubric. We also find the distinction of individual meaning-making and meaning systems. I believe that this is reflecting a need to expand the vocabulary in a situation where crisis in both fields can be described as connected to the worldviews landscape changing while the categories did not (Woodhead 2012). In both cases there is an interest in foregrounding meaning-making in the lived lives of people and moving away from merely 'learning facts' about World Religions. I find that both suggestions from educational research/classroom research, and Taves theoretical contribution, is relevant towards the aim of being able to work in education to explain how worldviews are formed. In Taves original framing of the term, I see a potential that can be developed further in educational contexts. Especially some aspects of Taves suggestions are not found on the educational side yet, such as the grounding in the meaning-making system from Psychology and biology and evolutionary theories, and the following claim that

'worldviews' is panhuman and thus stable and potentially clear, while 'religion' is culturally dependent, vs. unstable and contested.

## Final discussions and conclusion

In this article, I review some recent discussions among educationalists against the suggestions of Taves and co-researchers, thus a number of issues such as the worldview concept background in German philosophy or development in psychological research is not explicitly on the agenda. This does of course not mean that they are not relevant for the broader debate. The purpose here is simply to review to what extent the idea of worldviews as framed by Taves and her co-researchers is relevant to and corresponding with discussions among educationalists. I find that in Taves suggestions there are great potential towards explaining how worldviews are formed, and potential to develop ways of exploring this in education. Further I find elements of intent to explain how worldviews are formed in present educationalist debates, but Taves arguments inspire towards new questions, for instance through a focus on meaning making as something that happens in the lived lives of people, sometimes unconsciously. It can be studied through looking at the way people live. A main purpose has also been to argue for including views on non-binary worldviews, as research into a growing number of people identifying as 'not religious' ('nones') has shown that they hold diverse worldviews that sometimes defy a binary distinction of religion vs. non-religion. A further point here is how non-religion is not necessarily the same as 'secular'. From this it could be possible to go further into arguments about different meanings of 'secular' as well (e.g. Knott 2013; Niemi 2018).

For the purpose of including education of worldviews formation, I find Shaws (2020, 25), research to be of interest as she, also based on knowledge about 'nones', suggests an aim in education of making sense of secularity, irreligion and the relationship between them. The non-binary category is suited for exploring this relationship between the religious and the secular. Taves notes, there is a need for an even-handed basis for comparison of worldviews, in an interdisciplinary space. Taves herself works interdisciplinary, Kooij (2016) describes how the concept is used in different disciplines (as do others who have explored the concept, e.g. Aerts et al. 1984). In Education, integrated models of Religious Education could be developed further as a kind of interdisciplinary space where worldviews could be explored even-handedly, i.e. open to the fact that worldviews are composed of religious and non-religious elements, and are sometimes non-binary. The term 'worldviews literacy' (Shaw 2020) could be acquired for the purpose of teaching which is aiming at explaining how worldviews are formed.

Already in 2013, Cush challenged the religious-secular divide in an editorial of the British Journal of Religious Education. However, obstacles to *implementation of worldview education* that promotes understanding even how secular or even non-binary worldviews are formed, includes that legal frameworks could prevent it and that politicians seem more preoccupied with allocating a role for religions to preserving, whatever nations, 'values' in education than to teach about how worldviews are formed today. Arguments formulated from a World Religions paradigm perspective, could include the idea of religions and worldviews as bounded, and the basic notion of a clear distinction between the 'religious' and the 'non-religious'/secular as something which is taken for granted. Freathy & John (2019b, 10) defy arguments in the English scene that the suggestion of CoRE (2018) to change from 'Religious Education' to 'Religions and Worldviews education' would water down the subject. They argue for "the creation of a new concoction that concentrates on both 'religion' and 'worldviews' (of which religions are examples) and the relationship between them.

The history of use, including in education, of the core concepts 'religion' and 'worldviews', is an obstacle to renewing the subject to better reflect the lived lives of people today, and thus be more relevant. For example, it was found both in the English and Norwegian context that in practical teaching one worldview had a dominant position: the *secular humanist worldview* (Bråten and Everington 2019). For the part of Norway, this is underlined by Schjetne and Borchgrevink Hansen



(2019) article 'Emplotting a privileged position. The construction of the history of secular humanism in Norwegian religious education textbooks.'

Taking the above into account, I see a need for a further distinction in education between different kinds of worldviews; namely between worldviews in a *super narrow* sense: meaning secular humanism, *narrow sense*: referring to non-religious and/or secular, a *wide sense*: including religious and non-religious/secular worldviews, and a *super wide sense*: including also non-binary worldviews. Of course, taking the naturalist perspective of Taves, an even wider conception is possible, one in which it is seen that also animals and some sort of artificial intelligence, have worldviews, which can be deduced from their abilities to act in the world. This is one meaning of 'worldviews' which pupils exploring the 'jungle of knowledge' with the RE-searchers approach, could discover.

Turning back to Breivik, he may have had idiosyncratic experiences in life that he explicitly integrated into a larger narrative frame proposed by conspiracy theorists that led him to kill others. This raises an issue of the extent to which the meaning one person finds in an event is shared by others. There is potential in this for further exploration of the complicated process of worldview formation. There might be something to gain for the relevance of teaching about worldviews from looking into recent theories of conspiracy theory and contemporary religion. For instance Robertson, Asprem and Dyrendal (2019) have noted that: 'framing conspiracy theories as narratives that are situated in everyday life, entangled with power, which spin out of and fuel group processes, express and enforce social identity, and that sometimes evolve from and into complex worldviews' allows for seeing conspiracy theories in, about and as religion".

In this article, I have discussed the potential of developing a kind of worldview education which have the purpose of enabling teachers and students to understand how worldviews are formed. However, the issue of formation of worldviews is complicated and deserve careful analysis and further discussions. Suggesting including this in school education opens up for many new questions and for further research and debate. Here I only explore how some ideas from Ann Taves and co-researchers can be helpful towards such an aim and pay special attention to research into 'non-religious people which is reporting that their worldviews can defy the secular-religious divide and be categorised as non-binary. This should therefore also be on our agenda in education. Taves have suggested using worldviews as an overarching rubric, and I see this as corresponding with some suggestions towards worldview education in schools. It signals a need for a new language for certain parts of human activity related to *meaning-making*. Bringing in from psychology ideas of nonconscious forms of meaning-making that happens in the lived lives of people, brings to the fore an existing critique of some ideas of worldviews as having too much emphasis on the cognitive aspect, thus highlighting the need for further exploration of and use of the concept in a new way which emphasises the meaning-making aspect of it.

In some form worldview education is already a part of school subjects in Norway, Sweden, England, Finland, Netherlands and beyond, and scholars are now investigating and discussing the implication of this. By this article, I hope to contribute to this debate, by juxtaposition arguments in Religious Studies and Religious Education which are both related to the changing societal landscapes of religion and worldviews today. Reviews of some recent arguments in the debate about worldviews in education against the suggestions of Taves, to define worldviews in terms of Big Questions, draw upon a global meaning system theory used by psychologists, shows a degree of overlap, and, I would argue, a potential usefulness in combining the theoretical suggestions by Taves with those grounded in educational research. Biological and evolutionary grounding of the concepts which according to Taves would make the worldview concept more stable than the highly contested concept of religion, is however, not yet found in the educational context, which rather pulls the discussion of 'worldviews' into the same kind of discourse of contestedness, as is characteristic for 'religion'. I welcome further debate on this issue.

## Notes

1. Democracy and citizenship, Sustainable development and Public health and mastery of life.
2. <https://22juliseret.no/information-in-english/>
3. This student reader was published in four editions, the first in 1982, then new editions in 1992, 2002 and 2012.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

## Notes on contributor

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