

## Conference

### ***Political education : citizenship, moral training and teaching of religion. International approaches (19th-21st centuries).***

Université Lumière, Lyon 2. November 14, 15, 16, 2022

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From the 19th century onwards, political modernity resulted in many countries in the will of the state to take charge of the citizens' education, in connection with the development of mass elementary schooling and the rise of national feelings. More recently, especially since the 2000s, citizenship education has become a key issue for international institutions such as the Council of Europe and Unesco, which have developed dedicated programs and published recommendations and resources for teacher educators and policy makers.

As a condition for maintaining, strengthening and expanding democratic institutions, such a project requires a political education, that is a preparation for the exercise of popular sovereignty and participation in common affairs. It also involves the transmission of a set of behavioral norms and collective values that are difficult to reduce to a procedural approach.

As a result citizenship education permeates other elements in the curriculum such as history, science, literature, physical education, while the school's sphere of action overlaps with that of other educational institutions and places of socialization which have their own views on politics and citizenship like the family, peer groups, community organizations, political movements, faith-based groups, or the army.

Considered in their relationship with political education, moral education and religious education (whether academic or devotional) offer an interesting perspective on the complementarities and tensions between the different actors and aspects of public educational policies.

The link between the civic, moral and religious dimensions of educating new generations, which depends on regional, national and even international power relations and institutional balances, is undoubtedly part of the political and social history of the various territories. In this respect, the national level is not always relevant since educational policies are not always the responsibility of a centralized state.

We can thus roughly distinguish secular models dissociating moral and citizen education from religious education, more or less secularized models which include pluralistic religious teaching, and denominational models which combine moral, citizenship and religious education.

Yet, however enlightening these categories may be, they provide little clue on actual curricular configurations and do not prevent comparison between educational policies and practices deployed in these different contexts.

Although it does not always involve explicit teaching, moral or ethical education can be a point of agreement or dissension between education for citizenship and teaching of religion.

Whether it is a separate subject or whether it is more or less deliberately integrated into the curriculum, the relationship of morality to the civic and the religious varies significantly from one educational system to another: it can be integrated into common or optional denominational teaching, or part of citizen education in a secular approach or as an alternative to the religious education ; it can also be related to it in a pluralistic and existential perspective.

How do the potentially competing purposes of moral or ethical education, such as the transmission of collective norms and values and the development of personal autonomy, fit together in these various configurations and contexts?

Without positing an inescapable tendency to secularization, the latter does appear to be a common feature of educational policies, though to varying degrees and in different ways, whether it stands as a repellent, a requirement of modernity, an aspect of globalization that needs to be taken into account, whether it is encouraged by political power or promoted by institutions or groups of stakeholders with their own visions and interests.

A move towards secularization can thus be observed even in the denominational curriculum, such as the development of approaches based on Humanities, social sciences and philosophy, like the teaching of Islamic culture in Tunisia, or through the inclusion of cultural and pluralistic approaches in religion courses, as has been observed in Sweden, Norway, England, Quebec and some Swiss cantons.

Such evolutions call for a comparison between the practices of denominational or interfaith religious teaching with the objectivist approach to religious facts such as it may exist in laic educational systems.

Conversely, it would also be necessary to study the impact on educational policies of the trend towards the reconfessionalization of the political sphere observed on a global scale since the 1980s: the Iranian revolution, the role of a rigid conception of Islam in the Afghan revolt against the Soviet regime, the rise of religious political parties in Israel, India, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, the reaffirmation of the Orthodox identity of Russia, the weight of Protestant fundamentalism in the United States, the use of religious arguments in the debates on "the Christian roots of Europe"...

Major international surveys such as the ICCS survey of the IEA (International Association of the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) or that of the European network Eurydice have been devoted to citizenship learning at school from a comparative perspective (Council of Europe 2017; Schulz et al 2017), but they have shown little interest in non-school actors or in the relations of these actors with education.

Moreover, they only marginally address the relationship between citizenship learning, moral education, religious education or teaching about religions.

It is these relationships that the conference aims to shed light on by exploring the institutional, professional, epistemological and political issues at stake in public education, not only in official texts, but at every level (Lascoumes et Le Galès 2012). In an interdisciplinary perspective, the papers could involve a diversity of academic approaches: history, educational sciences, didactics, political sciences, sociology of the curriculum, analysis of professional practices. Contributions discussing the possibility and relevance of transferring their analytical frameworks to other contexts will be particularly welcome.

Several lines of investigation will be focused on :

### **1) Training citizens: a diversity of places, institutions and actors promoting specific educational projects**

School policies are developed at a multiple levels due to the diversity of regional and national institutional structures, as well as the variety of stakeholders involved.

Our aim is to compare national and regional models of citizenship education in their complexity and historical evolution - if necessary identifying specific issues at stake at the different levels of education - and to compare them with the forms of political socialization outside school such as family, religious groups, community associations, political parties, community education movements or the army.

How do these various actors position themselves in relation to the school system ? What complementarities and tensions are at work in possible partnerships between them?

We will also look at the role of international agencies or institutions such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe in curriculum development and informal education, as well as possible discrepancies between their recommendations and local policies.

### **2) Pluralism and construction of the « common ground »**

How do historical, institutional and societal balances between different religions or beliefs translate into curricular policies and teaching practices in formal or informal education?

What conceptions of political community do they develop ? What kind of common ground, apart from the national, do they create. To what extent and along which lines do they allow for convictional pluralism ? What power relations impact curriculum designing ? Which aspects of the curriculum refer to controversial issues and what management of dissensus do they imply ?

### **3) The place of religious teaching or teaching about religions in citizen education : historical, geographical, institutional variations**

What approaches to religion are at work in the public policies and in the classroom ? What changes can be observed in this area ? What impact do the transformations of attitudes to religion and its social role have on the building of citizenship? What are the arguments used and which models of citizenship do they promote ?

### **4) Professional issues, educators' postures, teaching materials, pedagogical approaches in moral, citizen education and teaching of religions:**

This part will address the difficulties and specific professional issues encountered by teacher educators depending on the contexts in which they work and the institutional and epistemological frameworks governing their activity.

What teaching approaches and materials do they use and how do they use them ?

Beyond the differences regarding context, to what extent can a comparison between pedagogical approaches, professional hardships and resources be enlightening ?

### **5) Investigating moral and citizen education and the teaching of religions in a comparative international perspective: theoretical frameworks, methods and obstacles**

Given the diversity of the education systems, analyzing the methodology used by researchers to deal with their subject in the various contexts is an essential dimension of any comparative approach.

We shall also examine the organization of the scientific field in this area and the researchers' working conditions : field accessibility, funding, dissemination of their findings, high priority or sensitive issues.

Papers can be submitted in english, german or French

Proposals (title, abstract of about 3000 characters, short bibliography) must be submitted on the platform sciencesCONF.org until March 31 included