

Vorwissenschaftliche Arbeit im Rahmen der Reifeprüfung

# **A comparison of multicultural education in the USA and the EU with reference to Austria**

**Katarina Zivkovic**

8D 2018/19

Bundesgymnasium und Bundesrealgymnasium Wien 4  
Wiedner Gymnasium/Sir Karl Popper Schule  
A-1040 Wien, Wiedner Gürtel 68

Betreuungslehrperson: Mag.a Eva Knechtelsdorfer

Vorgelegt am 11.02.2019

## **Abstract**

This VWA's topic is the implementation of multicultural learning in contemporary education policies. It contains an empirical chapter in which US, EU and Austrian educational approaches to multiculturalism are compared to one another using critical analysis methods.

Many of the criteria for the analysis are based on theories by a pioneer in multicultural education, James A. Banks. The relevant theories and criteria of analysis are explained in the theoretical part of the paper, where their importance and impact on students is also elaborated on.

In short, this paper assigns one of two approaches to each document and further examines which dimensions (another category of approaches) influence which policies. The results show that the most relevant approach is the *Decision Making Approach*, which influences one document in both the US and the EU and is essential to the two Austrian policies. As far as the dimensions are concerned, equity pedagogy, an empowering school culture and the minimal group paradigm play an important role in several documents.

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## 1 Introduction

Since the 1950s and 60s, multiculturalism has undergone big changes in both Europe and the US. Today, 32.5 million Europeans (4.38% of the European population) are non-nationals (cf. Catarci 2014, 14). The number of immigrants in Austria has increased by 35% in the last ten years and there are three traditional minority groups, Croats, Carinthian Slovenes and Hungarians, that are granted specific rights. The largest ethnic minority groups in Austria according to the World Population Review (2018) are Serbs, Germans and Turks. In the US, 39.4% of the population are persons of colour (including White persons of Hispanic or Latino descent) and by 2050, they are expected to constitute half of the population (cf. U.S. Census Bureau 2002). This increase in cross-cultural exchange can sometimes trigger negative developments. Terrorism and far-right politics goad each other and cause racism and nationalism to spread. In a world that increasingly evolves towards globalisation, multicultural education is responsible for finding solutions to ever new challenges arising in cross-cultural relations.

This paper examines US-, EU- and Austrian policies on multicultural education, compares their approaches and dimensions (a term describing a specific kind of approach to multicultural education), as well as critically analyses how they reflect popular theories in this field. Much of this paper's theory is based on the work of James Banks, one of the founders of multicultural education. To examine a teaching style as multifaceted and complex as contemporary multicultural education, this paper precisely defines which accomplishments are expected from this type of teaching. While in the 1970s, lessons on African American's rights on Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday would likely have improved many students' attitudes towards Black Americans, modern multicultural teaching must go beyond the addition of ethnically diverse content to increase equity.

An attempt to explain the reasons behind common ambiguities in definitions and in goals of the policies is made, and it is examined which approaches governments and policymakers prefer and avoid, respectively. At large, the purpose of this paper is to illustrate current developments in multicultural education and point out accomplishments and potential areas of improvement. This is done by finding answers to the following questions in the theoretical and the analytical chapters of this paper:

Q1: What are the most important current approaches to and goals of multicultural education?

Q2: What are the documents' approaches to multicultural education? How do these reflect multicultural theory?

Q3: What are the documents' goals of multicultural education? How do these reflect the theoretical goals?

Chapter 2 provides with possible definitions of multicultural education and defines what this paper means by the term. It moreover states why a definition that does not distinguish multicultural education from intercultural education was chosen. Chapter 3 explains the most central goals of multicultural education. In chapter 4, the dimensions of multicultural education are explained and used to formulate criteria of analysis, and the same applies to the approaches described in chapter 5. The last theoretical chapter, chapter 6, describes two teaching strategies that are destructive to multicultural education and clarifies how they can be recognised and counteracted.

The final part of this paper, the analysis, compares US-, EU- and Austrian policies to one another. Although many factors can influence the effectiveness of multicultural education, the theoretical discourse focuses on the ones that stood out in the documents. In short, the aim is to assign one of two approaches (the *Transformation Approach*, the *Decision Making Approach*) to each policy and furthermore analyse which dimensions had an impact on them. Attention is drawn to aspects in accordance or disaccord to the other policy documents as well as to the issuing authority's own principles and self-defined goals.

## 2 Definition of multicultural education

What started on the one hand as an attempt at opening the job market for immigrants in Europe in the 1950s and on the other hand as a try to improve the representation of African American issues in mainstream US schools in the 1960s became what multicultural education is today: a form of citizenship education (cf. Allemann-Ghionda 2008, 1-6, cited in Catarci 2014, 97) that seeks to enable all students to profit equally from it (cf. Holm and Zilliacus 2009, 6-28). Although multicultural education's beginnings date back to the 1950s and 60s, scholars have been unable to reduce it to a uniform definition. Consequently, there are now several widely accepted interpretations of its purpose and tasks. James A. and Cherry A. McGee Banks argue that

[m]ulticultural education may mean a curriculum that incorporates the experiences of ethnic groups of color, [or] a program [in multicultural education] may include the experiences of both ethnic groups and women. (Banks and Banks 2007, 7)

They claim that a "total school reform effort designed to increase educational equity for a range of cultural, ethnic, and economic groups" (Banks and Banks 2007, 7) is the main purpose of their efforts. To achieve this, schools are tasked with teaching youth how to make responsible decisions, establish community goals, effectively communicate across cultures (cf. Liddicoat and Scarino 2013, 22, cited in Laaber 2015, 6) as well as change and challenge the current system.

Some scholars criticise a limited understanding of culture (cf. Ladson-Billings 1992, 51) and make efforts to expand the remit of multicultural education to include issues outside "the triumvirate of race, class, and gender" (Ladson-Billings 1992, 61). By this, some mean to facilitate the resolution of issues rooted in complex identities. To give an example: While traditional multiculturalism may recommend the same methods of inclusion for a disabled and an able-bodied Latino male, more recent scholars may recognise that disabled people can find accessing multicultural classes more difficult. Many modern scholars of multiculturalism understand multicultural education as an "umbrella movement" (Ladson-Billings 102, 55) that also deals with issues of language, ability, sexual orientation, immigrant identity and aboriginal identity. Especially the topic of language is often discussed as in some countries, for example, Austria, multicultural education and foreign language learning are inseparably linked.

However, efforts to expand multicultural education's area of responsibility also face criticism by some members of marginalised ethnic groups. According to Ladson-Billings (1992, 55-62), the main points of criticism are that the combat against racism could be overshadowed by other struggles for equality, and that fighting too many fights might exhaust multiculturalism's capacities and weaken its ability to effect social change.

## 2.1 Distinction between multicultural and intercultural education

When writing about multicultural education, one must inevitably also discuss intercultural learning and possible differences between the two. Although there is no final consensus about whether there is a distinction nor wherein it lies, this chapter will go into detail about different ways of interpretation and clarify which definition is used in this paper.

Many popular concepts of inclusive education are closely intertwined and differentiating between them can be challenging. This is also the case for multicultural and intercultural learning. To some experts, they are merely two different words for the same concept. While in most of Europe, except for the UK and the Netherlands, *intercultural education* is the favoured term, in the US and Canada scholars speak of *multicultural education* (cf. Faas, 2010, cited in Faas et al. 2014, 305). However, the two terms can also be used to describe substantially different approaches to education.

In Europe, the EU commission and the Council of Europe adhere to the UNESCO's preference of the term *intercultural*. This preference is caused by the belief that the term conveys "a dynamic concept and refers to evolving relations between cultural groups" (Unesco 2006, 17) and that it "results from 'intercultural' exchange and dialogue" (Unesco 2006, 17). Intercultural education is understood as aiming towards a society in which members of different ethnic communities live and interact and that is made sustainable through communication, understanding and respect. Multicultural education, on the other hand, is seen as the learning about other cultures with the aim to foster a form of coexistence of ethnic groups that is accepting or at least tolerant (cf. Unesco 2006, 18). Many scholars in Europe describe multiculturalism as being too centred around cultural differences instead of similarities (cf. Kincheloe and Steinberg 1997, cited in Faas et al. 2014, 306) and criticise that by devoting little effort to detecting and combating racist societal structures, the creation of social justice is inhibited.

The term 'intercultural education' was first coined in the 1980s by European scholars because the use of a different term allowed independence from US research and served as a means to distance this new approach from more traditional American ones. It was claimed to foster a system in which every single individual strives towards equity. For this purpose, it should reveal institutionalised racism and reconsider the impact of racism from the perspectives of oppressed groups (cf. Faas et al. 2014, 306). And for the most part, the EU continues to refrain from using *multicultural* as a descriptor for their education policies.

Today, there is a notable difference in how the US and the EU deal with issues of multi- and interculturality. While the US dedicates most of its efforts to African Americans and other

minorities that came to the US many generations ago, the EU focuses on more recent immigrants and their descendants. The exception are new member states, which are most interested in including indigenous people and territorial minorities. Moreover, while religious knowledge is an integral aspect of intercultural education in Europe, US scholars largely ignore interfaith differences as Christians make up the vast majority of the population and because all public schools are secular.

However, the line should really be drawn elsewhere: In multicultural as well as in intercultural education, there is a large difference between conservative and critical approaches, the distinction between which is more suitable for delimitation. In both multi- and intercultural education, “[t]he more traditional and conservative approaches focus on learning to get along and learning about different cultures” while more critical scholars aim at achieving “social justice as a core value [and at] furthering democracy and working against prejudice and discrimination” (Holm and Zilliacus 2009, 14). The documents this paper looks into largely employ the critical *Transformation Approach* and *Decision Making Approach*. *Multicultural* will be used as an umbrella term and the word *intercultural* only mentioned if policy documents use it, in which case its meaning in that specific context will be clarified.

### 3 Goals of multicultural education

The European attempt at multicultural education in the 1950s was on the one hand targeted at teaching immigrants the new languages and on the other hand at helping them to retain their mother tongues. Since then, European multicultural education has evolved to also deal with aspects such as faith, language and gender (cf. Allemann-Ghionda 2008, 1-6, cited in Catarci 2014, 97) and aims to establish an educational system that supports learners of all backgrounds (cf. Holm and Zilliacus 2009, 6-28).

A decade after the education reform in Europe, what is known today as multicultural education grew out of the civil rights movement in America as African American's struggle for justice began its fight against racism in schools. Up to then, the objective of educating non-mainstream youth had been disassociation from their family and community, and schools had aimed at assimilating students by socially and politically alienating them from their native cultures (cf. Banks 2007, 20-21). During the civil rights movement, ethnic studies classes were offered for the first time. And although many efforts were still limited to courses separate from mainstream education, more and more schools began integrating multicultural content into their regular curricula (cf. Holm and Zilliacus 2009, 1-15). Following the example of previous international movements such as the Declaration of Human Rights, a common aspiration of inclusive education became democratic, moral and equitable national and world societies. Modern multicultural education cannot be limited to learning how to fit ethnic minorities into mainstream structures as a means to combat racial tensions. Unlike before the civil rights movement, educators now have the responsibility to teach children the necessary skills for active citizenship.

Notably, as educational structures still discriminate against students of colour, special attention must be given to their inclusion in multicultural education. To achieve this, education must allow students to look at structures from different perspectives and moreover help them understand which perspectives influence the content they are being taught. Students should learn the skills necessary to participate in productive and rewarding cultural exchange with people from diverse ethnic and cultural groups (cf. Banks 2007, 2-26).

## 4 Dimensions of multicultural education

James Banks formulated five so-called 'dimensions' that describe the fronts on which multicultural education seeks to change the education system (cf. Banks and Banks 2004, 3-6). This chapter will look at the two dimensions implemented in the documents chosen for analysis. It will moreover examine ways of applying these dimensions.

### 4.1 Equity pedagogy

*Equity pedagogy* is a form of citizenship education that focuses on giving students of all backgrounds equal educational opportunities (cf. Banks 2007, 8-9, 83-85). *Equity* differs from *equality* in that while equality ensures equal access to resources, equity actively supports those who need more help to catch up. J.A. Banks defines equity pedagogy as

teaching strategies and classroom environments that help students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups to attain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively within and to help create and perpetuate a just, humane, and democratic society. (Banks 2007, 92-93)

The underlying assumption to equity pedagogy is that all students have the ability to learn. It encourages to challenge racism found in various institutions, for example, the media or the judicial system (cf. Banks 2007, 104). Equity pedagogy is a highly individualised form of learning focusing on the students' personal experiences and interests and educating about issues that are familiar to them (cf. Banks 2007, 98). Educators should build their teaching on the students' cultural experiences and consider, for instance, those whose first language is not English. It is moreover advantageous for teachers to have a profound understanding of their students' culture or even be of the same background as their students.

Educators must keep in mind that merely changing teacher training or the curriculum will not suffice for equity pedagogy to succeed. Rather, it is the entire education system that requires a reformation (cf. Banks 2007, 8-9, 83-85). Equity pedagogy demands of both teachers and students to destroy existing social structures that encourage racial inequality. The questioning of current institutionalised assumptions about structures such as the US society or the student body is an indispensable means to create equal learning opportunities for all students (cf. Banks 2007, 93).

Successfully implemented equity pedagogy must therefore educate not only about different cultures but also and more importantly call students to action in regard to challenging institutionalised racism and inequality.

## 4.2 Empowering school culture and social structure

An *empowering school culture and social structure* is a dimension of multicultural education that demands the reorganisation of the entire education system while considering that the structures include more than just the teachers and curricula (cf. Banks 2007, 8-9). To build an empowering environment, this dimension must promote the equity of people of different races, social classes and genders (cf. Banks and Banks 2009, 22). Special attention should be paid to student grouping practices, interactions involving students or staff of diverse backgrounds, achievement differences, as well as differences in representation in gifted and special education programmes. Essential to this dimension is that all school staff must participate in the restructuring (cf. Banks 2007, 83-85).

## 5 Approaches to multicultural education

According to Banks, there are four approaches, or *levels of integration of multicultural content*, that indicate the extent to which and the way content about diverse ethnic groups is taught in schools. They build on one another and the successful application of all previous approaches is prerequisite to moving on to the next level. This chapter will look at the levels that are incorporated into the selected policies and examine how they can be implemented in education.

### 5.1 The Transformation Approach

The *Transformation Approach* is the penultimate level of integration. It attempts to look at historical events and contemporary issues from the perspectives of all ethnic groups involved (cf. Banks and Banks 2009, 256). Aiming beyond mere addition of content about different cultures, it should help students gain a better understanding of their communities' complexity (cf. Gay and Banks 1975, 461-465, cited in Banks and Banks 2009, 256). The *Transformation Approach* focuses on the interactions of diverse cultural groups that shaped society.

For example, Banks and Banks (cf. 2009, 258-259) claim that teaching US literature without including the influence of important authors of colour would give an incomplete view on the topic due to the close interconnection of mainstream and minority literature. At the same time, merely listing influential books from authors of colour would not classify as transformative if critical reflection of these works was not encouraged. This last aspect of teaching is especially crucial to the *Transformation Approach* and a major indicator for this approach in the following analyses.

### 5.2 The Decision Making and Social Action Approach (DMSA Approach)

Contrary to education in the past, which oftentimes aimed to teach uncritical acceptance of existing structures and institutions, the *Decision Making and Social Action Approach*, often only called *Decision Making Approach*, strives towards a more socially critical society whose members are politically active and responsible and demonstrate decision-making. This approach is the ultimate level of integration and a transformative curriculum is a prerequisite for its implementation.

The DMSA approach requires more than the mere teaching of hard facts. Pupils should go through a reflection process during which they take a new look at their own attitudes towards discrimination by examining real life situations, fiction and biographies. Banks and Banks (2007, 258-259) claim that this approach is especially suitable for conversations about racist incidents individual students may have observed or been involved in. Teachers employing this strategy need to consider the crucial role guidance and support play in cross-cultural contact. The desired result of this approach, meaning the acquisition of skills necessary for responsible social action,

can only be achieved by providing students with the skills needed to analyse social injustices in their communities and by encouraging them to take actions to combat them.

Summing up, a combination of skills needed for reflection processes and motivation to fight for racial justice is what indicates the application of this approach.

## 6 Destructive strategies in multicultural teaching

Despite the progress that has been made since the 1950s and 1960s, respectively, many school curricula are still only reflective of the mainstream population. The following chapters will examine two detrimental strategies that are still common in multicultural education today. In the analysis ensuing this chapter, it will be inspected whether the policy documents recognise these strategies in their respective country's general curricula and how they are addressed.

### 6.1 Teaching from a Eurocentric perspective

A Eurocentric curriculum is one "in which concepts, events, and situations are viewed primarily from the perspectives of European nations and cultures and in which Western civilization is emphasized" (Banks and Banks 2007, 472-473). Eurocentrism is the direct consequence of only victors writing history and largely ignoring the perspectives of other groups.

Minority students in an educational system that teaches Eurocentric knowledge suffer harm because their school environment lacks social equity and fails to reflect their experiences and ambitions, instead alienating their cultures. Many also experience a gap between the cultures of their school and their community. However, it is important to note that Eurocentric teaching is not exclusively harmful for students of non-European descent. It can lead mainstream students to develop a deceptive sense of superiority and a false perception of the relationships between foreign cultures and their community. It moreover robs the opportunity to study various cultures from them and denies them the diverse perspectives that could hereby be gained (cf. Banks and Banks 2007, 247-248).

Many concepts taught in school are secretly Eurocentric and have politically oppressive functions. For example, current teachings of US history have been criticised for suggesting that Native Americans were lacking in culture before colonisation (cf. Banks and Banks 2007, 247-248). Using those assumptions, even attempts at justifying the annihilation of the Native American population were made (cf. Banks 2007, 17). A central task of multicultural education is to detect and critically scrutinise similar institutionalised Eurocentric knowledge. Objectivity should always be questioned from a multicultural point of view and involve dialogue between students of disparate backgrounds. Especially in the case of historical victors and vanquished, their pasts are always interwoven and the understanding of one's own history requires the learning about the others'. Knowing about these different perspectives can help students become more thoughtful and reflective of different issues.

It can already be noticed that the trend of Eurocentrism is receding in some fields. For example, many universities are replacing their Western civilisations classes with world history lessons.

Moreover, scholars in fields such as European history are slowly being replaced by scholars studying a wide variety of regions. However, in other subject areas, perspectives have yet to shift. In the analysis part of this paper, it will be examined whether different policies recognise the Eurocentric aspects of the current education system and the negative impacts they can have. For this purpose, the analysis will mainly focus on how the documents appeal to teaching youth to question content's objectivity.

## 6.2 Minimal group paradigm

Another name for this model of society is *social identity theory*. Supporters of this theory state that in any given community, every individual tends to divide all other members into an *in-group* and an *out-group*. The in-group is reserved for people who have perceived shared identities with the person in question, whereas the members of the out-group are seen as the *others* (cf. Banks 2007, 103). This process, which is appropriately called *othering*, can occur even if there are no strained relationships within the group (cf. Banks and Banks 2007, 4). Groups that have experienced *othering* are excluded from the in-group in many regards, among these, education.

## 7 Analysis

The following chapters seek to analyse six different policies on inclusive education with regard to the above explained dimensions of and approaches to multicultural education. They will look at how the general goals of US, EU and Austrian multicultural learning are reflected in the chosen documents as well as examine which dimensions influenced the making of these policies. The main questions underlying this analysis are:

Which documents qualify for the *Transformation Approach* or the *DMSA Approach*?

Which dimensions are implemented and which destructive strategies recognised? What indicates the implementation of the particular dimension? What shows the recognition of the particular destructive strategy?

After a general analysis, the EU policies are directly compared to the US and the Austrian policies, and finally, the Austrian documents are compared to the US ones, all with the objective of answering the above-mentioned questions.

In the graph provided below, the policy documents are listed and the approaches, dimensions and strategies that they employ assigned to each policy.

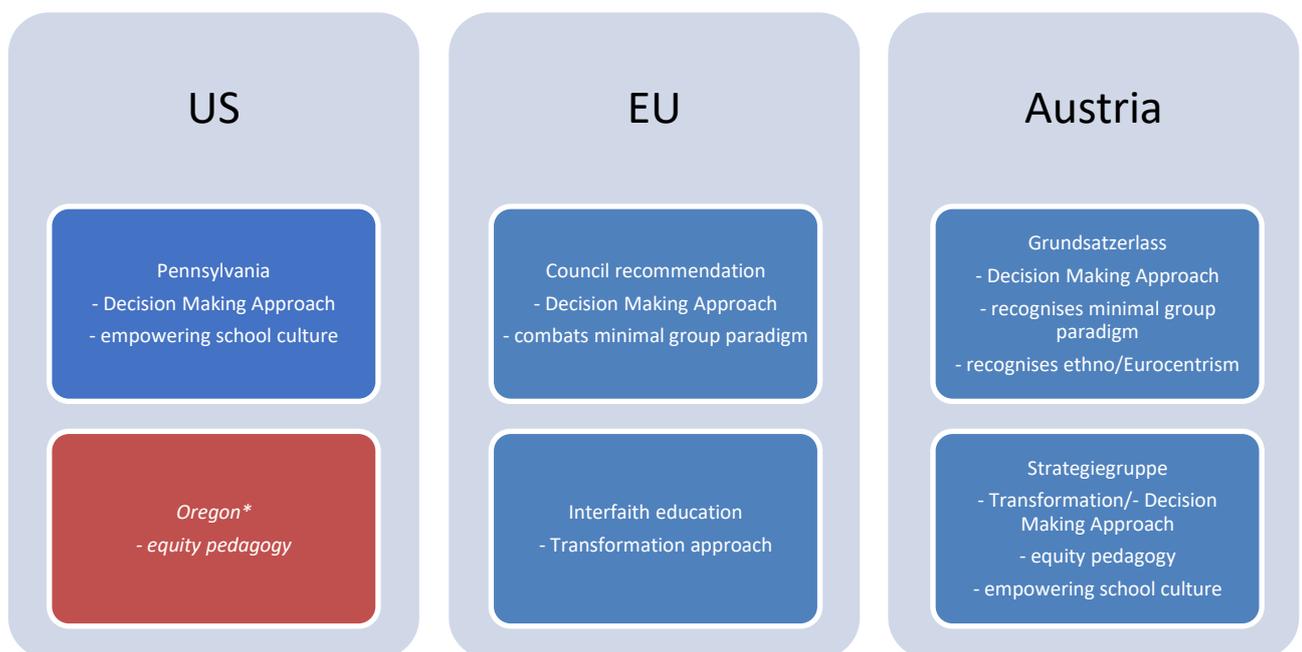


Table 1: Overview of policy documents (author's own graph)

\*This policy does not allow categorisation as either transformative/decision making and socially active.

### 7.1.1 Analysis of US-policies

Since the civil rights movement, the US approach to multicultural education has undergone big changes. This chapter will analyse what multicultural education looks like in contemporary US schools. First, an overview of two selected US documents on multicultural education, namely the Oregon “Resolution on Safe & Welcoming Schools for All Students Regardless of National Origin, Immigration Status, or Documentation Status” and the “Pennsylvania Equity and Inclusion Toolkit”, will be provided. The reason why those two specifically were chosen is that their policies can be best analysed using the criteria this paper elaborates on.

Both the Oregon and the Pennsylvanian policy attempt to include issues outside the so-called “triumvirate of race, class, and gender” (Ladson-Billings 1992, 61). However, these efforts are only limitedly successful. The Oregon education board for instance calls for a school system in which student success is not dependent on “national origin, immigration status, or native language” (cf. Oregon State Board of Education 2007, 1). But while this means that the policy focuses on other aspects than the triumvirate, it still fails to include many facets of identity and oversimplifies the issue. In the case of Pennsylvania, the fifth page of the document includes a letter written by Pedro Riviera, the Pennsylvania Secretary of Education, in which he claims that the policy not only includes racial issues, but also deals with questions of national origin, ancestry, religion, gender, gender expression or identity, sexual orientation and ability (cf. Wolf 2017, v). Notwithstanding, this assertion is the only instance in which identities other than race or nationality are elaborated on. Apart from trying to simplify the task at hand, a possible reason for the non-fulfilment of their promises may also be the criticism that efforts to expand multicultural education’s area of responsibility face from some members of marginalised ethnic groups.

All suggestions in the “Resolution on Safe & Welcoming Schools for All Students Regardless of National Origin, Immigration Status, or Documentation Status” are directed towards the Oregon education service districts. It is a prime example for a US policy that does address immigrant rights in education. According to the Oregon State Board of Education (2007, 2), the need for more welcoming learning environments arose because “national events and the current political climate have caused uncertainty and anxiety.” The impact of current migration policies that threaten immigrant safety and can have negative effects especially on documentation statuses is mentioned several times. Concerning this, the Oregon State Board of Education confirms its support for the protection of immigrants, refugees and religious minorities. The dimension of equity pedagogy played an important role in drafting this document as it recognises that immigrants and some other groups need more support than mainstream students to succeed in education.

Furthermore, it asks that

Oregon school districts and education service districts consult with local and state community partners to develop, implement and/or strengthen comprehensive networks of support for students and families who are experiencing increased vulnerability (Oregon State Board of Education 2007, 2),

indicating that, in line with equity pedagogy, a reformation of the entire education system is demanded.

In the “Pennsylvania Equity and Inclusion Toolkit”, the main objective is to minimise the community’s trauma after racially motivated incidents. The greatest shortcoming of this policy document remains the ignorance towards improving cross-cultural relations outside of crises. Within its purpose of dealing with incidents, however, the document does a thorough job at providing with information and in particular contains many resources for further research relevant for teachers. The policy determines that understanding prejudices and their underlying causes is a prerequisite for a positive reaction to crises. Pennsylvania’s governor Wolf (2017, 15) writes that

[w]ithout knowledge of current and historical challenges, [...] it is extremely difficult to respond to an incident effectively and in a way that maintains credibility and authenticity, which are vital to long-term progress.

Wolf (2007, 9-10) notably does not make the mistake of equating minor issues to grave incidents. Rather, he adjusts the suggested measures to the severity of the incident, which he divides into three levels of severity.

The Toolkit deems an empowering school culture preventative and suggests school climate surveys and needs assessments to determine the unique needs of every school. Notably, the linked surveys do not exclusively address students and teachers, but also families, indicating that he wishes to assess the entire education system in line with the aim of creating an *empowering school culture and social structure*. Moreover, the Equity Toolkit explicitly states that not just teachers, but all office staff should contribute to a welcoming school environment. This is the most obvious instance at which changes concerning the entire school system are proposed. The Toolkit manages to comprehensively explain which considerations are necessary to allow its suggestions to be implemented. It asks questions about the status quo and potential areas for improvement at the time of the incident and encourages administrators to consider the level of knowledge school staff already has and to search for available resources and partners (cf. Wolf 2007, 14-27).

Whereas the Oregon resolution focuses on multicultural education outside of crises and makes rather general recommendations, the Pennsylvania policy tries to provide school staff with precise guidelines for dealing with racially charged incidents at school. This makes the former more suitable for its purpose of long-term change while the latter is quicker to apply in a crisis.

### 7.1.2 Analysis of EU-policies

Concerning European multicultural education, this paper analyses two policies: One is an information document written by the Council of Europe on European interfaith education. It is called “Teaching religion and convictional facts” and attempts to provide guidance for dealing with religious diversity, which has historically been a crucial aspect to European multicultural education. The other policy, the “Council recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching”, was published in 2018 and stands out for its recency.

The Council recommendation is above all a positive example for a policy which clearly explains its values to the reader. It does that already in the first paragraph, in which they are enumerated as follows: „respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities“ (Valchev 2018, 1), and the document successfully orients itself to them. With regards to these values, goals of and very general guidelines to multicultural education are established without going into much detail.

The document “Teaching religion and convictional facts” focuses on interfaith learning as a part of multicultural education. It explains that many issues society faces nowadays, inter alia xenophobia, terrorism, ethnic conflicts or fundamentalism, have a religious aspect to them, and it makes religions and politics responsible for finding common ground on which to build their attempts at solving social problems. According to the Parliamentary Assembly, the values of the Council of Europe are rooted in the three Abrahamic faiths. Through “teaching of the full range of religious knowledge, with a view to developing cultural knowledge and religious practices” (Council of Europe 2008), students should be enabled to discover various religions and understand their customs. In the document on interfaith education, its goals are enumerated as follows:

to make pupils discover the religions practised in their own and neighbouring countries, to make them perceive that everyone has the same right to believe that their religion is the “true faith” and that other people are not different human beings through having a different religion or not having a religion at all. (Council of Europe 2008)

The leading role of teachers in multicultural and interfaith dialogue is especially stressed by the Council of Europe, which proposes courses to prepare them for working with diverse classrooms and practicing multicultural dialogue (cf. Council of Europe 2008). The Council of Europe (2008) furthermore emphasises that the purpose of interfaith education is to provide the youth with the knowledge and tolerance necessary for functioning in a democratic society and to teach them how to deal with fanaticism. Learning about various religions is also crucial in understanding historical developments that shaped societies over the centuries. However, the Council of Europe also stresses that the secularity of the state must be respected in the process.

To conclude, although multicultural education in the EU is praised by scholars such as Allemann-Ghionda (2008) for including language and gender in its policies, this is not the case in either of the EU guidelines. The aspect of religion, however, is the subject of one important EU policy.

### 7.1.3. Analysis of Austrian policies

To examine the role of multicultural education in Austrian curricula, two documents were chosen: One was published by the Strategieguppe Globales Lernen, an organisation comprised of representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Austrian Development Agency, of various NGOs, as well as of experts in the fields of school practice and research. The Federal Ministry is one of the strategy group's most important partners even though the strategy group is independent from it. The strategy group was commissioned by the government to issue a suggestion for an Austrian strategy concerning global education. The other document is a fundamental decree called "Grundsatzterlass 2017" which was issued by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and stands out for its recency.

The "Grundsatzterlass 2017" briefly outlines the importance of 'intercultural' schools, lists goals the educational system should be working towards and makes proposals for multicultural competences students should acquire. The Ministry of Education stresses that they did not favour the word *intercultural* over *multicultural* for any other reason than it being more common in German (cf. Hammerschmid 2017). When later talking about the kind of society 'intercultural' education strives towards, it is called a *multicultural* society, indicating that the terms are indeed used interchangeably. Hence, this paper shall continue to refer to this policy as a 'multicultural education' policy. Several EU and UN documents that constitute the framework for the Austrian

goals concerning multicultural learning are mentioned, but their contribution to the decree is not elaborated on.

Relatively at the beginning, readers are provided with the ministry's definition of multicultural education: a teaching method that reveals cultural and societal changes caused by migration and mobility and that should be implemented in all subjects, but also in processes outside the classroom (cf. Hammerschmid 2017). That the objective of the policy's suggestions is a "multicultural society characterised by migration and mobility" <sup>1</sup>(Hammerschmid 2017) is exemplary for the general Western European approach that emphasises migration over historical minorities. The "Grundsatzlerlass" aims to combat Eurocentrism by encouraging the questioning of the curriculum's objectivity. Central objectives of this policy are to detect and critically scrutinise institutionalised Eurocentric knowledge and to assist pupils in "becoming aware of the relativity of one's own perspectives and behaviour" <sup>2</sup>(Hammerschmid 2017). The questioning of one's own impartiality should happen from an as multicultural point of view as possible and involve cultural exchange between students of different backgrounds. The document also emphasises that multicultural education must be alert to discrimination in students' daily lives and take a biographic approach to teaching the impact inequalities can have. In this sense, the ministry promises to work towards making multicultural learning a more individualised form of education „based on the environment, the previous experiences and points of view of all students" <sup>3</sup>(Hammerschmid 2017).

As far as the strategy group is concerned, they introduce a new teaching strategy called *global learning* with the goal of development towards a "world society" <sup>4</sup>(Strategiegruppe Globales Lernen 2009, 7), which is in line with Austrian multicultural education's recent endeavours. Similar to equity pedagogy, global learning should build on the interests and experiences of every individual student (cf. Globales Lernen 2009, 8-10) but also emphasise the aspect of globalisation in inclusive learning. The developed strategy aims to teach students

to understand these complex developments and recognise one's own responsibility as well as one's opportunity of social participation and contribution to the world society. (Strategiegruppe Globales Lernen 2009, 7)<sup>5</sup>

Interestingly enough, despite foreign language classes being an integral part of multicultural education in Austria, language learning is only elaborated on in these documents once, when it is

<sup>1</sup> „die migrations- und mobilitäts-geprägte multikulturelle Gesellschaft“

<sup>2</sup> „sich die Bedingtheit eigener Sicht- und Handlungsweisen bewusst zu machen“

<sup>3</sup> „setzt an der Lebenswelt, den Vorerfahrungen und Sichtweisen aller Schülerinnen und Schüler an“

<sup>4</sup> „Weltgesellschaft“

<sup>5</sup> „diese komplexen Entwicklungsprozesse zu verstehen und eigene Mitverantwortung sowie Möglichkeiten zur gesellschaftlichen Teilhabe und zur Mitgestaltung in der Weltgesellschaft zu erkennen“

suggested by the strategy group that it be combined with global learning in teacher education (cf. *Strategiegruppe Globales Lernen 2009, 12*).

Austrian policies on multicultural education are often criticised for lacking precise guidelines and merely providing final objectives. But while this may be true for the *Grundsatzlerlass*, it is not the case with the *Strategiegruppe*, which explicitly divides its suggestions into on the one hand goals of multicultural education, and on the other hand measures to achieve these. The *Strategiegruppe Globales Lernen (2009, 11-13)* hopes that the importance of a supportive school community, which is essentially an empowering school culture, will be more widely recognised in the future. Furthermore, it stresses that communication between schools that already implement global learning should be encouraged.

Generally, the emphasis of teaching students to make responsible decisions for their community is the most striking commonality between these two Austrian documents. Notably, this seems to be a recurring theme for Austrian multicultural education.

## 7.2 A comparison of US-policies and EU-policies on multicultural education

One of the dangers of exclusive curricula is that they can cause students to distance themselves from their schools and lose trust in their education system. As the establishment of an inclusive school environment is seen as a prerequisite to multicultural education in both the US and the EU, it must be examined whether schools recognise the risk of student disassociation.

Out of the six policies chosen for this empirical analysis, two address this problem. Firstly, the EU Council recommendation warns that

[a] lack of awareness of the origins of the Union, the reasons for its creation and its basic functioning favours misinformation and prevents the formation of informed opinions on its actions (*Valchev 2018, 1*)

which ultimately hurts our democracies as more and more people become suspicious of their own governments and legal systems.

Secondly, the Pennsylvania policy recognises the possible consequences that students who experience racial biases at school may face: feeling isolated and insecure, and distancing oneself from the student body (cf. *Camicia 2007, 219*). In line with the document's overall goal of reducing the impact of racial incidents, establishing a safety-first mindset and assuring the physical and emotional safety of all affected people is recommended. The first step *Wolf (2014, 18)* suggests is to restore order to school life as quickly as possible. Staff is urged to explicitly condemn the act of racism and apologise to all their students.

All in all, student disassociation plays a more central role in the Pennsylvanian policy, which also makes concrete suggestions for its prevention. Hence, it can contribute greatly to an inclusive school environment.

### 7.3 An analysis of Austrian policies with reference to EU-policies

This chapter looks at how the two Austrian documents implement the policies defined by the European Union and shines a light on consistencies and divergencies between the EU and Austrian policies.

Multicultural education, here called ‘intercultural’ education, as it is understood by the EU Council in its “Council recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching”, should encourage the participation of not only teachers and students but also of their communities (cf. Valchev 2018, 3). The Grundsatzlerlass attempts a similar approach to multicultural education by defining it as a teaching method that reveals cultural and societal changes caused by migration and that should be implemented in lessons as well as in processes outside the classroom (cf. Hammerschmid 2017). The Austrian Ministry of Education emphasises that multicultural education is more than just a teaching strategy and describes it as “an attitude that has to be lived out in school by all people involved to be effective”<sup>6</sup>(Hammerschmid 2017). In this sense, multicultural education is described as being a holistic approach (cf. Hammerschmid 2017), but explanations of how parties other than teachers and students can participate in the process are vague.

The Council of Europe deems it important that the fundamental European values, in particular democracy, rule of law and human rights, are not compromised on (cf. Council of Europe 2008). Great importance is also given to European values in the EU Council recommendation, where it is warned that a lack of knowledge about the European Union, its responsibilities and why it was founded allows racism and nationalism to spread. It claims that, constantly exposed to false information and discriminatory thoughts, the youth becomes more susceptible to different forms of extremism (cf. Valchev 2018, 1-2). To combat these developments, which are essentially a form of division into an in-group, ‘locals’, and an out-group, ‘foreigners’ in line with the minimal group paradigm, the promotion of common values is strongly emphasised. Similarities to the Grundsatzlerlass, in which Hammerschmid (2017) declares the combat against othering, can be noted. However, while the Council recommendation provides resistance against the minimal group paradigm, the Grundsatzlerlass does not go beyond declaring recognition of its existence. The Council generally instructs member states to enable their students to make responsible and

<sup>6</sup> „eine Haltung, die am Schulstandort von allen gemeinsam gelebt werden muss, um wirksam zu werden“

well-reflected decisions for their communities (cf. Valchev 2018, 3). Parallels to Banks' *Decision Making Approach* can be noticed here. The Council of Europe (2008) also acknowledges that European society is shaped by the histories of diverse religions and that "[k]nowledge of religions is an integral part of knowledge of the history of mankind and civilisations." It therefore argues for the importance of giving students an overview of all faiths that shaped their society in the spirit of the *Transformation Approach*. In this sense, the policy explains that interfaith education must not be confused with manipulating pupils to convert to a certain faith and suggests that "[e]ven countries where one religion predominates should teach about the origins of all religions rather than favour a single one or encourage proselytising" (Council of Europe 2008).

As far as the strategy group is concerned, different suggestions contain aspects of either the *Transformation Approach* or the *Decision Making Approach*, a practice that indicates that the policy may function as an interim solution as global learning transitions from one approach to the other. Similarities to the *Decision Making Approach* can also be found in the Grundsatzlerlass, in which multicultural education is claimed to "promote the analysis of and participation in current social developments" <sup>7</sup>(Hammerschmid 2017) as well as to enable students to "apply intercultural competences in all subjects as well as in everyday school life and everyday life outside of school" <sup>8</sup>(Hammerschmid 2017).

To conclude, citizen participation is a key objective of both Austrian and EU policies. What is more, attempts to teach pupils content from different perspectives and provide them with decision making skills can be found in both.

#### 7.4 A comparison of US-policies and Austrian policies

Finally, this paper will look at the differences and similarities of multicultural education policies in America and an EU member state, namely Austria. The similarities and differences of Austrian and EU tactics have been discussed in the previous chapter. To that it should be added that Austrian multicultural education is generally keener on being holistic than the EU guidelines are and in this respect is similar to US methods.

However, not every policy achieves a holistic approach that can be successfully implemented in schools. On the one hand, despite describing multicultural education as requiring everyone's participation (cf. Hammerschmid 2017) and as a holistic approach in the Grundsatzlerlass, the Austrian Ministry of Education gives at best vague explanations of how parties other than teachers and students can participate in creating an inclusive learning environment. On the other

<sup>7</sup> „fördert die Auseinandersetzung mit und Teilhabe an aktuellen gesellschaftlichen Entwicklungen“

<sup>8</sup> „die interkulturellen Kompetenzen in allen Fachgegenständen sowie im schulischen und außerschulischen Alltag anzuwenden“

hand, the strategy group's approach may be more successful as it adds the ministry, education boards, school inspectors, teachers' associations, as well as student and parent representatives to its list of influence groups and proposes close cooperation with researchers on global learning. A yet again different approach to holistic education is taken by Oregon. In its resolution, the State Board calls for better training of school staff and district-level administrators to enable them to follow new educational practices better, and advocates for the students', families', staff's and the community's right to information on the school's policies.

While the *Decision Making Approach* is key for the Pennsylvania policy as well as both Austrian policies, the US policy suggests more precise actions. This may be the case because the *Decision Making Approach* is, as previously stated, ideal for dealing with racist incidents at schools. In the Pennsylvania Toolkit, many of the actions suggested for the prevention phase are prime examples for decision making and social action from students. For instance, it is stated that "educators should deliberately support students to be engaged as co-leaders of school climate improvement efforts for those efforts to be successful" (Wolf 2017, 11), which is just one example demonstrating the policy's objective of urging teachers to listen to students and encouraging them to make decisions that directly affect their school environment.

Notably, the Pennsylvania Toolkit, which divides the reaction a school should have to a racially motivated incident into three stages, suggests that data on interracial relations be collected and the school's ability to cope with a potential crisis assessed. In case of racially charged incidents, all steps taken should be thoroughly discussed with staff and documented for future reference should similar incidents reoccur (cf. Wolf 2017, 27). Similarly, the strategy group emphasises that records of the entire process should be kept to allow analyses that contribute to a better understanding of issues in the field of global education. The aim for holistic multicultural education and the tactics of reacting to racially motivated incidents described in the chosen policies are hence the most obvious parallels of US and Austrian multicultural education.

#### 7.4 Discussion of analysis

This paper and its analysis demonstrate how today's US-, EU- and Austrian education systems are affected by multiculturalist theories and the multicultural society they are written to operate in. For this purpose, six policy documents are chosen for analysis based on criteria such as recency, influence and suitability for comparison with the other policies. To increase the value of the results, the choice to analyse diverse policies addressing various aspects and with different objectives is made. The analysis is guided by the questions posed in the introduction: Q2 asks

about the approaches implemented in the chosen documents and how these reflect multicultural theory and Q3 enquires about the policies' goals with regard to theoretical objectives.

Concerning the documents' goals and reflection of objectives defined by scholars, both US-documents attempt to extend their efforts to include issues outside the so-called "triumvirate of race, class, and gender" (Ladson-Billings 1992, 61). However, these attempts are only limitedly successful. The EU Council recommendation clearly explains its values and, in its introduction, elaborates on the issues students with migrant backgrounds may face. This emphasis on migration is exemplary for the general European approach to multicultural education. As far as Austria's Grundsatzertlass is concerned, the emphasis on migration and mobility is typical for Austria's focus on new immigrants.

In terms of the approaches employed, the documents display a wide array of approaches and offer both expected and unexpected suggestions. For one, between the US-documents, the one that stands out is the Oregon resolution, which addresses immigration several times, giving an example for a US policy that actively includes immigrants into multicultural education. In the EU documents, the leading role of teachers and the importance of teacher education is stressed many times. Both Austrian policies, as well as the Oregon resolution, have the intention of being holistic. As far as the Austrian strategy group is concerned, it also stands out because its definition of global learning indicates a transition from the *Transformation Approach* to the *Decision Making Approach*.

When comparing the policies to each other, one US, one EU-level and one Austrian policy stick out for their contributions to multicultural education. In the case of the US, the Pennsylvania Toolkit provides plenty of guidance and resources for teachers. The EU Council recommendation commendably explains its values and is continuously faithful to them. And in the case of the Austrian policies, the Strategieguppe provides relevant measures to achieve its goals despite Austrian documents being criticised for their lack of guidelines. Furthermore, it is remarkable that both EU policies confer greater importance to European values than the US policies to American values. What can be moreover taken away from the analysis is that, at least in the US, further efforts to include aspects outside of race, class and gender need to be made, as demonstrated by Oregon's and Pennsylvania's failed attempts to incorporate these points into their policies.

## 8 Conclusion

As multicultural education tries to prepare its citizens for increasing multiculturalism, its sole purpose can no longer be the teaching about events and heroes separated from their cultures. Whereas once, teachers would have used Martin Luther King's birthday on January 1 to compactly teach the history of African American rights, a more contemporary approach must not only be inclusive of minorities all year long but also encourage critical reflection from non-mainstream perspectives. It should urge students to, for instance, look at literature about Martin Luther King and try to understand why the same person can be depicted in disparate ways by different authors. Today, multicultural scholars demand a total school reform and aim to achieve educational equity for minority groups.

This paper attempts to examine which areas of multicultural education educators are already aware of, and on which they will have to focus in the future. For this purpose, it seeks to answer the research question Q1, which asks about the most important current approaches to and goals of multicultural education. The results of this paper show that generally, there is no consensus on multicultural education's aims. However, often listed goals include increasing equity for ethnic minorities, promoting active citizenship and challenging racist structures, especially in education. The latter is sometimes expressed by experts as the need to overcome Eurocentrism to minimise harm for both minority and mainstream students.

As far as approaches to and dimensions of multicultural learning are concerned, equity pedagogy, an empowering school culture and social structure, the *Transformation Approach* and the *DMSA Approach* all play a crucial role in the selected policies. Many of the analysed documents are already implementing the *Transformation Approach* and on a path towards the *DMSA Approach*. Importantly, to better understand which changes are taking place in the EU and what potential areas of improvement are, I would next have to look into theories less popular in multicultural education than the ones leading researcher Banks wrote, but more tailored for European societies.

When looking into possible future developments of multicultural education, what is apparent is that we will continue to live in an increasingly multicultural society. Not only is globalisation going to play an even bigger role, but the traditional US emphasis on minorities and European focus on immigration may have to shift. The US is currently experiencing large immigration movements from Mexico, and Europe's immigrants could eventually become recognised ethnic minorities. Therefore, experts should continue to put effort into analysing which approaches to and

dimensions of multicultural education are already being implemented and which still need to be improved while also considering the complexity of the globalised world we will continue to live in.

## Tables

Table 1: Overview of policy documents (author's own table)

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