

Differentiation Theory and the Sociology of Religion and Secularity

Boundaries of Religion: Demarcations and Negotiations

Workshop at the Centre for Advanced Studies
"Multiple Secularities – Beyond the West, Beyond Modernities", Leipzig University
03./04.06.2021

Convenors: Monika Wohlrab-Sahr (Leipzig University), Christoph Kleine (Leipzig University), and Daniel Witte (University of Bonn)

The second workshop on the usability of differentiation theory for research on secularity turns to the meso and micro level of social differentiations and conceptual distinctions in relation to 'religion'. It explores concrete empirical and historical cases that are instructive for the demarcation and negotiation of boundaries between 'religion' and other social spheres and practices. What are the activities and spheres between which the drawing of boundaries becomes visible? Which actors are involved? Which conflicts does the process evoke? And what are the underlying social problems and dynamics to which differentiation processes are related?

By putting both structural and conceptual boundaries of religion centre stage, we also want to address the relation between social and epistemic structures: Which semantics and interpretations (positive and negative) accompany (underlie, follow from etc.) the practical and institutional processes of differentiation? To what extent do conceptual demarcations and the shifting of semantic distinctions possibly also follow a logic of their own, which then affects structural patterns of societies?

Finally, research on processes of societal or institutional differentiation, on the one hand, and conceptual or semantic distinctions, on the other, also require attention to oppositional and adversary tendencies: Are there contrasting cases in which such differentiation and distinction would, in principle, be possible, but in fact does not take place? Are there cases in which previously existing differentiations are again dissolved? Do we find cases in which differentiation is introduced only on the surface level? And, if so, what are the reasons for that?

The workshop aims at a comparative perspective by bringing different regional and historical constellations of religion and its respective others together. This does not imply that the single papers need to be explicitly comparative. However, our goal is to relate papers on different contexts to one another and to discuss them in a comparative perspective.

We plan to publish selected contributions.

Costs for travel and accommodation will be covered. In the event of travel restrictions due to coronavirus, the workshop will be held in a hybrid format, allowing for virtual participation. Please send your contribution and direct all inquiries to: judith.zimmermann@uni-leipzig.de

Timeline

- 26 March 2021: Deadline for abstract (250–350 words) and short biography
- 2 April 2021: Notification of acceptance
- 14 May 2021: Deadline for draft of full paper
- 3–4 June 2021: Workshop