

Abstract of Contribution 214

ID: 214

A6) 6.Travelling objects: the production, reproduction and circulation of educational objects

Preformed Panel

Language(s): English

Keywords: Secularization, modernization, global/local, technologies, education reform

The Global and Local Political Project of Secularization and Modernization Through Education Reform and Its Technologies, Objects and Forms

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Since secularization as a research paradigm was increasingly found inadequate from especially the 1990s (e.g. Swatos & Christiano 1999), historiographic education research has challenged the dominating 20th-century progressive narratives on modern schooling, and pointed to how religion has played a role in modern European and as well as North American educational effort. This has resulted in not least research on how religion, especially in the form of Protestantism, has been used and transformed in the modern civilizing mission of schooling, in nation-building through schooling and in the languages of education, and as such circulated globally. The concepts of modern schooling that developed in Europe and North America from especially the mid-19th century onwards are increasingly recognized as having been part of transforming and reinforcing religion globally from colonialism to present-day politics of globalization (e.g. Popkewitz 2011, Tröhler 2011, Buchardt 2016). Historical scholarship has since especially the 2000s in continuation suggested that the picture of a sharp differentiation, when it comes to divisions between religion and state-driven education and its connected knowledge corpuses in the form of pedagogies and education theory, is not adequate. The relation between religion, education and state also post-19th century developed in a far more complicated manner.

Rather than seeing modern schooling as increasingly secularized in the meaning of separated and cleansed from religion from 19th century onwards, it might make more sense to understand educational modernity as what historian of education Fritz Osterwalder has described as a sacralization of education that accompanied educationalization of the public sphere (Osterwalder 2006).

Education historical scholarship post *Secularization, R. I. P.* (Stark 1999) leads to questioning, not *if* secularization in the meaning of institutional division took place, but rather *what secularization as a political project contained: Which strategies? Which technologies? Which forms? Which objects including pedagogical objects?* Also it invites us to reconsider what research into religion and state within the field of history of education – in interdisciplinary overlaps with political history and historical religion research – has contributed and can continue to contribute.

A core question when approaching education as an arena for battles around and negotiations of the political project of secularization is how education reform has functioned as an arena for secularizing efforts and which new educational and pedagogical forms it created. This calls for further exploration of the relation between education politics and secularization politics, a task this panel takes on. The point of departure for the panel is the methodological discussions within the subfields of comparative history, world history, transnational history and – latest – global history, of how to understand phenomena such as “Enlightenment” – a concept and historical monument deeply connected to the notion of secularization. Is “Enlightenment” and “secularization” to be understood and explored as European phenomena that spread worldwide – as claimed in a so-called diffusionist view? Or should such phenomena rather be understood as different and contextual reactions to similar circumstances, as local mobilizations related to global conditions – as in a “globalist” view (e.g. Conrad 2012, 2018, Sorkin 2008, Buchardt & Fox 2020)? The session will approach these discussions through papers that cover early modern to modern France, the Osman empire to the Turkish republic and mid-20th century Spain and Denmark. On this basis the panel aims to shed light to how secularization- and education reform interacted and which new technologies and formats, including pedagogical formats it created.

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Presentations of the Panel

Replacing Priests with Doctors? The Medicalization of Education in France in light of the Secularization Theses

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From medieval proverbs warning that “where there are three physicians there are two atheists” to contemporary debates linking the rise of modern medicine to processes of secularization, medicine has a long reputation of being at odds with religion. France, as cradle of modern medicine and prototype of a secular nation, lends itself as a case study to further explore the question *if* and *how* the medicalization of education was historically linked to secularization.

During the 19th century, the French medical field was often suspected of wanting to put the doctor in the place of the priest. Educational reformers not only propagated medical inspections of school buildings and health education, but also considered medicine as a scientific and secular authority in educational debates (Parayre 2011). This paper, however, goes further back and explores the second half of the 18th century when medical reasoning became relevant in political debates (Quinlan 2007). This period set the stage for the later (ideological) association of medicalization and secularization which shaped subsequent educational discussions and reforms. My investigation begins with a mid-century series of educational manuals that propagated “medicinal education” for children, discussed bodily self-control and emphasized health as precondition for morality (e.g., Le Camus 1753, Brouzet 1754). Using these sources as the point of departure, firstly, the paper analyzes early intersections of educational and medical reasoning to explore how the medicalization of education predated secularization efforts in the knowledge production of pedagogues, physicians, nuns and priests. Secondly, it is explored how medicine then came to be placed in the service of secularism within the context of the so-called *medical enlightenment* (Williams 1994, Brockliss/Jones 1997). With the professionalization and expansion of the medical field in France, an unprecedented optimism in medicine as a tool of social reform spread amongst French intellectuals. Medicine came to be envisioned as a holistic *science de l'homme* and elevated by many to queen of the sciences – a status formerly ascribed to theology (ibid.). By the end of the century, the narrative of medicine as being a wholly secular affair, detached from religious belief and even opposed to the Catholic Church, became dominant. My paper aims to make sense of this shift. Inspired by Foucault (1963, 1969, 1977/78), the source material is examined through a discourse-analytical lens to make visible processes of discursive delineation, the creation of new ideological oppositions and reorganization of fields of knowledge in reaction to historically contingent events and power struggles. The paper concludes with a revisitation of contemporary secularization theories and discusses their application to the medicalization of education in 18th-century France.

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Taming Religion by Nation: Educational Nation-Building and the Shifting Role of Islam in Relation to Ottoman and Turkish Language Policies

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It is generally acknowledged that language and script reforms have played an important role in the secular self-understanding of the Turkish Republic since its inception. Accordingly, it seems not by chance that in 1961 Turkey placed “The law about the acceptance and application of the Turkish letters” from 1928 under constitutional protection. As a result, the language regime was classified as one of the eight revolutionary laws codifying the main secular values on which the Republic of Turkey was built (Ertan 2007). This linked the simplification of the old Ottoman language to the secularization of the Turkish nation-state.

The paper challenges this nationalist modernization narrative by pointing at the ambivalent role of Islam within the discourse of language simplification in the multiethnic Ottoman Empire and the nationalist Turkish Republic that emerged from it. In post-Ottoman historiography, the official portrayal of religion, and Islam in particular, as a serious threat to the newly established secular nation-state was one of the cornerstones for circumventing the Ottoman past as inglorious and pre-modern.

However, in more recent research the denial of continuities has been highly contested by source-based historical research (Provence 2017; Meeker 2001), as has the dichotomy Ottoman-backward-religious and Turkey-modern-secular (Aymes et al. 2015; Heilo & Chovanec 2021).

In this paper I explore the ways in which educational discourses on the simplification of the Ottoman/Turkish language in the 19th and 20th centuries display a shifting intermingling of Islam, nation(-state) building and secularization. To this end, I want to proceed in four steps: First, I will trace the discourse on language simplification in the Ottoman period by analyzing the policies of Münif Paşa (1830-1910) as Ottoman Minister of Education. I will then focus on the transition period from Empire to Republic by examining the 1911-released booklet by a well-known publisher of textbooks in both the Empire and the Republic, titled "Are we in need of language purification." Thirdly, I will deal with the Republican era and therefore with the actual law about the change of the alphabet of October 1928. Here, the discourse is unearthed by archival documents from 1927-1929 from the Turkish Ministry of Education. Additionally, Mustafa Kemal's grand tour through Turkey as the nation's head teacher will be leading for my research. Finally, I would like to conclude by contrasting the three discourses on the Ottoman/Turkish language simplification that was educationally enacted, thereby displaying a renegotiation of religion's role in society.

Methodologically, to clarify my question, I will draw on Casanova's (2009) post-colonial approach to secularization as a specific Euro-Christian political experience and on Asad (2003), who describes secularization not as the disappearance of religion but rather as an intersection with it – in different ways and in different contexts. Drawing on this methodology, the paper will trace the discourse on education, which is considered a mainstay of modernization in both the Empire and the Republic. This is not only revealing in terms of continuities, but also provides new insights into secularization trajectories in a culturally Muslim region.

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Reconfiguring Religion and State Through Education? A Mid-20th Century Comparison of Education Reform in Social Democratic-Liberal Denmark and Falangist Spain

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The modernization of the European states from late 19th to early 20th century meant different types of models for state-religion relations, and reform in the education system became a political tool in this context (Buchardt 2022). While Third Republic France and the young Turkish republic have often been studied in this respect, less attention has been paid to the less obvious country cases, such as Lutheran Denmark, a constitutional monarchy with democratic parliamentarism, which throughout the 20th century was governed not least by the Social Democratic Party and Liberal parties, and Catholic Spain, from the late 1930s and up until the mid 1970s governed by fascist dictatorship. Also, previous scholarship regarding secularization and/or reintegration of religion and state has primarily been focused on the period from the mid-19th century and up until the mid-20th century, whereas less attention has been paid to the mid-20th century reforms in education following WWII, and which educational and pedagogical strategies and forms this was part of creating.

In Denmark, the juridical connection between the school and the Lutheran church was loosened, but from especially the 1930s also reconfigurations of religion as history and culture of the nation appeared in curricular and education reform work (Buchardt 2013). In Spain, from the late 19th century the church was losing domain with regard to education (Domke 2011), but education reforms following WWII under Falangist rule meant new political investments in religion as a national matter (Sayavera 2016, Fernández 2021).

With the Spanish educational reform in 1945 (*La ley de Educación primaria*) (Franco 1945) and the Danish 1958 reform – a compromise between Liberals and Social Democrats – as empirical point of the departure, the paper will address the following questions: In what ways was the relation between religion and the nation, the state and the demands to citizens addressed in the two reform processes? To what extent can respectively the Social Democratic and Liberal reform ideas and the Falangist reform efforts be said to follow comparable paths when retooling and repoliticizing religion through education reform? And in what ways do the ideological and pedagogical forms of knowledge that appear in the reform work intersect with the confessional landscape of the country cases under study?

The paper is methodologically based on a global history approach, addressing the question of religion/state and secularization/modernization as a global challenge with varying local appearances (Conrad 2012, Buchardt & Fox 2020). The source material is the archives surrounding the reform processes; minutes, manuals, law texts and public coverage of the reforms.

Theoretically, the paper draws on the double concept of 'confessional languages' and 'forms of governing' deriving from Daniel Tröhler's theoretical framework on the global and national "languages of education" (Tröhler 2011). This double concept will on the one hand be used as an analytical tool and on the other hand be sought further developed in order to make it possible to understand the historical development of the relation between forms of governing, religion and the education system.

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