

Identitary Temptations

Identity Negotiations between Emancipation and Hegemony

5th Workshop “Liberative Contextual Theologies”

- Date:** October 25 – 28, 2018
Location: Centre for Liberation Theologies (KU Leuven / Belgium)
Languages: German and English
- Conveners:** Michelle Becka, Judith Gruber, Sebastian Pittl, Stefan Silber, Christian Tauchner
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- Keynote Lectures:** Dr. Rita Perintfalvi (Budapest)
Dr. Lawrence Nwankwo (Anambra, Nigeria)
- Workshop Venue:** https://theo.kuleuven.be/en/research/centres/centr_lib/clt
Website: <https://sites.google.com/site/befreiungstheologie/workshop2018>
- Workshop Venue** Centre for Liberation Theologies
Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies
KU Leuven
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The Workshop is funded by Renovabis, the fund for Eastern Europe of the Catholic Church in Germany (among others).



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Please transfer at the same time the **participation fee** (40€) to:
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Ref: 400/0016/02357 + your name

Coffee breaks and dinners are included in the participation fee. Lunch, accommodation and breakfast have to be organized by the participants.

Content Background

Since 2008, every two years, workshops on “Liberating Contextual Theologies” have taken place at the University of Vienna. Participants came from the entire German-speaking area, and recently also from Central / Eastern Europe. This year, the series opens to the west and invites you into a centre that is crucial for both European and Latin American theology: Leuven.

One of the major challenges for religions and cultures in global modernity are 'identity temptations' that find various intersection expressions: in the will to homogeneous and self-evident identities, in an emphasis on collective (cultural, national and religious) affiliation as opposed to individualistic approaches, in a preference for patriarchal models of society, and in the binary logics of either 'inside' or 'outside', 'us' or the 'others'. Such identity patterns often go hand in hand with an apocalyptic imagination that highlights the urgent necessity of 'heroic practices' in the midst of an eschatological struggle between good and evil. Such identity temptations have pervaded contemporary religion, politics and culture. They are the shared 'matrix' of religious fundamentalisms and extreme-right ethnopluralism.

The recent presidential elections in the US, the success of parties and movements of the extreme right and Islamic terror attacks are examples of the successful implementation of this 'identity logic' in the 'West'. Nativistic and religious-fundamentalist movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America show that it finds proliferation in other continents and cultures as well. The alliances between religious and political agents are often blatant, as the above-mentioned examples show. They range from various forms of subtle support to open cooperation.

These constellations pose a challenge to liberative contextual theologies that has to be critically analysed. A particular challenge are, especially, the motives that 'classic' liberation theology seems, at first sight, to share with fundamentalist and new-right groups: a recourse on 'the Volk'; the 'struggle' of the 'dispossessed' against 'corrupt' global 'elites'; critique of capitalism, individualism, 'decadent' consumerism, US-Imperialism and liberalism; narratives of suffering and sacrifice as legitimization of resistance; an emphasis on the impossibility of 'neutrality' and, accordingly, the call for contextualization within a specific collective group or practice as the condition of the possibility of understanding reality; persecution and resistance as a confirmation of the authenticity of the message; an emphasis on martyrdom; an apocalyptic framing of conflict in society, etc.

In responding to the challenges of 'Identity Temptations', the workshop aims to address these questions:

- What is identity and how does identity emerge?
- Analysis of identity patterns in society, politics, religious communities and churches
- Identity and gender
- New modes of relation between religion and politics in global modernity
- Critical relectures of the tradition of Liberation Theology
- Theologically motivated critique of hegemonic power
- Perspectives from Bible and Tradition
- Consequences for Christian praxis

A more extended description and further information you will find at <https://sites.google.com/site/befreiungstheologie/workshop2018>