

### Assertion of Power – Spiritual Abuse – Sexual Violence Meeting the Challenges – thinking new ways

---

Interdisciplinary Networking Conference for Scientists in Qualification

4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> August 2025

Katholisch-Soziales Institut Siegburg

The discovery of cases of abuse in the Catholic church since 2010 has shown its susceptibility to abusive behaviour clearly. While focus initially was on sexualised violence, spiritual abuse and the inappropriate exercise of power have increasingly come to the fore. The ForuM study has shown that Protestant churches are highly affected by this problem as well. Theological reflection and pastoral practice can no longer ignore this experience; numerous publications provide impetus for rethinking the church's areas of action and highlight a need for fundamental change in ecclesiastical and theological discourse. Academic theology is not only the critical reflective authority dealing with causes, mechanisms, consequences, intervention and prevention options in the church, it also has to reflect on the extent to which theological content itself contributes to the initiation, realisation and cover-up of abuse. Future generations of theologians are of central importance for the development of a practice of academic theology that is sensitive to the reality of abuse here and now.

The conference faces the challenge of systematising the very heterogeneous discourse. It wants to discuss potential and limits of explaining what happened through church power structures as well as address prevention approaches and blind spots in the current discussion, such as the shaping of a culture of remembrance or the authority of persons affected in the academic investigation. The multidimensionality of the topic requires an interdisciplinary approach as well as a great openness to different perspectives and to relate different aspects to each other in a new way in order to gradually create orientation in this issue.

#### ***Target Group***

The call aims at academics in the qualification phases (doctorate/habilitation), as well as students from master's level programmes. In addition to contributions from the theologies of different denominations, we welcome perspectives from psychology, social, sports, and sexology science, law, religious studies, pedagogics and other relevant disciplines. The conference has a workshop character, so that open questions can be presented and discussed as well.

### ***Submissions***

The **abstract for presentations** with basic literature references (approx. 4,000-6,000 characters incl. spaces as a PDF) should outline the content of the planned contribution and its location in the thematic field of the conference as well as brief personal details. The presentations can refer to a selected topic as a common conference presentation or present basic approaches and individual chapters of a dissertation or habilitation project in the style of a colloquium. They should not exceed 20 minutes in order to allow sufficient time for questions and discussion. Short **poster presentations** are also possible. Interested scientists can submit a topic by email. English-language submissions and presentations are possible, the conference language is German.

**Deadline for submissions is 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025.**

Abstracts, questions, and suggestions shall be addressed to:

**vernetzung-msg@ur.de**

Conference Team:

Magdalena Hürten, *Regensburg*

Christiane Kuroпка, *Münster*

Pavlos Leußler, *Bonn*

Jakob Schrage, *Bonn*