

RELIGION AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN COMPARATIVE REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

A workshop organized by American University's Center for Latin American and Latino Studies (CLALS)
with generous support from the Henry Luce Foundation
July 10, 2015

WORKSHOP AGENDA

8:30-9:00am Arrival and coffee

SIS Room 113, School of International Service Building

9:00-9:15am Welcome, introductions and goals

Eric Hershberg, Rob Albro, and Evan Berry

9:15am-10:45pm Discussion: Religion in the Public Sphere

Moderator: Evan Berry

As is evidenced by the recent papal encyclical, religious actors (including leaders, institutions, and social movements, among others) are increasingly actively engaged with both the causes and impacts of climate change. But religion also affords a diversity of social and cultural contexts within which moral and political debates about climate are framed. A robust approach to the engagement of religion with climate change must encompass both the public responses of religious actors as well as the social contexts and cultural conditions afforded by religious traditions. How best to account comparatively for the salience of religion with respect to environmental issues, which cannot be reduced to the responses of particular religious groups? This session considers the various ways religion intersects with climate change, as both a moral conception of the world and as a specific response, and the relation between these.

10:45-11:00am Break

11:00-12:30pm Discussion: Religion and Climate Politics

Moderator: Rob Albro

Further extending the initial discussion, this session is focused upon understanding the influence of religion on the international politics of climate change, and explores the circumstances under which such influence is translated into action or, alternatively, leads to inaction. In short, what should a comparative understanding of the efficacy of religious engagement as part of contestation over the environment take into account? This session examines the instrumental relationship of religion to climate change in comparative perspective, as one important means through which to understand international affairs.

12:30-2:00pm Lunch

2:00-3:30pm Discussion: Identifying Comparative Cases

Moderator: Eric Hershberg

There are a variety of climate change-induced problems that communities around the world face in common: the decline of fisheries from ocean acidification, the increasing frequency and intensity of severe weather, glacial melt and freshwater depletion, unstable agricultural yields, and expanding vectors for tropical diseases, among others. How do different religious traditions or interventions articulate ecological challenges and how might religious articulations of often common experiences of climate change be compared across regions? This session continues to reflect on the comparative frame of our proposed project, concentrating on the selection of geographic and ecological cases where the harms of climate change are shared across different cultures and religious traditions.

6:00pm Dinner: Bistrot Lepic & Wine Bar

1736 Wisconsin Ave NW, Washington, D.C. 20007

Participants:

Robert Albro (American U)
 Kelly Alley (Auburn U)
 Evan Berry (American U)
 Susan Crate (George Mason U)
 Chris Crews (New School)
 John Grim (Yale U)
 Douglas Herman (Smithsonian)
 Eric Hershberg (American U)
 Barbara Rose Johnston (Center for Political Ecology)
 Naveeda Khan (Johns Hopkins U)
 Karsten Paerregaard (U of Gothenburg)
 Lucia Silecchia (Catholic U)

Staff:

Inés Luengo de Krom, American U
 Ling Howley, American U