

20th Anniversary of the Max-Weber-Kolleg, June 28–29, 2018

Workshop: Urban Religion – The city in the history of religion

In this workshop, we would like to discuss the millennia-long entanglement of “urbanity” and “religion” and their mutual transformations. Religion has been seen so far as cause of dramatic developments in the history of cities: foundations, waves of immigration, transformations, ghettoisations and destructions. Being a decisive factor in forming the concept of citizenship as well as in justifying the expulsion of large groups, it has contributed to the monumentalisation of centres or has given importance to ex-centric places. Yet only very recently, the research focus has shifted and started illuminating the other side of this dialectic, that is, how, to what extent, and under which conditions the urban space, its structural determinants, and its continuously morphing character represent a generative and/or transformative factor for religion(s).

The workshop’s aim is to bring together scholars who are interested in investigating the specific urban character of religious ideas, practices, and institutions and the role of the urban space in shaping these aspects. Taking seriously the proposition that space is condition, medium, and outcome of social relations, the development of ‘urban religion’ in lived urban space offers a lens onto processes of religious change that have been long and significantly neglected in both religious and urban studies. We welcome papers that deal with theoretical matters, as well as presentations dedicated to specific case studies. We have no particular preferences in terms of chronological range and geographical focus.