The contribution of schools and religious communities to religious formation of Christian youth

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Abstract

Main question in this paper is what implications tribal forms of religious socialization might have for the contribution of (religious) schools and religious communities to the religious formation of Christian youth. This paper clarifies that religious education of a new generation of Christians needs authorities and communities which are connected in a worldwide pedagogical space in which youngsters of this era are participating. This argument is made against the background of the Dutch case in which young Christians grow up in a de-institutionalized world with increasing influence of multi-religious and secular voices.

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1. Introduction

In our article *Beyond individualism: neo-evangelical lessons for religious socialisation* Johan Roeland, Pieter Vos and I argued that young Christians may be less individualised than some widely shared reflections in literature suggest and that the religious socialisation of these youngsters, instead, often take place in tribal forms of sociality (De Kock, Roeland & Vos, 2011). Main question in this article is what implications this insight might have for the contribution of (religious) schools and religious communities to the religious formation of Christian youth. The argument I will develop is partly against the background of the nowadays political and societal debates on the position of religious schools in The Netherlands. The conclusion of my argument, however, sheds light on the broader issue of the contribution of institutions to religious formation of a new generation of Christian youth which is growing up in a de-institutionalized world with increasing influence of multi-religious and secular voices.

A central issue in this paper is the concept of socialization. In section 2 three ideal types of socialization will be explored: traditional socialization, modern socialization and tribal socialization. It will be argued that forms of tribal socialisation are of particular importance for Christian faith communities in nowadays Dutch context. Next, the paper will concentrate on the implications for the kind of contribution one might expect from (religious) schools on the one hand (section 3) and Christian faith communities on the other (section 4) with regard to the religious formation of Christian youth.

In discussing the implications for (religious) schools, the paper will explore the ideals of being confessional and being secular in relationship to a school´s ambition to support students giving meaning to life and the world. In addition, the relative position of the individual teacher versus the relative position of the school as institution will be discussed. In describing the implications for Christian faith communities the liquidity of the community is discussed in relationship with the way churches organize its religious formation activities. In addition, the paper discusses different ways to incorporate the tribal forms of religious socialization. In section 5, the paper will further explore the implications for (religious) schools and Christian faith communities by integrating the insights from section 3 and 4 and taking the discussion one step further sketching a double movement with regard to the religious formation of Christian youth. The paper ends with a conclusion in section 6.

As said, the background of this paper is partly formed by nowadays political and societal debates on the position of religious schools in The Netherlands. For this reason, I end this introductory section with a very brief explanation of what is called the `dual educational system´ in the Netherlands following the outline of it given by Renkema (20XX). Renkema explains the dual system is strongly related to the pillarized society in The Netherlands resulting in a typical Dutch educational system with a large variety of schools with their own distinct values and principles. "The pillarization of the Dutch society got a strong impetus after 1917 when the controversy about school funding was settled by the Pacification Act: the equal financial treatment within the Dutch dual educational system of state schools and denominational (private) schools" (Miedema, 2013, p. 236). The pillarized educational system was at its highest in the fifties and sixties of the last century (Ter Avest, Bakker, Bertram-Troost & Miedema, 2007): "Within each 'pillar' every school has its own culture, related to its 'well-considered convictions' such as implicit or explicit opinions about 'the

good life', the ideal person, the ideal child, the good society and what the transcendental or God is like" (ibid., p. 209).

The educational system in The Netherlands is pillarized on any level: primary schools, secondary schools and higher education. Several denominational groups are present in founding their own schools. So, both public and a variety of private, for a large part ideological based schools, exist in the Dutch context. What makes the Dutch situation special is that both public and private schools equally receive governmental subsidy. The dual system in this way is founded in Dutch law since almost one century now.

2. Individualised young people, a de-institutionalized world and tribal forms of sociality

In The Netherlands, the past decades both multiculturalism, multireligiosity, and secularity is increasing in society. These tendencies can also be observed in public and political debates on the role of religion in public life, in educational settings in particular, and how this relates to the place of religion in peoples' private life and in religious communities. One of the concepts often used to analyse these kind of tendencies is the concept of individualisation. This paper focuses on the Christian faith communities and institutes and young people growing up in nowadays Christian families. De Kock (2012b) explains:

> **"**The religious identity development of Christian youth in The Netherlands at the beginning of the 21st century has been impacted on the one hand by processes of individualisation and on the other hand by the development of alternative religious communities outside of the Church as institution." (p. 179).

De Kock shows a relationship with Bauman's account of the 'liquidation' of modern society: de-institutionalisation is accompanied by individualisation, which is both a consequence of and a cause of the further erosion of established institutionalised patterns (Bauman, 2005). Structurally speaking, individualisation refers to the weakening and/or loss of ties and bonds between individuals; in other words the loss of community. Culturally speaking, individualisation denotes the loss of the authority of shared frameworks of meaning, which is both a consequence of the erosion of these frameworks and the rise of modern individualism that prioritises individuality and authenticity above collectivity and conformity (see Taylor, 1989).

In particular processes of individualisation and de-institutionalisation in the religious domain challenges religious pedagogy and religious education as a discipline. Reflections about religious learning processes and religious upbringing should concentrate more on a context decoupled from institutes or even outside the institutes. Religious learning is less organized or controlled by institutions like the Christian school or the church; instead, religious learning has become a fluid process, in which the individual youngster is at the steer wheel using input from different sources, not only the own family, church and school. Nowadays, in particular the social media is an important platform on which exchange of religious issues take place. All this means that there is a dynamic religious formation context for nowadays Christian youth.

To get some more grip on different ways in which religious socialization is actually practiced in Christian communities in the Dutch context, we will discuss the distinction between traditional, modern and tribal socialization as presented earlier by De Kock, Roeland & Vos

(2011) and De Kock and Sonnenberg (2012). The argument here is that forms of tribal religious socialisation have become of particular importance for the Christian faith communities and religious schools in nowadays Dutch context.

Theories of traditional socialization conceptualize religious socialization as the transition of the Christian faith onto the next generation (see also Vermeer, 2009). The *authority* in these socialization processes is situated *externally* in the religious tradition and representatives of this tradition. This type of socialization is marked by *traditionalism* and the dominant ideological focus of it is *transmission*. Through discipline, youth is initiated into the habits and values of a religious tradition and community, in such a way that one is able to put them in practice.

Central to modern forms of socialization (ibid.) is the raising of children by supporting the personal identity development of youths; the emphasis is on supporting the individual development of a religious identity. The *authority* here is held to be found *internally,* within the youngsters themselves. This type of socialization is characterized by *individualism* and *autonomy* is the core value. Adults such as pastors and youth ministers should restrict themselves to supporting and coaching youngsters in their subjective construction of their (religious) selves. This means that the ideological focus in modern socialization is on *clarification* (cf. Raths, Hermin and Simon, 1966). The emphasis is on self-actualization and the approach of values clarification can be labelled as a kind of expressivism (Van der Ven, 1998).

Theories on tribal socialization point to the relevance of the experiential practice of faith, that which is felt and sensed rather than merely cognitive. The Authority in this type of socialization is *intersubjective*. An individual can portray figures who by expressing their close relationship with God tend to become authoritative. Following Maffesoli (1996), this phenomenon can be typified as *tribalism*, emphasizing the worth of the social group that is loosely organized around shared lifestyles, tastes, interests and affinities or simply around the desire of *being together*. The ideal of *authenticity* is at the heart of forms of tribalistic socialization and the ideological focus is that of *communication*. Individuals bring their values and beliefs into a communicative process. In the tribal model, the affective dimension of the communication process is also stressed. Teachers or youth leaders in church can participate in this communication process where their authority is not primarily based on the positions they have as leaders as such, but is based on their authenticity and their charisma.

In debates on the religious formation of young people in a (post-)modern context we often observe a dichotomy with on the one hand views reflecting traditional socialization as an ideal and on the other hand views reflecting forms of modern socialization as an ideal. The latter views, in its pleas, often refer to a de-institutionalized society with a high degree of individualisation among young people as the ultimate argument. These opposing views foremost reflect an ideological debate on extreme positions. However, for the well-being of young people both individual autonomy and the structure and culture (including a tradition) of a community surrounding them are important. Precisely this is the basis for forms of tribal (religious) socialization. And this is why forms of tribal socialisation are of particular importance for Christian faith communities and religious schools in nowadays Dutch context. De Kock, Roeland and Vos (2011) observe tribal socialization for example in nowadays neo-evangelical movements in Dutch Christianity among young people.

As said, the ideological focus in tribal socialisation is communication, which means that individuals bring their values and beliefs into a communicative process. The importance of this communicative process is underlined, among others, by Bert Roebben. The following quotation from one of his recent contributions to the *International Journal of Inclusive Education* illustrates this point:

> "In the confrontation of their [adolescents', AdK] own background with the religious life-worlds of others, they are invited to re-evaluate their own position (…) I will call this: 'learning in the presence of the religious other'. This pedagogical option is underpinned by a pluralist concept of theology: various cultures in time and space are dealing with transcendence from their own particular viewpunt. This hermeneurical position can be discerned in every contemporary theological attempt to understand religious tradition in its relationship to religious learning" (Roebben, 2012, pp.1177-1178).

3. The position of (religious) schools

What implications might forms of tribal religious socialisation have for (religious) schools? The background of this question is formed by an often too unenhanced picture of possible roles for faith and religion in schools: there is either the option that religious education is a form of indoctrination linked up with a particular faith community, or there is the option of religious education as merely passing through factual information on religions and ideologies (Wardekker & Miedema, 2001b, p. 25). In contrast with this poor picture, Wardekker and Miedema (2001b) plea for taking the development of the whole person into account, which means to take care for both the cognitive, creative, moral *and* religious development of pupils, seeing the pupils as active and participating subjects. "Subjects, who themselves on the basis of presented and represented subject-matter, the ´stuff´ provided, take an active part in the construction of new interpretations and new meanings. In the same way they take part too in the construction of religious meaning in their own personal fashion" (ibid., p. 32).

Really interesting in the plea of Wardekker and Miedema is talking not merely on the *active* role of pupils but also on their *participating* role. As a reaction to more traditional views on pupils and their (religious) socialization, indeed sometimes labeled as 'indoctrination', a modern view on pupils' socialization is proposed (see section 2) in which the pupil himself is an active, autonomous constructor of his own (religious) identity. Adding pupils' *participating* role to the debate means shifting the focus on (shared) practices in which pupils are living and learning and influence in a reciprocal manner the (religious) development of youngsters.

An important actor in shared practices in the school is the teacher. According to De Wolff (2010) religious education is most educating when the teacher shows in daily practice his own religious or ideological views, in an authentic manner, in exemplary acting and possibly in shared practices. This does not inevitably lead to what we call indoctrination, at least if pupils also get their own active role, their own responsibility in their religious identity construction, which is in line with a transformation conception of (religious) education: "… learning is defined as the growing capacity or the growing competency of students to participate in

culturally structured activities. This learning process proceeds along the line of participation (learning-to-join-in-activities)." (Wardekker & Miedema, 2001a p. 40).

The implication of forms of tribal religious socialisation, in the first place, is that these are challenging both schools with an accent on forms of traditional socialization and schools leaning on a strict modern conception of religious socialization. As said in the introduction section, Christian youth in The Netherlands is growing up in a de-institutionalized world resulting in their participation in new forms of communal religious life, such as religious events, festivals, concerts, media and online communities (De Kock, Roeland & Vos, 2011). At the same time, both multiculturalism, multireligiosity, and secularity is increasing in Dutch society. One of the observed ´strategies´ (see De Kock, 2012b) of more orthodox faith based schools is to (re)strengthen the relationships between the school with the pupils´ families and their churches (as represented in the school board) with the aim to work together on religious identity formation in a coherent way in order to pass the tradition on to the next generation.

This strategy is leaning on a traditional socialization concept, giving tradition authority and transmission as a focus. In doing so, the school is a kind of counterweight against developments both towards multireligiosity and secularity *and* towards de-institutionalization. In a certain way, this strategy is fighting tribal forms of religious socialization, for example by taking tradition instead of the life of youngsters (individually or as a group) as a starting point for religious education. Or for example by focusing on more cognitive oriented processes of religious learning instead of more participatory processes in which learning by doing and experiencing are central features.

Furthermore, forms of tribal religious socialization are also challenging schools leaning on a strict modern conception of religious socialization. Another 'strategy' which can be observed in both denominational (private) and state schools is to leave the religious identity development for the private life outside the school. Where orthodox faith based schools are willing to be confessional in all aspects of school life, this category of schools, instead, have some kind of secular ideals in school life. Religious education can too easily lead to indoctrination, therefore the role of the school is at the highest to inform on a factual level on religions and ideologies. The autonomy of pupils with regard to their religious development is the starting point and this is served at the best with a clarification role of the school, which is in line with a more modern conception of religious socialization.

This strategy is, in a way, also excluding tribal forms of religious socialization. It is doing so, for example by seeing the pupil as a religious or a-religious individual rather than a partaker in a (religious) community partly overlapping with communities in the school. Or for example by seeing the teacher only as a kind of coach for the individual religious learning process instead of an authentic source of inspiration for the pupils' religious development. The school's role is at a maximum to help pupils to comprehend the core of a variety of ideological and religious traditions and to help pupils develop sensibility for the religious dimension of reality (Van der Zee, 2010; Alii, 2009).

Tribal forms of religious socialization are challenging more traditional or modern oriented (faith based) schools. What are the consequences when Christian schools are incorporating principles of tribal religious socialization? This question can lead to three kind of answers. The first one is focusing on a teacher's level. The second one is focusing on the school's level. The third one is focusing on a "trans school" level.

Tribal religious socialization can be applied in schools by taking the individual teacher as a starting point. Tribal religious socialization then means that the teacher is investing in relationships with pupils, being present in their networks, showing in daily school life his religious outlooks, affects and actions, being an authentic charismatic source of inspiration with whom pupils can identify with. In this scenario, the accent is laid on tribal socialization in the relationship of the individual teacher with one or more pupils in classroom who are willing to connect with each other. The responsibility for religious socialization is defined on the level of the individual teacher and is not necessary equally and in the same manner applied among the teacher staff. The individual teacher is much more important than the school as an institution. Defining tribal religious socialization at the individual teacher level means that Christian formation is not only possible at a Christian school; also multi-religious, inter-religious, inter-worldview or cooperation schools can be adequate environments for forms of Christian formation, where at the same time pupils from different backgrounds learn to live, to work, to learn and to play together (Miedema, 2013, p. 238).

Castelli (2012) introduces in this respect a pedagogy of ´faith dialogue´:

> "Faith dialogue as a pedagogy of religious education entails seriousness, humility, hesitation, articulation and imagination" (p. 213).
> "The proposal is to enact these elements in the classroom through narrative, place and person…. Faith dialogue with faith narratives, religious and secular, aims to develop pupils' faith literacy and oracy. Engagement with places that express faith for self and/or the other extends each pupil's perceptions of her place and space in the world. Encountering the other in the first person reveals a relational spae which offers the possibility of dialogue with its attendant challenges and opportunities. Thus, faith dialogue proposes a dynamic and dialectical religious education apposite for a twenty-first century, post-secular classroom" (ibid., p. 215)

When tribal religious socialization is applied at the school level, taking the perspective of the school as a an organization, other kind of consequences can be observed. We not only see individual teachers as authentic sources of inspiration, we also observe in (Christian) schools a sense of solidarity and common lived religious ground in school life, both among teachers and students. Furthermore, there are religious practices in which the teachers and students participate as part of the religious socialization task of the school; not bound to a specific Christian subgenre or church tradition but more fluid, flexible and even anti-institutional. The school as a whole is a kind of tribe. Not only the individual teacher but definitely also the school as a Christian institute is at stake.

In essence, a traditional pillarized school is a ´tribe´ in itself too. However, there are two important differences in comparison with the tribal school as proposed here. Firstly, the 'tribal life' of a traditional pillarized school is tightly connected to a particular church tradition and often has a confessional basis with consequences for teacher and student affiliation. This is in contrast to the tribal life of schools as proposed here: these are much more loosely coupled with church traditions and are much more open to faith diversity at teacher and student level. Secondly, traditional pillarized schools are characterized by (sub)cultural homogeneity when it comes to the family and church life of both students and teachers, whereas the schools as proposed here are characterized by much more (sub)cultural plurality; not in the last place because these schools are actively striving for meeting the (religious and cultural) other both in the school and classroom and outside the school.

Focusing on a "trans school" level is widening the concept of a 'tribe', being a maximally fluid and trans local, sometimes virtual community of individual believers in which Christian schools possibly can play a role. When taking a "trans school" view both traditional/orthodox faith based schools, schools applying tribal socialization principles on school level and individual Christian teachers on all possible kind of state and private schools all together are religious pedagogues acting simultaneously "in the cloud": the de-institutionalized Christian community in which young Christians are growing up and in which also other pedagogues like church leaders, parents, peers etc. are involved. The implication of forms of tribal socialization in this respect is being aware of a Christian community or tribe which is beyond institutional, organizational and visible boarders.

Whether it is on a teacher, school or trans school level, forms of tribal socialization are challenging both traditional and modern oriented religious education. Castelli (2012) puts it in this way: "Whatever the position taken on the contested notion of a post-secular society, the religious education classroom cannot ignore tensions within and between religions and between religion and a secularist view of the world if one of the tasks of education is helping young people understand themselves and the world they inhabit" (p. 209). Tribal socialization is not directing towards indoctrination but it is directing towards authenticity, communication, active personal involvement and participation: there should be dialogue not only in a verbal manner but also in a multisensory sense. "An encounter through dialogue will entail change if only a growth in an understanding of the other. Self and the other may not be seeking assimilation or domination but neither are they totally detached or unchanged by the encounter" (Castelli, 2012, p. 210).

4. The position of Christian faith communities

What implications might forms of tribal religious socialisation have for Christian faith communities? The background of this question is formed by the actual debate on the church as a learning community. The learning of the Christian church community can be seen as one of its basic functions (De Kock en Verboom, 2011, p. 272). The learning can be more or less organized, for example in catechesis practices or bible study groups. But there is also a lot of informal learning in the day-by-day practice in the church community. Therefore, the Christian church community is often seen in its ideal form as a *learning community*. The church as a learning community refers to intergenerational learning, learning in encounter, learning in everyday life, and emancipatory learning which means that individuals take responsibility for each other and the community (Elhorst, De Kock, & Barnard, 20XX).

The central learning principle of the learning church community is learning being an intergenerational process (see Elhorst, De Kock, & Barnard, 20XX). Shared religious practices in church and family life are the cornerstones for this type of learning process (see also Alii, 2009, pp. 18-19). The challenge for the majority of church communities in The Netherlands, is the loss of community in church life as a result of general tendencies in society as individualisation and de-institutionalisation. As said, This not only challenges practical church life but also religious pedagogy and religious education as a discipline.

An increasing amount of religious learning of church members can be observed outside or loosely coupled with local church institutional and communal life, for example in spontaneous activities of youngsters, diaconal trips, festivals and different kind of networks, both physical and digital. In all these examples often forms of tribal religious learning are grounding the

religious learning processes. Just as it is for the position of schools, the implication of forms of tribal religious socialisation, in the first place, is that these are *challenging* Christian faith communities; in particular these are challenging church institutions with strict traditional or strict modern views on religious learning practices in faith communities. De Kock (2012b, 2014) makes a distinction between three models of religious socialization in church communities which can serve my argument here: a behavioural, a developmental and an apprenticeship model.

In a *behavioural model*, pastors, youth leaders, catechists or parents instruct the youngsters what and how things should be learned and then the young apply these instructions. Catechists, for example, directs the content of lessons: one or other catechism generally; aiming in the words of Westerhoff (1987) "to acquire knowledge and skills considered necessary and useful to Christian life" (p. 584). In this model the passing on of the religious tradition onto the next generation is accentuated, which should be in conjunction with what families and schools are aiming at in raising their youth. In section 3 I desribed the tendency of more orthodox faith based schools to (re)strengthen the relationships between the school with the pupils´ families and their churches (as represented in the school board) with the aim to work together on religious identity formation in a coherent way in order to pass the tradition on to the next generation. In relationship to this 'strategy' churches are structuring their learning activities along the lines of a behavioural model, as a reaction to tendencies of de-institutionalization and secularization.

In a certain way, this model is opposing tribal forms of religious socialization, for example by placing religious authority at the level of the institute as such and not at the level of the living community and its members. Or for example by building a community with clear boundaries which are the institutional boundaries instead of building more flexible and (external) network linked communities of believers.

In a *developmental model*, youth leaders, catechists or parents are engaged in questioning, contradicting, or even challenging youngsters' personal (religious) theories. The young members of the church are coached by the elder ones, in the words of Westerhoff (1987) "to reflect on experience in the light of Christian faith and life" (p. 583). Not the church/faith tradition but the questions of young people themselves are directing learning processes in the church. The faith community is not directed towards communal learning in the first place but towards individual learning based on personal interests of individual church members.

This developmental model is, in a way, also excluding tribal forms of religious socialization. It is doing so, for example by the church defining itself as a provider of spiritual goods on the religious market of individuals looking for sense and meaning in life instead of defining itself as an accessible (be it a flexible) community that binds together individuals in a communal life with shared interests and ideals and responsibilities. Or for example by taking the individual truth claims as starting point for learning processes instead of a more shared communal defined claim of (religious) truth.

Tribal forms of religious socialization are challenging Christian faith communities heavily leaning on either behavioural or developmental models of religious learning. What are the consequences when churches are incorporating principles of tribal religious socialization? For sketching these consequences I will first introduce the third model of religious socialization as proposed by De Kock (2012b, 2014): the apprenticeship model. Next, I briefly explore three types of answers: the first one is focusing on church plants and micro communities as neo-

tribes next to church institutes. The second one is focusing on revitalizing the church by applying tribal principles. The third one focusing on the "trans church" level.

The *apprenticeship model* sees church life as one shared world, the faith community. The community consitsts of both experts and novices: The expert, for example the catechist, has considerable expertise and tries to model his expertise; the catechumen learns by participating in this world and imitating the activities of the catechist. The apprenticeship model is in the words of Westerhoff (1987) about experiencing the Christian faith and life. The roles of expert and novice are not stable but can change over time and over situations. In this model, little children can be perceived as experts when it comes to a basic trust in God for example. An example that shows the importance of shared faith practices is the concept of liturgical catechesis of which Anderson (1997) states: "… the singing of hymns offers a starting point for thinking about the formative power of liturgical practice, what I call liturgical catechesis. By this I intend the claim that liturgical practice is intrinsically formational and transformational. It is a means by which we come to know ourselves as people of faith and to know the God whom we worship" (pp. 350-351).

Davis (1986), as another example, underlines the importance of specifically inspiring faithful persons: the catechist is "… one who takes youth and their struggles seriously, one who is open to entertain all of their most basic questions about life and faith, and one who provides in his/her own life a model of spiritual groundedness for them to see from which the director him/herself draws a personal nurture and sustenance" (p. 273). Pedagogically, this is an important learning principle, also underlined in two recent articles of Peter Jarvis (2008a, b) in which he pleas for taking day-to-day experiences and meetings as the basis for learning processes.

The apprenticeship model of religious socialization in faith communities is most supportive for the church´s ideal to be both a faith community and a learning community (De Kock, 2012a). The apprenticeship model reflects many of the principles of tribal religious socialization. What are the consequences when churches are incorporating principles of tribal and apprenticeship religious socialization?

A first consequence can be clearly observed in the past decade in The Netherlands. Partly rooted in dissatisfaction with traditional and institutional organized church communities, people start with very local initiatives building up small communities, for instance in a particular street or house as an alternative way of being church. These communities are like little 'tribes' in which people from the same living area and with same (religious) interests come and live together. Part of these communities are realized as a missionary initiative, where one of the goals is to share the Christian life and Gospel with non- or other believing people. These communities can be seen as an alternative for or a form of church next to the traditional institute. Another example of these alternative communities can be found on the internet where internet churches or digital/virtual faith communities start up as an alternative way to experience church with each other.

A second consequence is that more traditional or institutional organized churches are revitalizing themselves according to tribal principles. Most important indicator of this development towards revitalized practices is the increasing attention for small groups in church. Church communities are investing more and more in the forming of small groups of youngsters involved in diaconal initiatives. Another example is churches organizing the pastoral care as "small group care" in which church members are responsible for pastoral care

for a couple of families. Another example is the explicit attention for role models in the church community who are given an educating role in church life.

A third consequence can be found at the "trans church" level. Just as it is the case on the "trans school" level (section 3), on a "trans church" level the concept of a ´tribe´ is widened, being a maximally fluid and translocal, sometimes virtual community of individual believers, in which both representatives of traditional churches, revitalized churches and members of new local or virtual communities are networked with each other. Young Christian people can be in connection with this "trans church" community, for example via social network sites or via other connections in their network, via peers or youth leaders in their local church communities. While being connected with this "trans church" community Christian youngsters get inspired by debates, positions and examples of peers and modelling (charismatic) figures from around the world. In this way a new de-institutionalized world wide pedagogical space is formed by which a new generation of Christian youngsters is raised. As said earlier, the implication of forms of tribal socialization in this respect is the important awareness among local pastors and youth workers that there is a Christian (and church) community or tribe which is beyond institutional, organizational and visible boarders.

5. Religious formation of Christian youth: a double movement

What can be observed when the insights from the previous sections on respectively the position of (religious) schools and the position of Christian faith communities are integrated? In this section we take our analysis one step further.

At the core we observe a double movement with regard to religious formation of Christian youth: on the one hand a movement from the institute (be it a church or a Christian school) to the individual believer in the particular local context; on the other hand a movement from the institute to the "trans institutional" fluid, global sometimes virtual context. As a result of processes of individualisation (see section 2) the religious life is increasingly a personal, individual matter instead of a communal, institutional matter; at the same time there is a need for "being together" or connectedness which is searched for either on a particular private local level loosely coupled with or detached from the institutional life or on a trans institutional level in the form of global (communities of) Christianity, foremost supported by new (social) media techniques.

At a trans institutional level the concept of a 'tribe' is widened, being a maximally fluid and trans local, sometimes virtual community of individual believers in which Christian schools and institutional churches, individual Christian teachers, pastors, youth workers and parents possibly can play a role in the "cloud of pedagogues". The implication of forms of tribal socialization is thus being aware of a Christian community or tribe which is beyond institutional, organizational and visible boarders with which individual believers and particular local de-institutionalized communities are (loosely) connected.

This double movement challenges the role of Christian schools and churches as organizations/institutes. What role might they play in the religious upbringing of a new generation of Christian youngsters? Our analyses thus far reveal two possibilities. One possibility is that the role of institutes (be it Christian schools or churches) is just decreasing and in the end fading away. Another possibility, which is much more interesting and realistic, is that institutes can have a powerful renewed role in the religious formation at local and trans

institutional levels. Their function is a supporting role which is twofold: (1) providing for authorities in the world wide pedagogical space, and (2) providing for or supporting of (new) religious communities.

The need for authorities among youngsters grows as a result of modern tendencies with regard to socialization in general and religious socialization in particular. What is true, what is worthwhile and what is right is subject to continuous debate: not only the youngster himself is constructing his own (religious) position in life, also youngsters and elder people surrounding him are continuously developing and changing their positions. As a result, there is a growing need for more or less stable authorities who can be anchor points for the identity development process of young Christian youth. At the same time, tribal tendencies with regard to socialization in general and religious socialization in particular not seldom result in communities of peers instead of multi/intergenerational communities. This leads to a need for authorities of an elder generation in particular.

In this respect, with regard to denominational schools, Vermeer (2009) states: "… denominational schools have two important contributions to make. Their religious affiliation not only enables them to introduce their students to a specific body of religio- cultural elements, but as living representatives of a particular religious tradition they also present these elements as meaningful" (Vermeer, 2009, p. 207). In these schools, teachers thus are not just facilitators of an individual religious quest of the youngster but a religious authority in the sense of being a living representatives of a particular religious tradition participating in the lives of young people. The same is true for parents, pastors and youth workers, as argued by Roebben (1997; who uses the word 'authority' here in the sense of authoritative…): "… in order to strengthen the agency pole of the young person, a confrontation is needed with other convincing agencies such as educators and parents. Their strength does not lie in their authority but in their wisdom, their authenticity, their affirmation of the contingency of every life project (included their own), their capacity to criticize and relativize the impact of media, and their openness to the stories of young people who are looking for a good life" (p. 334).

Young people are thus helped with an elder generation who invests in relationships with pupils, being present in their networks, showing in daily life their religious outlooks, affects and actions, being an authentic charismatic source of inspiration with whom pupils can identify with. In a de-institutionalized world, a new generation of Christian youth is still helped by authorities from an elder generation. It is the Christian school and the (institutional) church which can be the place in which these authorities can grow, be fed, and be inspired for the ´confrontation´, the meeting with young people anywhere inside or outside the institute, in local street life or on the world wide web.

Institutes might not only have a powerful renewed role in providing for authorities but also in providing for or supporting of (new) religious communities. Although the role of institutes decreases when it comes to its structures, organizing principles and homogeneity, the institutes still bring forth a lot of social capital of which the pedagogical 'authorities' are an important part. To a certain level, schools and churches alike own the social forces to renew themselves in the direction of tribal communities that meet the challenges and needs of a new generation of Christian youth. At the same time these social forces or social capital can serve the existence/continuation of new religious communities outside the institutes: in this scenario the institutes are still there but they make their sources of inspiration, their tradition and their members more fruitful to communities outside its own boarders: whether it be alternative

religious gatherings at a schoolsite, a missionary living community next door or a faith community on the internet.

6. Conclusion

Main question in this article was what implications tribal forms of religious socialization might have for the contribution of (religious) schools and Christian faith communities to the religious formation of Christian youth. This paper clarified that religious education of a new generation of Christians needs *authorities* and *communities* which are connected in a worldwide pedagogical space in which youngsters of this era are participating. This conclusion sheds light on the broader issue of the contribution of institutions to religious formation of a new generation of Christian youth which is growing up in a de-institutionalized world with increasing influence of multireligious and secular voices. The worldwide web or the social media context is not only a technical and communication context but also a pedagogical context where young people learn from other participants and communities. The same is true at street level: still the very local place one is living can be an important religious pedagogical context in which a small religious community can serve young people.

Both authorities and communities can be found in institutional settings but they should be connected to both local street level and the worldwide space. However, increasingly the authorities and communities will be found outside the institutes. This means that churches, schools, teachers, pastors, parents and other pedagogues should connect or reconnect with these new communities and authorities in order to be able to serve the young.

This paper shows the increasing importance of individual believers (authorities) and flexible and fluid religious communities in the religious upbringing of a new generation of Christian youth. This perspective of forms of tribal religious socialization adds to more organizational or institutional reflections on religious education, such as there is with regard to schools, e.g. the differences and preferences of segregated schools, program schools, (Christian) encounter schools and interreligious schools (Wardekker and Miedema (2001a,b). The perspective of tribal religious socialization also adds to more organizational or institutional reflections with regard to the church as an institute. In The Netherlands, a clear development towards ecumenism and church unity is observed, also translated into structural fusions and unity. This paper is challenging this development by putting into perspective the role of structures on the meso level and lightening the role of individuals, the local context and the world wide pedagogical space on a trans institutional level.

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