

ISCHE SWG:

“History of Laic Education: concepts, policies and practices in the world”

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National education systems' conformation has been a result of nonlinear processes, which went together with the creation of the modern State, the development of capitalist production and the expansion of urbanization and market economy. Nation States have assumed the function to educate the citizens and sometimes built an absolute monopoly on the formal education in societies. To do so, limits between the roll of the State and the civil society had to be delimited. Secularisation and Laic education have been part of the States empowerment, although with different modalities, degrees, advances and backward movements and facing diverse adversaries. Against the conflicts that were caused for reasons of creed or religion, laic education became a principle and a desirable model to the interior of the nations and in international and transnational organizations.

One of the problems for a discussion among the colleagues interested in this topic is the terminology and the meaning of terms in latin and anglo saxon countries (for instance). The terms *istruzione laica*, *éducation laïque*, *educación laica*, *educação laica*, or *laicità*, *laïcité*, *laicidad*, *laicidade*, *laïcisation*, *laicización*, or *laicização* do not exist in English with the same connotation. We could translate them to “lay education”, “secular education”, and secularization. But these do not mean the same. In Latin languages, the adjective *laic* gives account of a historical process that may not has parallel in the Anglo-Saxon countries.

In many countries “laicisation” firstly led to separate public education from Church; secondly, to omit all religious education, cults and symbols in educational system, and thirdly, in the most radical models, to prohibit, penalise, and forbid any kind of religious contents, pedagogical means, symbols, cults, persons, institutions, and financial or material resources related to any Church or religion in public education in all its grades and levels.

In the face of absence of the right term to name this issue, we do not hold the adjectives secular or lay. We propose to introduce in our English translations the terms “laic education”, laicism, and laicization as concepts with a connotation, which comes from historical processes, not as a processes limited to one country, but that occurs in the world. The term laic allows a better comprehension not only of the history of Latin and catholic countries, but also of the history of the educational systems in Orthodox, Muslim or other Christian religious contexts. As well, this term contributes to project future realities within the globalisation processes.

The “laicisation” was fraught with conflicts that included discussions in academy, public media, parliamentary debates and violent clashes. To teach or not religion at schools was one of the fronts on which waged a deeper struggle for control of the state apparatus. Therefore, it was a matter of power and power reproduction through hegemony. How has laic education been conceptualized ? When did the ideas about laic education emerge in history and how they took shape in institutions? How was laic education in different national and cultural contexts form? What kind of social advantages, dilemmas or

problems are related to the management of laic educative systems? What adhesions or resistances bring about the different institutional forms of laic education? What crossovers between laic and religious, public and private education occur in different historical contexts? How does laic education acquire new meaning in a transnational, worldwide context?

The objective of this SWG is to contribute to the explanation of the diversity of processes and conditions that made possible the transition from a religious to a laic education, as one of the fundamental strategies for building hegemonic power in modern States, as well as a mean for obtaining pacific coexistence and respect by the religious and cultural diversity in the world.

Starting in 2017, the SWG will have several work meetings in the context of each ISCHE conference and in permanent group communication. The SWG will discuss about history of laic education, starting with terminology and theories, and following with educational philosophy, national systems principles, political and law frames, curriculum changes, educative agencies and subjects, pressure groups, fighting for the educational control, social conflicts, advances and backwards in laic education. Members of the group will make monographic and comparative studies. The goal is to present several papers on the topic and publish the results of the collective research in at least one book, in ISCHE book series.