

Religion, Poverty and Politics

***Multi-disciplinary Conference
Bergen, Norway, 21-22 February, 2013.***

While poverty and social injustice are glaring social facts in many societies, they are often conceptualized differently by different religious strands. The ways in which poverty and social injustice are understood may reveal not only fundamental differences from secular approaches and between different religious interpretations, but also qualitatively different ways in which poverty is addressed. The question of poverty and social injustice may e.g. involve withdrawal and isolation, non-action, or action against poverty through spiritual, ritual, organizational and/or political means.

The Comparative Research Programme on Poverty (CROP) and Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) organize this conference to explore ways in which poverty and social injustice are addressed by different religious actors and communities. With an emphasis on how poverty and social injustice are understood, e.g. as caused by human, material or spiritual conditions, the focus of this conference are questions of interpretation, practice and change rather than discourses on economic growth, democracy and development. Of particular interest are the various forms and dynamics of convergence between the religious and the political, e.g. from the point of departure of Catholic, Pentecostal and/or Muslim religious communities and movements, as well as indigenous worldviews and cosmologies. A central concern is how mobilization among religious actors may, e.g. on the basis of relational ontologies, generate new ways of conducting politics. By breaking with established dualisms between what has conventionally been perceived as the secular and the religious, such mobilization may imply a shift of what it means to be a political actor. We seek papers addressing these issues as well as one or more of the questions below:

- How do religious actors, institutions and/or organizations interpret and conceptualize poverty?
- How is poverty addressed by religious actors, institutions and/or organizations?
- In what ways does religion impede or facilitate social, cultural, institutional and/or structural change in societies where poverty is a severe problem?
- What characterize the societal models formulated by religious institutions/organizations, and how do they envisage these models and their own roles in the political, juridical and economic spheres of society?

- To what extent do religious actors, institutions and/or organizations engage in advocacy vis-à-vis secular authorities with regard to poverty-reduction policies and practices?

We welcome papers that deal with one or several of the above issues, empirically and/or theoretically. While the conference focuses on Latin America and Africa in particular, papers based on research from other continents are also welcome.

The workshop will bring together participants from across all university disciplines. This call for papers is open to all although preference will be given to researchers based in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Participants are expected to actively participate with presentations and in discussions of all the papers.

Participants are responsible for their own travel expenses and health insurance. Board and lodging will be covered. A limited number of travel grants will be assigned according to geographic origin and the relevance, quality, and originality of the submitted abstracts. In the case of co-authored papers, only one author may compete for a travel grant. The seminar will be conducted in English.

The abstract should not exceed 500 words (one page) and must include: the title of the proposed paper and a summary of its theme, including its central argument and research question. In addition, a brief resume (max. one page) clearly indicating your name, title, nationality, and contact information as well as a list of recent publications.

The abstract and resume should be sent by e-mail to
[cropWS@crop.uib.no]

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS:

15 NOVEMBER 2012

Accepted participants will be notified by the Academic Committee regarding the format/guidelines for their paper. The deadline for submission of full papers (max. 8 000 words) will be 31 January 2013.