

"Understanding religious organisations as competing platforms: what has happened to religion in the world since the Second World War?"

Prof. Paul Seabright

The CLBO Leadership Lectures

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5:00pm – 6:30pm

Ort: Zoom

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At the world level, the outstanding religious fact of the last century or so has not been the supposed advance of Islam at the expense of Christianity, but rather the expansion of both Islam and Christianity at the expense of local and folk religions, especially in Africa and Asia. This phenomenon represents a growing globalization and corporatization of religion at the expense of small-scale and local faith communities, similar to the transformation of economic enterprises over a similar period. In this talk I will present some aggregate statistics to justify this claim, and then go on to propose an analytical framework for thinking about what religious organizations do, and how they compete with each other, both within and between

religions. The idea is that religious organisations can be understood as platforms, which offer a bundle of different services, both spiritual and secular, and attract members partly because they serve as a point of contact through which members are put in contact with one another. Commitment to spiritual activities serves both as a mechanism to enhance individuals' propensity for pro-social behavior, and as a signal to others of their trustworthiness. I present evidence from several countries, including detailed studies in Haiti and Ghana.

Paul Seabright is the Director of the Institute of Advanced Studies in Toulouse. His current research encompasses industrial organization and competition policy; the economics of networks and the digital society; and behavioral economics (especially the integration of evolutionary biology and anthropology with an understanding of the development of economic institutions in the very long run). He is working on a book under contract to Princeton University Press entitled *The Origins of Enchantment: How Religions Compete*. He is a Fellow of the Centre of Economic Policy Research, London, and of the [European Economic Association](#). He was formerly a member of the [Economic Advisory Group on Competition Policy](#) at DG-Competition of the European Commission and a member of the Scientific Council of the think-tank [BRUEGEL](#). Since 2005 he has been an almost annual visitor at the [Santa Fe Institute](#) in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

This event is organized by the Center for Leadership and Behavior in Organization in the new annual Leadership Lectures series.

Participation in the event and following reception is free of charge. There is no registration needed. If you have any questions, please send an email to heimrich@psych.uni-frankfurt.de

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