

Workshop in Bamako (Mali) on
“Competition and Cooperation in African Religions – Concepts and Methods for the Critical Study of
Religious Pluralism in Africa”

Call for Papers:

Venue: Centre Point Sud, Bamako, Republic of Mali Date of the workshop: February 27 – March 5
2012 Deadline for application: **November 1st, 2011**

Convenors:

Magnus Echter, Bayreuth University, Germany (Study of Religion) Franz Kogelmann, Bayreuth
University, Germany (Islamic Studies) Eva Spies, Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz, Germany
(Anthropology and African Studies) Asonzeh Ukah, Bayreuth University, Germany (Study of
Religion)

In cooperation with:

Point Sud, Centre for Research on Local Knowledge, Bamako (Mali) <http://www.pointsud.org>

In a bilingual workshop of eight days we invite fourteen PhD candidates from the social sciences
and humanities to investigate the role of competition, conflict and cooperation in the contact of
religious actors, the drawing of boundaries around and between religious groups, and the role
these strategies play for the positioning of different traditions in the religious fields in varying
African contexts. The workshop addresses research on contemporary encounters of religious
traditions in Africa:

This includes encounters between different religions like Christianity, Islam and African Traditional
Religions (ATRs) and between different groups of the same religious tradition. Recent scholarship
on religion in Africa has tended to be focused on one religious tradition. In the case of Christianity
in Sub-Saharan Africa research has been dominated by the question of compatibility of a “global”
Christian religion with “local”

contexts, respectively by the more general question concerning the relation between local religions
and a global (Christian) “modernity”. In the case of Islam, the influence of local Islamic traditions
and religious practices on the development of indigenous models of reference is underestimated
and the analytical frame for understanding Muslim societies in Sub-Saharan countries is mostly
focused on external influences.

Moreover intense inter- and intra-religious debates on the future influence of religion on society
and politics in Sub-Saharan Africa have also far reaching consequences for adherents of ATRs which
are not yet discussed in academia. Thus, research should no longer focus solely on the modernity
and compatibility question but rather on the interrelations of actors in the religious field, their
ideas, intentions, practices and ways of positioning one religious tradition against or next to
another.

The workshop combines a discussion of critical theories of religion with methodological
considerations. The workshop will therefore involve the discussion of relevant texts on theory and
method for the study of religious life and practice in Africa as well as practical exercises in the
principal empirical methods.

The workshop convenors will provide a reader for the participants. During working group sessions
the PhD candidates will have the opportunity to present their own research projects, to discuss
them with regard to the theoretical and methodological texts read and to test research methods on
the ground. Six invited post-doc participants will give keynote speeches on theory and methods for

the research of religious pluralism in Africa, and take leading roles in the group sessions. The post doc participants will act as mentors for the PhD candidates.

The selection process of the PhD candidates is competitive. The candidates will be chosen according to the quality of their submitted proposals.

For application the following documents are necessary:

1. CV
2. A letter explaining the motivation for applying (1 page)
3. A project proposal related to the topic of the workshops (max. 5 pages)
4. Two letters of reference by academics
5. Copy of university certificate(s)
6. Copy of passport (page with picture and personal data)

Deadline: Applications must be submitted by 1st November 2011 to the four organizers of the workshop.

- Dr Magnus Echter, Bayreuth University magnus.echter@uni-bayreuth.de
- Dr Franz Kogelmann, Bayreuth University franz.kogelmann@uni-bayreuth.de
- Dr Eva Spies, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz espies@uni-mainz.de
- Dr Asonzeh Ukah, Bayreuth University asonzeh.ukah@uni-bayreuth.de

Successful applicants will be requested to send in draft versions of their paper four weeks prior to the workshop, to ensure a thorough preparation of the workshop discussions. Papers for the oral presentation (20-25 min) may be written in English or French.

Costs of transport and accommodation for the selected participants will be covered during the duration of the workshop.

Date of notification for accepted proposals: 1st December 2011. The texts to be prepared for the workshop will be sent to the participants as pdf files by mid December.