



> Organisation

Project A2-19 of the Cluster of Excellence:
“Transnational Religious Actors in Global Biopolitics”

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Centre for Advanced Study in Bioethics

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> Venue

Schloss Münster
Festsaal
Schlossplatz 5, 48149 Münster

> Registration

Participation is free of charge to anyone interested. However, registration is required due to the limited capacity. Please send your registration inquiry to: jutta.siepert@uni-muenster.de until 23.10.2015.

A conference of the **Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”** of the University of Münster. Some 200 academics from more than 20 disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and from around 14 countries deal with the relationship of religion and politics across epochs and cultures: from the world of ancient gods and Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period to the current situation in Europe, America, Asia and Africa. It is nationally the largest research association of its kind and of the 43 Clusters of Excellence in Germany, it is the only one to deal with religion. The German Federal Government and the Federal States support the project with 33.7 million euros in the Excellence Initiative’s second funding phase from 2012 to 2017.

Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”

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Conference of the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics”

and the Centre for Advanced Study in Bioethics

> Religion and Biopolitics

The Role of Religious Arguments and
Religious Actors in Liberal Democracies

27.–29.10.2015





› Religion and Biopolitics

Bio-political questions are nationally and internationally important and there is profound moral-ethical disagreement about whether such technologies – as embryo research or cloning – should be allowed or forbidden. Among the social groups that strongly shape the character of these debates are many religious organizations and actors. But the legitimacy and the functionality of such religious interventions into the secular state are both politically and theoretically controversial. The controversy centers on the liberal thesis that public debates – in particular decision making processes – should be restricted to arguments and reasons which are in principle accessible, intelligible and agreeable to all citizens. And religious arguments and reasons do not fulfil these standards. Despite this theoretical debate there is a lack of empirical knowledge about the extent, nature and consequences of the use of religious arguments. Therefore, it is of specific interest in what ways religious traditions and actors formulate their bio-ethical positions and which kinds of reasons they give to validate their positions. Moreover: how do religious actors influence politics, e.g. in which ways and under what conditions do religious positions and arguments achieve influence in political decisions?

The Conference deliberations will focus on two themes: First, epistemological and philosophical questions on the role of religious actors and arguments in liberal democracies and second, empirical case studies of the political discussion processes on stem cell research, therapeutical and reproductive cloning as well as preimplantation genetic diagnosis.

› Programme

Tuesday, 27.10.2015

10:00–10:15 Welcome/Introduction
Ulrich Willems and Michael Quante, Münster

10:15–11:30 Keynote Speech
Robert Audi, Notre Dame

Coffee Break

11:45–13:00 Citizens in Robes: The Role of Religious Reasons in Politics | Cristina Lafont, Evanston

Lunch

14:15–15:30 Arguing for Authority? Religion in Democratic Public Life | Maeve Cooke, Dublin

Coffee Break

16:00–17:15 Banning Religion? Existential Commitments and the Variety of Critique | Michael Quante, Münster

17:15–18:30 Questioning the Topos of “Religion and Violence” in Liberal Political Theory | Ulrike Spohn, Münster

Wednesday, 28.10.2015

10:00–11:15 Religious Arguments in Political Pluralism
Ulrich Willems, Münster

Coffee Break

11:45–13:00 Biotechnology and the Non-Religious Uses of Religious Claims in the Public Sphere
John Evans, San Diego

Lunch

14:15–15:30 Religion and Biopolitics: A Comparison of the United States of America, Germany, Norway, Italy and Ireland
Mirjam Weiberg-Salzmann, Münster

Coffee Break

16:00–17:15 Similar Problems, Different Solutions? Comparing Political Regulations and Public Arguments on Bioethics in Catholic Spain and Poland | Anja Hennig, Frankfurt

17:15–18:30 Biopolitics in Austria | Matthias Beck, Vienna

Thursday, 29.10.2015

10:00–11:15 “An Offer You Can’t Refuse”: The Political and Ethical Debate on Stem Cell Research, Cloning and PGD in Denmark
Jacob Dahl Rendtorff, Roskilde

Coffee Break

11:45–13:00 Two Sides of the Same Coin: The Political and Judicial Mobilization by Patients, Researchers and Religious Groups in the Field of Biomedicine in Canada and the UK
Audrey L’Espérance, Toronto

Lunch

14:15–15:30 Cloning and Medically Assisted Reproduction: The Positions of the Orthodox Church of Greece
Elisabeth Diamantopoulou, Louvain