

Memo for discussion at the
European Centers of Religion and Politics Meeting
June 23 2020 at 6 pm (EST)

**Cluster of Excellence „Religion and Politics. Dynamics of Tradition and Innovation“
WWU Münster, Germany**

Introductory remarks

Since 2007, the Cluster of Excellence “Religion and Politics” at the University of Münster, Germany, has been investigating the complex relationship between religion and politics across eras and cultures.

The researchers concentrate on the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and on their polytheistic precursors. The focus of interest is on Europe and the Mediterranean region, as well as on their entanglements with the Near East, Africa, North and Latin America. The research network is the largest of its kind in Germany and receives funding of 31 million euros (2019-2025).

In the new funding phase since 2019, the 140 researchers from 20 disciplines across the theologies, humanities and social sciences focus on the “dynamics of tradition and innovation”. They analyze religion as an engine of political and social change – both in the past and in the present.

<https://www.uni-muenster.de/Religion-und-Politik/en/>
https://www.uni-muenster.de/Religion-und-Politik/en/forschung/dynamiken_von_religion_und_politik.html

Structure of the Cluster

The Cluster has over 80 individual projects that collaborate in three large research fields: Transcultural entanglements and disentanglements; Religious diversity and legal-political unity; and, Criticism of religion and apologetics.

<https://www.uni-muenster.de/Religion-und-Politik/en/forschung/forschungsprogramm.html>

The dynamic nature of the Cluster easily allows for the creation of new research groups. Since the last network meeting, for example, several research groups have been established, i.e.

- Theological Doctrine and Lived Religiosity
- Digital Humanities
- Epidemics
- Conflict and Violence

https://www.uni-muenster.de/Religion-und-Politik/en/forschung/research_clouds.html

Major research programs and activities over the last year include...

- start of the new funding phase
- working in research clouds
- lecture series “100 years of the constitutional law of religion” in summer 2019
- start of Graduate School and research projects in winter term 2019/20

Graduate School and Young scholars

The Cluster has an integrated Graduate School. Currently there are 16 PhD students, ca. 15 more positions are planned.

Asset:

- The existing Graduate School with its structures, including academic mentors and dedicated administrative staff, makes the integration of visiting PhD students easy.
- Dedicated funding is available for a number of Junior Fellows for 6-12 months. The fellowships will take place in summer 2022 and 2024.
- The Cluster provides support for visiting fellows with external funding to do research in Münster.

How we could benefit from partnership:

- Possibility of recruiting second doctoral advisors for Cluster PhD students outside of the Cluster (Cotutelle)

Media Outreach

Since the last network meeting the Cluster of Excellence has continued its ambitious outreach activities. Some focus has been placed on social media.

The Cluster and the ifp Catholic School of Journalism will be offering from autumn 2020 the first in-service training programme in Germany in “Religious Journalism”.

The Cluster is very pleased with the #NewsFromOurMembers function that has been established since the last meeting and also with the presentation of the network on the Webpage of the EuARe.