

5<sup>th</sup> conference

**Religion and Human Rights (RHR)**

December 6<sup>th</sup> – December 9<sup>th</sup> 2017

Uppsala – Sweden



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## Call for papers

### Empirical perspectives on Religion and socioeconomic Human Rights in a time of global Migration

In 1966 the General Assembly of the UN agreed on the “International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights”. The preamble points out that in recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family “the ideal of free human beings enjoying freedom from fear can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his economic, social and cultural rights, as well as his civil and political rights.” The so called second generation of human rights include economic rights, rights with regard to social security, labor and employment, as well as cultural rights which may be seen as a shield for the protection of human dignity especially of specific groups like women and children or refugees. In the following the term “socio-economic rights” is used as an umbrella for these contents. These rights seem to be widely accepted in the public arena and they seem also to be positively received and supported by religious traditions. This may be understood from the caring engagement with the poor, the sick, the old, the strangers that all three monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, are marked by, and not only these religions, but also the other so-called axial religions like Hinduism and Buddhism. Many times they transcend the borders of their own communities and reach out to people, religious and nonreligious alike, who find themselves at the margins of society at large. Nevertheless a deeper analysis is needed how young people evaluate socioeconomic rights and in how far religious convictions and practices as well as other attitudes predict their perspective on these rights.

It might be remembered that Van der Ven and Ziebertz published the book “Human Rights and the Impact of Religion” (Brill) in 2013 which did already included papers with regard to socioeconomic rights. In this volume Üzeyir Ok and Selim Eren presented research with Muslim students in Turkey and the hypotheses taken from that research is that the individual importance of religion has a positive impact on socioeconomic rights. From the study of Leslie

Francis and Mandy Robbins on Christian, Muslim and nonreligious students in England and Wales the hypotheses can be developed that Muslim students are less engaged with socioeconomic rights and environmental concerns than their Christian and nonreligious fellows are. Johannes van der Ven's researched the impact of religion on students' attitudes towards socioeconomic rights in six countries in North West Europe. From this research the hypotheses can be derived that Christian, Muslim and nonreligious students fully agree with the socioeconomic rights in the strict sense, the Muslim students even more so than the other two groups. This would be contradict the finding mentioned earlier. The paper by Francis-Vincent Anthony in the same book also indicates that differences between religious groups with regard to socioeconomic rights may be expected. Finally the research done by Pål Ketil Botvar in this volume offers insights on students' valuation of socioeconomic rights. He could indicate different parameters that influence attitudes towards socioeconomic rights as well positive as well negative. These findings can stimulate research in order to come to better knowledge, to clarify the contradictory results and to produce meaningful hypotheses for future research.

A basic assumption of the "religion and human rights project" is that religion is an influential forces with regard to human rights attitudes. All religions claim that the ethical aspirations and moral duties they share contribute to the well-being and welfare of individual human beings, groups and communities. This applies particularly to the golden rule, which plays an important role in all religions, namely to treat others as one wants to be treated. The principle of universal reciprocity underlying this golden rule can be seen as the very basis of all human rights law. But one could ask whether and to what extent this principle is actually observed both within and between different religions, as well as in the secular world, both within and between nation-states. More specifically one could ask whether and to what extent religions contribute to the realization of human rights, i.e. how they legislate, positivize and universalize the moral codes they advocate, or at least help to prevent and counteract violations of human rights. The question is not only legitimate, because religions can be requested and even required to abide by their own ethical and moral standards but also relevant, since religions can be seen as the very core, or at least one important core aspect, of the various civilizations represented in our multicultural society today.

International empirical research on attitudes towards human rights is not about the legal dimension of rights, but about the legitimation of these rights in the opinion of the people. The question is how young people understand and value socio-economic rights and to which degree religious convictions and practices are connected with attitudes towards these human rights. It is also of interest whether the individual background of the respondents matters, (i.e. the degree of education, migration background and value orientation) - and if so, to what extent. Therefore the general question of the upcoming conference is: *What religious attitudes can be found among religious and non-religious citizens with regard to socio-economic rights? Can religion be identified as a force supporting the human rights regime?*

## Appendix for researchers for the development of a conceptual model

### **Items covering the main topic of the conference**

(These items -or a selection of these items- can be used as “dependent variables”)

#### **SOCIOECONOMIC RIGHTS**

*(Questionnaire section E 7)*

**State’s obligation regarding the right to work**

**State’s obligation regarding the right to social security**

**State’s obligation regarding living wages**

**State’s obligation regarding rest and leisure**

**The state’s obligation to the right of children**

**The state’s obligation to education**

The RHR program 1.0 made use of some different items with regard to the socio-economic rights (see below). If one would like to use them, check these items:

#### **[Social security]**

The government should provide health care for the sick

The government should provide a decent standard of living for the old

#### **[Rights of the Child]**

The state is obliged to protect children from neglect or negligent treatment.

The state is obliged to protect children's right to engage in play and recreational activities.

#### **[Rights of Women]**

The state should protect women’s right to acquire and administer property.

The state should protect women’s right to adequate job opportunities.

#### **[Environmental Rights]**

The state should protect unspoilt nature.

The state should reduce air pollution by industry by imposing legal limits

I am willing to make certain sacrifices for the sake of more beautiful environment

I am willing to pay higher prices for products if that would mean less industrial pollution

In the current data-set (RHR 2.0) there are some similar items with regard to women. Although they are subordinated to civil rights, they also can be used in the context of socio-economic rights. See therefore section E 1:

#### **[Protection from discrimination - women]**

o. Women should have the right to be equally paid for equal work.

j. The state should protect women’s right to adequate job opportunities.

#### **[Prohibition of inhuman treatment]**

l. Women should have the right to be protected from sexual harassment in the workplace.

e. Inhuman treatment is forbidden in any circumstances.

## **Explanatory connections can be made with a selection of:**

(A selection of these items can be used as “independent variables” resp.. “background variables”)

### **Population–characteristics**

*(Questionnaire section A1 – A9)*

### **Psychological dimension**

*(Questionnaire section B1 –B3)*

### **Multiculturalism**

*(Questionnaire section B4 – B5)*

### **Religion**

*(Questionnaire section C1 – C5, F1 – F3)*

### **Values**

*(Questionnaire section D1 – D2)*

### **State and Democracy**

*(Questionnaire section B6 – B10)*

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## **Varia**

### **Formats**

Because we have made good experiences with plenary sessions in 2016, we tend to organize the conference without parallel sessions. The concrete time scheme will be distributed later. Count with 30-40 minute for a speech. However, we suggest to prepare a full paper because it helps to realize a sooner publication.

### **Deadlines**

Abstract: Please send your abstract form (the form is included below) to Hans-Georg Ziebertz (hg.ziebertz@uni-wuerzburg.de) **no later than 1st June 2017**. We communicate the outcome before the end of June.

Registration: For the organization of the conference your **registration is needed by 31 July**.

## **Publication**

Contributors of theoretical and empirical papers can offer their text for a publication in a book which will be published in the series “Religion and Human Rights” (Springer).

Website

<http://www.springer.com/series/15597>

The discussion of the papers during the conference can be understood as the first step of a review procedure. Delivered papers should consider relevant conclusions of the discussions. After that we will review the papers again to ensure the production of a coherent and high quality book. Guidelines will be provided during the conference in December 2017.

## **Finances**

Host of the conference is our colleague Anders Sjöborg. His letter of invitation is attached to this mail. Anders was successful in getting funding to host our research group. Please read his letter of invitation carefully.



December 2016