

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**RELIGIOUS CONSCIENCES AND COLONIALISM:
EXPERIENCES AND LEGACIES**

17-19 January 2024

School of Arts and Humanities of the University of Lisbon

<https://religcolon24.mozellosite.com>

Call for papers

The forms of religious consciousness – from the local and ancestral to those that arrived in Africa by the hand of the colonists – can contain a synthesis of human history. In the colonial context, religious consciousnesses had to deal with themselves, that is, with their usefulness in shaping the relationship between colonists and the colonised, in multiple colonial situations. Colonialism and the changes of the post-colonial period have called into question the universalism of the message of some religions, particularly those that were the vehicle of so-called Western values, which none the less played a relevant role in the progressive affirmation of the colonised.

In different contexts and under different forms, at the initiative of European and African missionaries, catechisation and conversion were, inadvertently or not, vehicles for creating individualistic and, subsequently, new political consciousness, most often anti-colonial. Even if not oriented towards nationalist struggle, anti-colonial resistance in the name of religious imperatives – preached by African religious – had a significant role in the corrosion of settler certainties. Because of the African handling of religious messages, colonial domination (and also the forms of subjection in force after independence) did not always correspond to the spiritual subalternisation of Africans or the colonised.

Still, religious consciences or visions have not ceased to be instrumentalised, nor have they ceased to be disparaged by nationalist leaders, who, imbued by an unholy faith in their own political slogans, accused them of being a vehicle of alienation and subjection.

After coming under fierce attack from heralds of the new liberating creeds – like ideologies – religious consciences survived political vicissitudes and trials, while ideologies fell heavily. Not infrequently, political leaders pushed ideology aside, exchanging it for pragmatism or authoritarianism, supported, whenever possible and credible, by the invocation of the divine.

Nowadays, as a political trump card in various parts of the world, religious beliefs have conditioned, in multiple forms, political designs in independent Africa, especially in the former Portuguese colonies. If, to some extent, religious beliefs and consciences depend on the contingencies of the drift of societies, they are also based in their historical experience, sometimes against colonialism.

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For this International Conference – **Religious Consciences in the Face of Colonialism: Experiences and Legacies** – we will accept proposals which reveal the multiplicity of religious experiences in the colonial context, and their political and social uses leading to various attitudes, from acceptance of to opposition to the colonial situation.

We will also accept proposals that evaluate religious legacies in post-colonial societies where, frequently, political actors and institutions have tended, implicitly, to replicate procedures similar to the religious ones they use to criticise, to achieve the imposition of their truths.

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Paper submissions, in *.docx, between 180 to 200 words, should be sent to **religcolon24@mail.com** by **October 1, 2023**.

No registration fee; the costs of participation are at the expense of the participants.

Working Languages

- Portuguese, Spanish, French, and English

Thematic axes

- Religious consciences and wars
- Independences and ideologies versus religious beliefs and practices
- Church in support of colonialism - from civilization to Lusotropicalism
- Typologies of religious consciousness in a colonial situation
- Religious criticism of Portuguese colonialism
- Religious consciences and liberation/decolonization wars
- The Portuguese bishops and colonialism
- Portuguese colonialism, faith and independence: the case of Bishop D. Sebastião Soares de Resende
- Liberation movements, churches and religion
- The Church in the transition to independence
- Memories and legacies of religious practices in a colonial context and colonialism in the current churches

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