



International Conference

Religion Revisited Women's Rights and the Political Instrumentalisation of Religion

Date: Friday and Saturday, 5-6 June 2009

Venue: Heinrich Böll Foundation, Schumannstr. 8, 10117 Berlin, Germany

Religions still affect state structures and public opinion worldwide. Strict separation of religion, on the one hand, and the state, politics and civil society, on the other, exists in only a minority of countries. For women and their rights to equality, there is much at stake in how religion and politics intertwine. Religious and political leaders often mobilize religious beliefs in political interventions to constrain women's rights and gender equality. However, religions also play an important role in the lives of many people. They often open up new spaces for women's societal participation; and religiously grounded claims about the fundamental equality of all human beings have provided important inspiration to emancipatory movements for human rights and democracy.

Is the strict separation of religion and politics a requirement for women's rights and gender equality? Or can they be realized in the context of public religions? Are religious movements allies or threat in the struggle for women's rights? The Heinrich-Böll-Foundation has invited scholars and feminist activists from Germany, India, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, UK, and the U.S. to discuss the question of how to deal with religions in the fight for women's rights and gender equality.

Friday, 05 June 2009

16.30-17.30 Registration

17.30-18.00 **Welcome addresses**

- Barbara Unmüßig (Heinrich Boell Foundation)
- Shahra Razavi (UNRISD)

18.00-20.00 **Keynote speeches and public discussion**

Speakers

- José Casanova (Georgetown University, Washington, DC)
"Religion, Politics and Gender Equality: Public Religions Revisited"
- Anne Phillips (London School of Economics and Political Science)
"Religion: ally, threat, or just religion?"

Discussants (10 min each)

- Farida Shaheed (Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Centre, Pakistan)
- Agnieszka Graff (Warsaw University, Poland)

Chair

- Renate Wilke-Launer (Freelance Journalist, Hamburg)



Saturday, 06 June 2009

- 10.00-11.00 **Lecture**
“*Secularisms, Citizenship and Gender Equality: Contested Approaches*”
- Deniz Kandiyoti (University of London, UK)
 - Chair: Shahra Razavi (UNRISD, Geneva)
- 11.00-12.00 **Introduction of working groups**
- (1) *Religious Feminists – Allies in the struggle for women’s rights?*
(Chair: Homa Hoodfar, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada)
 - (2) *Welfare provision by faith-based organizations – danger to women’s rights or necessary addition to the state?*
(Chair: Asef Bayat, Leiden University, the Netherlands;
Azza Karam, UNFPA)
 - (3) *Multiculturalism and Muslim immigrant women’s rights and choices in Western Europe*
(Chair: Gökce Yurdakul, Humboldt-University Berlin;
Rapporteur: Riem Spielhaus, Humboldt-University Berlin)
 - (4) *Religious fundamentalisms – feminist understandings and counter strategies*
(Chair: Cassandra Balchin, Consultant for the Association for Women’s Rights in Development, UK;
Rapporteur: Sina Nadine Tegeler, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Berlin)
 - (5) *Religion, politics and family laws*
(Chair: Mariz Tadros, Institute of Development Studies, UK;
Ruth Halperin-Kaddari, CEDAW Experts Committee and Bar-Ilan University, Israel)
- 12.00-13.00 Lunch break
- 13.00-15.15 **Parallel working groups**
- 15.15-16.00 Tea and coffee break
- 16.00-18.00 **Final discussion**
How to challenge politicized religions in favour of women’s rights and gender equality?
- Beate Blatz (Protestant Women in Germany)
 - Sindi Medar-Gould (BAOBAB for Women’s Human Rights, Nigeria)
 - Maria Consuelo Mejia (Catholics for the Right to Decide, Mexico)
 - NN
 - Facilitation: Annette Riedel (Deutschlandradio Kultur)
- 18.00-18.15 **Concluding remarks**
- Barbara Unmüßig (Heinrich Böll Foundation)
 - Shahra Razavi (UNRISD)

The Heinrich Boell Foundation, in close cooperation with the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) cordially invites you to attend this international conference! Please register at <http://religionrevisited.gwi-boell.de>.

Conference language is English, simultaneous translation to German will be provided.

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