



### **The Politics of Conversion Workshop, III**

*CIDE, Mexico City, March 9-11 2017*

Early Modern Conversions takes great pleasure in convening the third Politics of Conversion workshop at the *Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas* (CIDE) in Mexico City (March 9-11, 2017). The event will follow previous workshops at the University of Warwick (July 21-22, 2015) and McGill University (June 6-7, 2016), and will build toward a large-scale conference at the Newberry Library in Chicago (Sept. 21-23, 2017).

One of the roots for the word ‘religion’ is the Latin verb *religare*, which means ‘to bind together,’ an action that emblemizes the social and political work that has always been a part of religious practice. In early modernity, the socially constructive force of religion became prominently manifest in an increasingly potent and sophisticated mode of operation: conversion—the promise, or threat, that a person could turn into something radically new. But just as conversion drew people into new alliances and social formations, it also pulled them apart, destroying as it created, and significantly reorganizing politics throughout the Western world and the Americas.

The Politics of Conversion workshop will explore a wide range of questions related to the political dimension of conversional thinking and practice: In what ways did conversion open up new opportunities for political control, on one hand, and political resistance on the other? How does the popularity of conversion narratives—in plays, songs, sermons, and pamphlets—connect to the emergence of an early modern public sphere? In what ways did conversion change the politics of identity, personhood, and ethical responsibility? How have the politics of early modern conversion influenced the politics of conversion in our own age?

In addition to discussing these and other questions, participants in the Politics of Conversion workshop will explore related cultural activities on offer in Mexico City, an important locus of conversional activity in early modernity, and home to a rich archive of documents and artifacts pertinent to conversion studies.

We invite members of the Early Modern Conversions project to submit proposals for short individual presentations, group presentations, and ideas for special sessions including sessions that focus on particular events, historical figures, or texts. Our goal is twofold: to pay generous, critical attention to the research and ideas of workshop participants and to work together toward a philosophically and historically grounded understanding of the political dimensions of the multiple forms of conversion that emerged in early modernity. The editors of an upcoming volume on the politics of conversion may consider some of the work presented at the Mexico City meeting for publication.

Please send your proposals to [conversion.iplai@mcgill.ca](mailto:conversion.iplai@mcgill.ca) by December 1, 2016. Proposals should be approximately 250 words in length and should provide a brief explanation of how the proposed paper or session relates to the political dimension of conversion in early modernity. An adjudication committee will review all submissions and arrive at a decision by December 15, 2016.

Conversions project members may apply to the Collaboration Fund for travel support. See here for details: <http://earlymodernconversions.com/projectadmin/collaboration-fund/>