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Highlights of the Spring Semester 2018

Kick-Off Event April 23, 2018

On April 23, 2018, the Interdisciplinary Research Cooperation (IRC) "Religious Conflicts and Coping Strategies" was launched at the University House in Bern. More than 70 people from academics, politics and the general public gathered to participate in the kick-off event and to learn more about the twelve interdisciplinary projects connected to the IRC. In her introductory speech, IRC director Prof. Dr. Katharina Heyden illustrated the goals, methods and structure of the IRC by means of the musical text "Alpeflug" by the popular Bernese singer and songwriter Mani Matter. The five note lines might symbolize, according to Heyden, the five involved faculties of the University of Bern. The overall goal of the IRC is to develop a model for a context-sensitive analysis of conflicts with religious dimensions on the basis of the results of the individual projects. This inductive modeling is, so to speak, the clef for the IRC as a whole. In his greeting to the audience Prof. Dr. Christian Leumann, Rector of Bern University, congratulated Prof. Heyden on the successful start of the IRC and emphasized the significance of the IRC "Religious Conflicts and Coping Strategies" for Bern University and its 2021 strategy. As the IRC's "One Health" and "Decoding Sleep", this IRC demonstrates Bern University's excellence in research on current and relevant issues.

International Scientific Board Assembled

The IRC is pleased to announce the names of the members of the International Scientific Board. The following distinguished scholars from the field of religious conflicts have agreed to share their expertise with the IRC: Prof. Dr. Anna Sapir Abulafia (Abrahamic Religions, University of Oxford, UK), Prof. Dr. Michael Bongardt (Anthropology, Cultural and Social Philosophy, Interreligious Theology, Siegen University, GER), Prof. Dr. Andreas Feldtkeller (Religious Sciences, Intercultural Theology, Humboldt-University Berlin, GER), Prof. Dr. Nicola Lacey (Law, Gender and Social Policy, The London School of Economics and Political Science, UK) and Prof. Dr. Joram Tarusarira (Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding, University of Groningen, NL).

Conferences Organized in Affiliation with the IRC

Prof. Dr. Isabelle Noth and Dr. Jessica Lampe took part in organizing the International Association for Spiritual Care Annual Conference from July 8-10, 2018. This conference took place at Union Theological Seminary in New York, USA, and dealt with "Religious Conflicts: External and Internal". About 100 international researchers and practitioners participated in discussing topics that ranged from "Race, Culture, and Complex Religious Bonds" to "Fundamentalism as Toxic Spirituality" and "Religious Trauma". Isabelle Noth (*Project 2: Religious Coping Styles among People Dealing with Internal Religious and Spiritual Struggles*)

Bern University's Institute for New Testament hosted the conference "Plutarch and the Religious Landscape" from June 28-30, 2018. Prof. Dr. Rainer Hirsch-Luipold and Dr. Peter Lötscher presented papers on "Religion, Religions and Theology in Plutarch" and on "Plutarch's Monotheism". Peter Lötscher (*Project 4: The One God: Conflict Zone and Concept of Integration*)

At the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR) conference on "Multiple Religious Identities" at Bern in June 2018, Angela Berlis, Katharina Heyden and David Plüss, all project leaders within the IRC, organized an interdisciplinary panel "Shared Holy places". Based on historical and contemporary case studies, the participants discussed the influence of multi-religious places on religious identities. The panel was met with great interest, some contributions are already in the process of being published. Katharina Heyden (*IRC director*)



Highlights from the Projects

Through the Forbes “30 under 30” nomination for the DACH region in May some media attention resulted in articles in the Bund, Reformiert.info and Uniaktuell. In summer, I delivered a keynote lecture at the annual *International Association for Spiritual Care* (IASC), followed by a TEDx talk on the topic. These were all great experiences that helped me to grapple deeper with my project.

Jessica Lampe (*Project 2: Religious Coping Styles among People Dealing with Internal Religious and Spiritual Struggles*)

I found the workshop with Margo Okazawa-Rey at the Graduate School Gender Studies on September 6-7, 2018, very inspiring and enriching. Within this framework, I was able to present my research work to my colleagues and put it up for discussion. The discussion was exciting and I returned home with a lot of very good feedback, which I will now record and implement in my work.

Meral Kaya (*Project 5: The Role of Gender and Women's Agency in Religious Conflicts and Social Transformation*)

At the European Association for the Study of Religions (EASR) conference on “Multiple Religious Identities” at Bern in June 2018, I gave a paper in the panel “One, Many, and the City: Making and Unmaking of Boundaries in Urban religion”, organised by members of the Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt. The paper was well-received and triggered potential research collaboration, amongst others with La Sapienza in Rome, through Prof. Alessandro Saggioro whose research focuses on the Codex Theodosianus and religious conflict.

Jessica van't Westeinde (*Project 9: Councils and Conflicts. Trouble shooting and shooting trouble in Late Antiquity*)

The attendance at the conference «Mitten in Deutschland – mitten im Krieg? Leben und Handeln in einer Ausnahmesituation, 1618-1648» in Gotha was the highlight of this summer. The presented research projects shed a light on how everyday life was handled during the Thirty Years' War.

Dominique Juen and Janine Scheurer (*Project 10: Rhetorics of Confessional Identity and Alterity. Religious Wars in Switzerland between Reformation and Liberalism*)



Upcoming Highlights

During the fall semester 2018, the IRC discusses different methods in interdisciplinary conflict studies. Methods range from the analysis of qualitative interviews to historical text interpretation and digital anthropology.

IFK Annual Conference "Coping as a Concept in Conflict Research" at Bern University, May 6, 2019. Keynote Speaker: Prof. Dr. Jeffrey Haynes, London Metropolitan University.

International Conference "Claiming History - the Place and Role of Historical Reasoning in Religious Conflicts" in Rome, October 24-25, 2019. Cooperation IFK and Istituto Svizzero.



Impressum

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