

CALL FOR PAPERS for the CEPS Journal 4/2019

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Religion, Education and the Challenges of Contemporary Societies

(Focus editors: Anja Zalta and Aleš Črnič)

Religions have had, and still have, an important role in shaping the world as we know it today. In some parts of Europe, we are witnessing the revival of religion (the so-called “religious revitalisation”) and its re-entry into the public sphere. Religion as an ideology also plays an important role in shaping world politics. The context of modern globalisation makes our societies increasingly susceptible to influxes of heterogeneous groups of migrants, who bring with them cultural and religious traditions that are often markedly different from those of the majority of the local population. The contrast between historically established religious practices and relatively newly established religions, combined with power struggles over the new public role of religion in some countries (especially evident in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe), is giving rise to complex social challenges, some of which are also manifested in the field of public education. It has become evident that numerous tensions and conflicts often result from ignorance and a lack of understanding of religious ideas, values and norms (on both sides). Teaching about religion(s) is therefore of key importance for the development of religious literacy and an understanding of the situation in the world today.

The growing pluralisation also gives rise to the complex problem of religious symbols in contemporary public spaces. With the advent of modern secularity and the increased pluralisation of the twenty-first century, the marking of school spaces with Christian symbols is not longer self-evident. At the same time, pupils (and to a lesser extent teachers) increasingly enter educational spaces with visible symbols of their minority religious affiliation (e.g., Muslim girls and women wearing veils), which challenges the (until recently) prevailing image of a monolithic society, as well as problematising the principle of equality (regardless of cultural differences) ensured by modern democratic societies.

European education systems have adopted different standpoints regarding the way religious belonging among pupils and teachers is dealt with and the kind of knowledge about religions that is communicated in and beyond classrooms. The situation varies from country to country and is based mainly on the kind of regulation that is valid within a given country. In countries where religion is strictly separated from the state, any kind of religious content, and sometimes also any information about religion, is excluded from teaching. This has resulted in young people no longer being sufficiently equipped with information about religions and consequently having serious difficulties understanding and critically reflecting on today’s questions and conflicts connected to religion. On the other hand, in some countries there has arisen highly confessional teaching that provides students with knowledge of one religion only. This is again insufficient to meet the needs of today’s world.

For a forthcoming issue of the CEPS Journal, we kindly invite theoretical and empirical contributions that address, but are by no means limited to, the following topics:

- the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the relationship between religion and public education;
- religion and public education in the light of fundamental principles and concepts (such as human rights, tolerance, multiculturalism etc.);
- developments and difficulties related to the concept of the secularity and neutrality of public education;
- the potential of education about religion(s) and its applications;
- the influence of the growing pluralisation on the question of religious content in the public school curriculum;
- the construction of pedagogical knowledge for education about religion, didactic recommendations and competence, and the training of teaching staff;
- the contextualisation of confessional and non-confessional education in public and private schools;
- various models of education about religions in public schools as implemented in practice;
- various models of the attitude of education systems towards the presence of religious symbols in educational spaces;
- the state of education about religion in individual countries and the context within which it has been shaped, including the nature of the curriculum, who the teachers are, and what kind of knowledge about religions is communicated in schools;
- legislation (national and international) and relevant judicial practice;
- etc.

Article submission timeline:

30 June 2018: submission of paper title and abstract [300 words max.]

30 March 2019: paper submission [6500 words max.]

December 2019: publication of the focus issue in the CEPS journal