

## **Current Project**

### **1. Transnational Discourses on Education – Focus on Religion**

UNESCO, OSCE /ODIHR and the Council of Europe are developing normative concepts and learning plans traversing the interface between religion and education policy and in some cases are establishing competence centres to manage propagation and implementation. These policies address interreligious as well as integrative religion education and view ‘teaching about religion’ to be the primary (global) approach to general education on religion.

As previous studies have demonstrated there has been a shift in education policy from national governments towards international organisations which is accompanied by the standardisation of local education systems by global elites. In this process of self-discovery and identification beyond national boundaries, which has also been described as a period of ‘second modernity’, the field of education becomes a focal point for negotiating religious understanding and for addressing social trends towards pluralisation and individualisation, which will be researched in this study.

The project will carry out an analysis of internal modernisation processes and the education policy and legal arguments used to legitimise normative education concepts. This will be augmented by an analysis of the communication strategies and dissemination channels used within school education. Secondly changes in religious terminology and the range of religions and world views over the last 30 years will be reconstructed from the policy documentation on human rights and intercultural education issued by the above-named organisations. As such terms are found in contexts such as human rights, diversity education and conflict resolution, this analysis will therefore also constitute a contribution to research into the interrelations between religion and politics. The third part of the project will be a comparison of the named organisations in which terminology, concepts and strategies will be investigated for similarities and divergence. The findings from these analyses will reveal what understanding of religion exists when increasingly dominant security policies related to religion encounter the presumption of a harmonising global society. The question arises, with reference to the expressions observed in international politics, whether sacralisation of politics is evident in the documentation, and if so, how it is expressed. In addition to addressing desiderata in this area of research, the groundbreaking aspect of the project also lies in ascertaining which knowledge will be deemed relevant for the future of these organisations. It will become apparent from the documents and guidelines what future generations should learn about religion and what knowledge will find its way into future educational media.

Social relevance of the project is reflected in the fact that the documents investigated here anticipate future society and are already being used to guide individual education policy decision-makers, within the framework of inclusive school subjects, in places such as Quebec, Switzerland and Luxembourg. These developments in education policy are significant for religious stakeholders around the world, as contained within them is the implication that the diversity of approaches to religion we are familiar with today should be counterposed with an homogenous approach to religion within education

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