



International Research Training Group *Transformative Religion*
—*Religion as Situated Knowledge in Processes of Social Transformation*—

Call for Applications

Application deadline: 16 January 2023

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Stellenbosch University, University of the Western Cape and University of KwaZulu-Natal are jointly collaborating in the International Research Training Group (IRTG) *Transformative Religion: Religion as Situated Knowledge in Processes of Social Transformation*, funded by Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (Germany, DFG) and National Research Foundation (South Africa, NRF). In this German-South African IRTG, the following position is advertised:

Germany (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

1 Postdoctoral researcher (100% full time equivalent E13 TVÖD, funded by DFG) for the period from **01.03.2023 to 30.06.2026**.

Profile of the IRTG *Transformative Religion*

The German–South African IRTG *Transformative Religion* transdisciplinarily investigates the impact of religion in processes of social transformation and the impact of these transformations on religion in contemporary global societies with an intercontinental perspective. It seeks to contribute to recent academic research and public debates on the complex relationship between religion and society.

Against the backdrop of discursive differences in perceiving and positioning religion in the field of knowledge between the global north and the global south and with a distinctive decolonial approach, this IRTG aims at a critical epistemology through which the situatedness of religious knowledge production and reception in processes of social transformation can be researched. In case studies from contexts in the global South and North, the IRTG seeks to investigate religion as specifically situated knowledge functioning as a resource and as a site of social transformation. It engages scholars from two continents and a variety of disciplines to go beyond conventional research approaches.

The research focus of the IRTG unfolds in the following four research areas:

- Research area 1, **national identity**, will focus on the relationship between normative elements of religious knowledge in processes of public deliberation and conflicts of hegemony and power concerning modern nation states and their corresponding social imaginaries.

- Research area 2, **development**, will investigate the transformative role of religion in development discourses and practices and its implications for decolonising dominant notions of development.
- Research area 3, **migration**, will study the entanglements of migration and mobile religious practices, and how these entanglements both are being produced by and co-produce social transformations.
- Research area 4, **healing**, will focus on healing practices in the context of situated religious knowledge and how they contribute to and are at the same time shaped by social transformation.

Requirements

The Postdoc position includes the close mentorship of the scholars as *junior principal investigator*, collaboration with project team members and especially with the counterpart postdoc researcher in South Africa to develop and supervise a new fifth research area (not included in the project description above). For the postdoc researcher, tasks pertaining their own scientific qualification and writing of publications relevant to the research areas of the IRTG are required.

Required:

- An excellent master's degree and PhD or comparable qualification in anthropology/ethnology, religious studies, cultural studies, sociology, African studies, theology, political science or related disciplines (ordinarily candidates should be located in faculties of humanities, social sciences and/ or theology).
- A substantially above average academic profile.
- Proficiency in written and spoken English as well in any other language required for the successful implementation of the planned postdoctoral project.
- Cultural sensitivity and openness to work in a highly transdisciplinary and internationally composed team.
- The ability to work independently.
- The willingness to spend some time abroad at one of the South African partner institutions.

Desirable:

- Study, work or research experience in a foreign country or other-than current university will be considered asset.
- Prior knowledge in the thematic field of the IRTG and the research area applied for is an asset.
- Prior publications will be considered an asset.
- Voluntary engagement and/or prior work experience in the thematic field or research areas of the IRTG.
- Prior experiences in antiracist, decolonial voluntary work will be considered an asset.

Selection Criteria

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Stellenbosch University, University of the Western Cape and University of KwaZulu-Natal are committed to a transparent and fair selection process. Applications will be reviewed by the admission board of the IRTG in a structured selection process based on standardised guidelines. The main criteria for selection of individual candidates are:

- academic career and qualification
- the scientific excellence of her or his proposed research project
- the relevance of the envisaged new research area to the IRTG programme
- the applicant's competence profile and relevant professional experience
- her or his motivations for participating in the programme.

Factors that may have hindered an applicant's academic career such as (child)care obligations, disabilities, chronic illnesses, minority discrimination or other conditions or situations of hardship can be voluntarily disclosed and will be taken into consideration during the selection process.

Female* candidates and candidates with non-binary gender are particularly encouraged to apply. Severely disabled applicants with equivalent qualifications will be given preferential consideration. Candidates with PoC and/or migration background are particularly encouraged to apply.

Application Documents

Applicants are required to submit:

- a letter of motivation
- their full CV, including a list of publications
- transcripts of their academic records
- a concise proposal of the planned postdoc project AND a possible envisaged new fifth research area for the IRTG. The proposal of strictly 10 pages/3.000 words/20.000 characters should include an outline of the state of the art of the relevant literature, the central research question(s), the planned methodology and the envisaged time plan of the project.

Kindly submit all documents in one pdf file named SURNAME_FIRSTNAME.pdf and quoting the reference number DR/165/22 via e-mail to transformative-religion@hu-berlin.de.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an individual interview scheduled for the end of January 2023. More information about the IRTG *Transformative Religion* can be found on the website www.transformative-religion.org.

Please visit also our website www.hu-berlin.de/stellenangebote, which gives you access to the legally binding German version of this Call for Applications.

Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the IRTG coordinator, Dr Clemens Wustmans, at the above e-mail.

We're looking forward to receiving your application!