

Invitation and Call for papers
The second international conference on:
The Impact of Religion
Challenges for Society, Law and Democracy
Uppsala University, Sweden, April 24-26th 2018

Theme: Religion in the public sphere, media and politics

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Abstract

A wish for social resilience – Participation and perspectives on local inter-religious councils in contemporary Sweden

Swedish society is characterized by secularization but as a result of migration during the last decades Sweden has developed into a more pluralistic society. On local level this is also detectable through a development of inter-religious councils in a growing number of Swedish cities. Often local political authorities has decided to play a crucial part in the councils, seemingly out of a growing awareness of faith-based organizations vital role in promoting social cohesion in local settings. This paper presents a case study where the formation of an inter-religious council is taking place in a mid-sized Swedish town. It presents the result of interviews with three kind of actors; (1) elected politicians responsible for strategic policymaking in local community, (2) civil servants responsible carrying out these policies and (3) representatives of participatory Christian and Moslem faith-based organizations active in the local community. Main research questions: What are the key expectations on the council from the different actors' point of view? What kind of challenges should be dealt with in the short and long perspective from different actors' point of view? Analysis will be made comparing similarities and disagreements in various views.