



# On the Edge? Centres and Margins in the Sociology of Religion

British Sociological Association Sociology of  
Religion Study Group Annual Conference

12<sup>th</sup> July to 14<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Hosted by



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

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# Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you to **the British Sociological Association Sociology of Religion Study Group Annual Conference**. This year we are excited to be hosting the conference at the University of Leeds, supported by the Centre for Religion and Public Life, in the School of Philosophy Religion and History of Science.

The Centre for Religion and Public Life has three main aims:

- To carry out research into the important, and increasingly contentious, role of religion in public life in the world today, and to provide a forum in which contemporary research and scholarship can be debated and disseminated.
- To work closely with non-academic partners to identify the ways in which religion is relevant to their work and to produce research that is capable of meeting their need to better understand the nature of religion and religious organisations locally, nationally and internationally.
- Through our Community Religions Project - beginning nearly 40 years ago - to support innovative research-led teaching at both undergraduate and MA level that also has a focus on students obtaining first-hand experience of putting research methods into practice as well as opportunities for work placements and other types of engagement with non-academic audiences.

The topic of this conference - **On the Edge? Centres and Margins in the Sociology of Religion** – is central to the concerns of the Centre for Religion and Public Life, where we seek to investigate the boundaries and borders of sociologies of religion in an expansive and inclusive way. We want to ask, what do the centres of the sociology of religion look like in the 21st Century, and where are the margins and borders? Where are the new, and innovative subjects, methodologies and collaborations in our subject and how are they shaping the discipline? How well do Sociologies of Religion intersect with other sociologies, such as of class, migration, ethnicity, sexuality and gender, and what are the effects? What about the geographical centres and margins of this historically Western-orientated sub-discipline, in our ever-changing world characterised by postcoloniality, globalisation and transnationalism? To what extent have any alternative Sociologies of Religion from the “edge”, to use a term proposed by Bender et al (2013), re-interpreted or re-configured the concerns of the centre? Importantly, what light does the Sociology of Religion shed on the more general study of centres and margins in religious and social settings/institutions and identities/subjectivities? Ultimately we want to question where these expansive and multi-directional boundaries leave us as ‘sociologists of religion’ and as a distinct study group and highlight the challenges and the opportunities.

We welcome all the delegates and particularly the keynote speakers Professor Bryan Turner (City University of New York), Professor Kim Knott (University of Lancaster), Professor Philip Mellor (University of Leeds), Professor Sarah Bracke (University of Amsterdam) and Professor Nasar Meer (The University of Edinburgh).

We hope you have an intellectually stimulating time during the conference.

Emma Tomalin, Professor Religion and Public Life, Direction of the Centre for Religion and Public Life on behalf of the 2017 Organising Team:

Adriaan Van Klinken, Caroline Starkey, Emma Tomalin, Jasjit Singh and Sean McLoughlin

# Acknowledgements

We are very pleased to host this year's conference and to be part of exciting discussions here at the University of Leeds. All of us involved with organising the conference would like to give a huge thank you to Ros Bates and her Events team at the University of Leeds for all their help in planning this year's conference and supporting us as an organising committee.

We would like to thank Liz Brown, Events Coordinator at the BSA, for her wonderful and efficient organisation of the conference. The BSA office is committed to supporting study groups, and we have enjoyed the opportunity to collaborate and work with our BSA colleagues.

We would like to thank the Sociology of Religion Study Group (SocRel) for financing the conference and SocRel committee members, Adam Dinham, Peter Gee, Carl Morris, Rachael Shillitoe, Josh Bullock and Alp Arat for all of their guidance and help along the way. We are all extremely grateful for the immense efforts of Rachael Shillitoe, Socrel Events Officer, whose help and guidance has been priceless.

We are very grateful to our two University of Leeds student volunteers Laura Wallace and Truman Durham for their support in assisting with the smooth running of this conference.

We would like to thank Routledge, Bloomsbury, Brill and Oxford University Press for their presence and contribution to this year's conference.

Finally, thank-you to all delegates, keynotes, colleagues and friends who have come to present their work and who have agreed to chair a session.

We hope that you enjoy the conference.

Adriaan, Caroline, Emma, Jas, and Sean.

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# Key Information

## Conference Registration:

The conference is being held at the Maurice Keyworth Building, University of Leeds Business School, University of Leeds, Woodhouse Lane, LS6 1AN. If you are arriving by taxi, we advise you to ask for the barrier entrance on Moorland Road which is adjacent to The Liberty Building. The barrier entrance is about a third of the way down the road and this instruction may help for drivers unfamiliar with the Campus.

Main conference registration will be between 12 noon and 1.30 on the 12<sup>th</sup> July, in G31 of the Maurice Keyworth Building, Leeds University Business School. On the 12<sup>th</sup> July, the Business School are holding their graduation ceremony, so the Maurice Keyworth building will be busier than usual but there will be staff present to direct conference delegates to G31.

For day delegates on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, registration will be in the Maurice Keyworth Building Foyer from 8am.



## Accommodation:

Accommodation is in Henry Price Residences, Clarendon Road, Leeds LS2 9LG. This is just a short walk away from all the conference venues.

Check in: 14:00

Check out: 10:00

On the first day, you will be able to leave your luggage in the Business School (Seminar Room 1.09). We will be able to direct you to this room from the Registration Desk.

Please check out of your room and return your key to the Hall office on your day of departure. A charge of £20 is payable for any keys not returned.

Please ask taxis to drop you off at Henry Price Residences, Clarendon Road, Leeds LS29LG. Car parking is very limited on campus and costs £7 per car per day.



### Meals, Refreshments and Gala Dinner:

The conference keynotes and panels will take place in the Maurice Keyworth Building in the University of Leeds Business School (LUBS). Lunch and refreshments will be served in G31 on the 12<sup>th</sup> July, and on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> July in the LUBS foyer.

Breakfast will be available in the University Refectory between 08.00 and 09.00 daily. The Refectory is on the main University campus, less than a 5 minute walk from the Business School (see campus map at the back of this booklet).

There are also tea and coffee making facilities provided in the shared kitchen facilities or in the bedrooms in your accommodation.

The dinner on the 12<sup>th</sup> and the Gala Dinner on the 13<sup>th</sup> will be held in the Great Woodhouse Room University House, next to the Refectory and Student Union building.

There will be drinks receptions on both days to welcome guests first in the Little Woodhouse Room next to the main room before everyone is seated.

### Guidance for Presenters, Chairs, Panel Hosts and Discussants:

Laptops and linked electronic display equipment will be available for your use at all of the presenter venues. The laptops will be running the Microsoft Windows operating system and Microsoft Office software. Please use Microsoft PowerPoint for visual aids. Presenters, Chairs, Panel Hosts and Discussants should ideally arrive at least ten minutes prior to the commencement of their sessions to discuss the running of the sessions and check that visual aids are displaying correctly. Please have your PowerPoint presentation available on a memory stick and ensure that you are easily able to locate it in the file structure. If you use a Mac, please bring the required cables to connect to a PC as these will not be available at the venue.

It is essential that presentations run in accordance with the scheduled times. This will allow delegates to move between presentation rooms during the parallel sessions. We ask that Chairs place due emphasis on the importance of adhering to the schedule in running the parallel sessions. The general expectation is that a half-hour paper slot should consist of a twenty-minute paper presentation followed by a ten-minute opportunity to ask questions. Chairs should bring their own timepieces to their appointed sessions and provide five-minute and two-minute warnings to presenters to enable them to conclude their papers properly while providing sufficient time for questions.

### Wi-Fi:

Delegates will be provided with a username & password to access the WiFi access upon registration. This can be used throughout the University Campus, including accommodation, and

will enable you to access the Meet In Leeds network. Instructions are issued with the Usernames & Passwords.

If your institution is a member of Eduroam you will also be able to use that service on the University Campus.

Please read the Terms of Service carefully to ensure that your browsing and internet usage complies with University regulations.

### Parking:

Where possible we suggest the use of public transport to travel to the University. Parking at the University of Leeds is extremely limited.

For more information and prices on alternative car parks in Leeds please visit [www.parkopedia.co.uk](http://www.parkopedia.co.uk)

### Facilities:

Cash points - are located within the Student Union building situated adjacent to the Refectory on the University campus.

Banks - There is a Santander located on the ground floor of the Students Union

There are also several major banks & further cash points opposite Parkinson Court at the University's main entrance

Post Office - is located in the St John's Centre in the City Centre.

Coffee Bars & Food - There are several coffee bars located around the university campus, which serve hot & cold drinks, snacks, sandwiches & Paninis. The main University Refectory serves all of the above plus freshly cooked hot food.

Shops - Essentials which is a mini-supermarket selling newspapers, magazines, stationery, drinks, sandwiches, snack and confectionery items.

City Centre shops generally open between 09.00 and 17.30 Monday to Saturday and 11.00 to 17.00 on Sundays.

Please note, the Coffee Bars, Refectory, and Student Unions shops are open weekdays only, and have shorter opening times out of term.

Lloyds Chemist is situated on Woodhouse Lane across from the Parkinson Building. Boots late night pharmacy (open until midnight) is located at Leeds City Train Station.

The nearest emergency department is at the Leeds General Infirmary, telephone 0113 2432799, which is situated adjacent to the University.

### Sports Facilities

Delegates staying on campus accommodation can benefit from free access to The Edge, the university's new pool, gym and fitness suite, for the duration of the conference. Built for use by visiting athletes prior to the London 2012 Summer Olympics there is a 25m, 8-lane swimming



pool, the largest fitness suite of any UK university, 3-designated class studios, squash courts & over 100 classes per week.

Please visit: [sport.leeds.ac.uk](http://sport.leeds.ac.uk) for more information



### Photocopying and Printing:

A media services shop is open between 09.00 and 16.30, Monday to Friday, on the ground floor of the Roger Stevens building where there are photocopying facilities and other audio visual services available.

### Smoking:

On 1 July 2007 England brought in a ban on smoking in all public places. All meeting rooms, lecture theatres, foyers, public areas, bars, doorways, entrances and bedrooms within the University operate a no smoking policy.

### Publishers:

We are pleased to have the following publishers exhibiting at this year's conference: Routledge, Bloomsbury Publishing and Brill. Oxford University Press has provided details of their publications for the SOCREL website.

### Telephone Numbers:

Conference & Events: +44 (0) 113 343 6104

In the event of any serious problems, or for emergencies, please contact University of Leeds Security on 0113 343 5494 (24-hours). The emergency number in the UK for fire, ambulance or police is 999.

If first aid is required on campus please contact a member of staff in the building or for emergencies call Security via an internal telephone on x32222 or externally on +44(0)113 343 2222 - available 24-hours.

### Transport:

The campus is approximately half a mile from the City Centre on Woodhouse Lane, the A660. Leeds is linked to the M1 and M62 and is very easily accessible.

Satellite Navigation Main Entrance Address

University of Leeds,  
Woodhouse Lane,  
Leeds,  
LS2 9JT  
(street listing can appear as Cavendish Road in some navigation systems)

**Bus:**

There are number of excellent bus services in Leeds.

The number 1 bus leaves from Infirmary Street, near the City railway station in City Square, to the campus every ten minutes during the day and every half hour in the evening. There are frequent buses from the central bus station including numbers 28, 56, 96, 97. You should get off the bus at the main entrance adjacent to the Parkinson Building.

There is a 50p flat fare City bus service running every few minutes Monday to Saturday, linking the railway station, City Centre and the south end of the University campus (06.30 to 19.30 only).

Visit [www.wymetro.com](http://www.wymetro.com) for timetables and general information.

The National Express Coach Station is adjacent to the Central Bus Station.  
[www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com)

**Rail:**

For rail travel details visit: [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

**Taxi:**

Streamline- Telecabs - 0113 244 3322

Amber Cars - 0113 231 1366

Arrow - 0113 258 5888 (Arrow taxis are the official Leeds/Bradford Airport taxi company)

Further details about the University and travel can be found on the University web site at [www.leeds.ac.uk/visitors/getting\\_here.htm](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/visitors/getting_here.htm)  
[/www.meetinleeds.co.uk/getting\\_to\\_the\\_University.php](http://www.meetinleeds.co.uk/getting_to_the_University.php)

# Outline Programme

## **Wednesday, July 12th**

- 12.00 Registration and Lunch (G31, Maurice Keyworth/LUBS)
- 13.30 Welcome (G.02 Lecture Theatre, LUBS)
- 13.45 Keynote Plenary Session 1: Professor Nasar Meer (University of Edinburgh) (G.02 Lecture Theatre, LUBS)
- 15.00 Refreshments (G31, Maurice Keyworth/LUBS)
- 15.30 Parallel Sessions (Maurice Keyworth/LUBS)
- 17.30 Refreshments (G31, Maurice Keyworth/LUBS)
- 17.45 Keynote Plenary Session 2: Professor Bryan Turner (CUNY) (G02, Lecture Theatre, Maurice Keyworth/LUBS)
- 19.00 Wine Reception (University House, Little Woodhouse Room)
- 19.30 Dinner (University House, Great Woodhouse Room)

## **Thursday, July 13th**

- 08.00 Registration (Maurice Keyworth/LUBS Foyer)
- 08.15 Breakfast (The Refectory)
- 09.00 Parallel Sessions (Maurice Keyworth/LUBS)
- 11.00 Refreshments (Maurice Keyworth/LUBS Foyer)
- 11.30 Keynote Plenary Session 3: Professor Philip Mellor (University of Leeds) (G02, Lecture Theatre, Maurice Keyworth/LUBS)
- 12.45 Lunch and Post Graduate Lunch (The Refectory)
- 13.30 SocRel Annual General Meeting (G02, Lecture Theatre, Maurice Keyworth/LUBS)
- 14.30 Parallel Sessions (Maurice Keyworth/LUBS)
- 16.30 Refreshments (Maurice Keyworth/LUBS Foyer)
- 17.00 Keynote Plenary Session 4: Professor Kim Knott (University of Lancaster) (G.02, Lecture Theatre, Maurice Keyworth/LUBS)
- 18.15 Wine Reception (University House, Little Woodhouse Room)
- 19.00 Gala Dinner (University House, Great Woodhouse Room)

## **Friday, July 14, 2016**

- 08.00 Registration (Maurice Keyworth/LUBS Foyer)
- 08.15 Breakfast (The Refectory)
- 09.15 Parallel Sessions (Maurice Keyworth/LUBS)
- 11.15 Refreshments (Maurice Keyworth/LUBS Foyer)
- 11.30 Parallel Sessions (Maurice Keyworth/LUBS)
- 13.30 Lunch (Maurice Keyworth/LUBS Foyer)
- 14.30 Keynote Plenary Session 5: Dr Sarah Bracke (University of Amsterdam) (G.02, Lecture Theatre, Maurice Keyworth/LUBS)
- 15.45 Close of Conference (G.02 Lecture Theatre, Maurice Keyworth/LUBS)

# Keynote: Nasar Meer

University of Edinburgh

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July, 13.45, G.02 Lecture Theatre, Maurice Keyworth Building/Leeds University Business School**

## Biography

Nasar Meer is Professor of Race, Identity and Citizenship in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Edinburgh. His publications include: *Islam and Modernity (4 Volumes)* (ed, 2017); *Interculturalism and multiculturalism: Debating the dividing lines* (co-ed, 2016); *Citizenship, Identity and the Politics of Multiculturalism: The rise of Muslim consciousness* (2015, 2nd Edition); *Racialization and religion* (ed, 2014), *Race and Ethnicity* (2014) and *European Multiculturalism(s): Religious, Cultural and Ethnic Challenges* (co-edited, 2012). In 2016 he was awarded the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) Thomas Reid Medal for excellence in the social sciences, and in 2017 he was elected as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.

[www.nasarmeer.com](http://www.nasarmeer.com) @NasarMeer

## Religion and Racialization

This paper will argue that we should not understand Islamophobia by treating it as a matter of religious intolerance, nor isolating it from the experiences of other religious minorities. Conceptually this means drawing on ideas of racialization to illustrate the conceptual and empirical relations between Islamophobia and other forms of racism, and in this paper antisemitism in particular. To this end the paper supports Goldberg's (2009) insistence that in addition to comparativist methodologies employed in the study of race, we also need relational methodologies. That is to say that where the former compares and contrasts, the latter also seeks to connect.

# Keynote: Bryan Turner

Australian Catholic University/Potsdam University

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July, 17.45, G.02 Lecture Theatre, Maurice Keyworth Building/Leeds University Business School**

## Biography

*Bryan S. Turner* was the Alona Evans Distinguished Visiting Professor at Wellesley College (2009-10) and the Presidential Professor of Sociology and the Director of the Committee for the Study of Religion at the Graduate Center The City University of New York (2010-17). He is currently a Professor of Sociology in the Institute for Religion Politics and Society at the Australian Catholic University and the Director of the Centre for Citizenship, Social Pluralism and Religious Diversity at Potsdam University Germany where is an Honorary Professor. He won the Max Planck Award in 2015. His recent publications include *Religion and Society* (2011) and *The Religions and the Political* (2013) with Cambridge University Press. His is the Editor of the *Wiley Encyclopedia of Social Theory* (forthcoming 2017).

## The Past and Future(s) of the Sociology of Religion

The sociology of religion (hereafter SoR) has had a chequered career. In ‘classical sociology’ the study of religion was fundamental to Weber, Durkheim, Troeltsch and Simmel. This phase came to an end with Parsons and the negative reaction to him in a more left, liberal progressive phase of US politics marginalized religion in American sociology. The secularization thesis flourished in the US with Berger’s *Sacred Canopy* and in the UK with Bryan Wilson and to a lesser extent David Martin.

There is a general view that SoR has enjoyed a revival in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What were the intellectual influences on this revival?

Jose Casanova (1994) *Public Religions in the Modern World* accepted a limited version of secularization but drew attention to the profound impact of religion in the public/political world Another important development (again from a Parsonian sociologist) was in terms of the theory of multiple modernities by S.N.Eisenstadt which buried the idea of a universal pattern of modernization and recognized the influence of different religious traditions in varieties of modernity.

The other development has gone in the opposite direction namely a focus on post-secular, post-institutional, private religiosity or ‘spirituality’. The main emphasis here is on the eclectic, privatised character of individuals who engage in spirituality which has little connection to churches or indeed to Christianity. See Courtney Bender (*The New Metaphysicals* 2010; and *Religion on the Edge* (Bender, Cadge and Levitt 2012) and Paul Hellas in the *New Age Movement: the celebration of the Self and the Sacralization of Modernity* (1996).

In broad terms SoR has two very different possibilities for research – either private or public religions. I want to defend and promote the second option.

The focus on post-institutional religion will not make SoR mainstream to sociology. In the worst case SoR will resemble the sociology of sport – marginal and catering to people who happen to be ‘sporty’. Such research is closer to social psychology than to sociology. Secondly without

organization, resources and leadership religious consciousness has no significant effect on society. Finally the new spiritual subjectivism is perfectly compatible with secular neo-liberal individualism. In other words it is a market-driven society that is shaping spirituality not vice versa. Isn't this what we mean by secularization?

I conclude by considering a new public religion research agenda that can be defended as important in its own right, important for sociology as such, and one that is socially and politically relevant today. These would include (but not exclusively): Religion and Populism; Law and Religion: and the Body, Bio-tech and Religion.

# Keynote: Philip Mellor

University of Leeds

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July, 11.30, G.02 Lecture Theatre, Maurice Keyworth Building/Leeds University Business School**

## **Biography**

Philip A. Mellor is Professor of Religion and Social Theory in the School of Philosophy, Religion and History of Science at the University of Leeds. His most recent book is *Sociology of the Sacred: Religion, Embodiment and Social Change* (2014, Sage/Theory Culture and Society, with Chris Shilling). At Leeds, he is also Pro-Dean for Research and Innovation in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures.

## **Situated at the Margins and the Centre Simultaneously: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Religion as a Problem of Societal Order**

Parsons called 'the problem of order' the most basic question for social theory, though it is not an undifferentiated issue relevant to society as a whole. Rather, it can be explored as the degrees of integration within and between 1) the *systemic* or institutional parts of society, 2) the *social* relationships characteristic of society, and 3) the *individual* identities formed within it. Changes on each of these levels of analysis are key to assessing the evolving patterns of religious life today. Thus, the articulation of this evolution as a narrative of secularization signals its increasing marginalization from the systemic parts of society: religion's continued capacity to effect social integration nonetheless operates within an overarching, differentiated systemic order; a co-existence that also encourages individuals to adopt a reflexive approach to it. On the other hand, the much discussed 'resurgence' of religion suggests a revitalization of its capacity to foster social integration so potent it can react back upon and even threaten differentiated systemic orders. In extreme forms, such as the phenomenon of ISIS, these can offer a fundamental challenge to systemic global order. In what follows, and utilizing both perspectives across each level of analysis, I explore how Weber's secular model of modernity needs to be modified but remains relevant to the analysis of religion today, even with regard to those movements that seek to obliterate this order. Indeed, I suggest that religion's simultaneous marginalization from, and centrality to, contemporary societal order is indicative of its evolving role across the globe.

# Keynote: Kim Knott

Lancaster University

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July, 17.00, G.02 Lecture Theatre, Maurice Keyworth Building/Leeds University Business School**

## **Biography**

Kim Knott is Professor of Religious and Secular Studies at Lancaster University and Deputy Director of the Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST, <https://crestresearch.ac.uk/>). She has written extensively on religion and the secular sacred in relation to the media, urban contexts, place and space, migration and ethnicity.

## **Edge spaces: Territoriality, sociality and the sacred**

Edges and edge spaces variously facilitate entrances and exits, protect property, enclose and bind people or keep them out, and operate as surfaces on which things can be placed. They exist in time as well as space. Furthermore, such material boundaries allow new relationships to develop and transformative experiences to take place.

In *The Image of the City*, the urban designer theorist, Kevin Lynch (1960), analysed how people represented their own neighbourhoods and journeys to work, and reflected on how these views might contribute to the design and development of effective and dynamic cities. His analysis led him to produce a model of five types of urban elements – paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. I take Lynch's conception of 'edges' as my starting point; for him edges were 'boundaries between two phases, linear breaks in continuity: shores, railroad cuts, edges of development, walls... [They] may be barriers, more or less penetrable, which close one region off from another; or they may be seams, lines along which two regions are related and joined together. (Lynch 1960: 47)

In my examination of the potentiality of edge spaces, I will build on examples from my earlier work, on the territories and borders of disciplines and, more recently, on walls and other unremarkable infrastructural boundaries. The aim is to explore what edges constrain and make possible vis-à-vis territoriality, sociality and the sacred.



# Keynote: Sarah Bracke

Kent University and Goldsmiths

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July, 11.30, G.02 Lecture Theatre, Maurice Keyworth Building /Leeds University Business School**

## **Biography**

Sarah Bracke is Associate Professor of Sociology of Gender and Sexuality at the University of Amsterdam. She was trained in Sociology of Religion and Culture as well as Philosophy at the KU Leuven, and holds a Ph.D. in Women's Studies from Utrecht University. She previously held appointments as Visiting Fellow in the Program in Critical Theory, UC Berkeley, as Research Associate and Visiting Professor in the Women's Studies in Religion Program, Harvard Divinity School, and as Visiting Scholar at the Center for European Studies, Harvard University. She has written extensively about gender, religion (Islam and Christianity), secularism, and multiculturalism in Europe, with a focus on questions of subjectivity and agency. She is an executive editor of the on-line journal *Religion and Gender*. She has also produced the documentary *Pink Camouflage* (2009) on the use of the rhetoric of LGBT rights within current civilizational geo-politics.

## **Religion and Race: A Story of Conceptual Entanglement**

After one of his visits to Poland, and more in particular to the Warsaw Ghetto, W.E.B. DuBois noted that his increased understanding of “the Jewish problem” gave him a “more complete understanding of the Negro problem” (DuBois 1952:15). Like the other founding figures of the sociological tradition, religion occupied an important place in the work of DuBois (Blum 2005), yet unlike the other founding fathers, he belaboured the connection between religion and processes of racialization.

This lecture revisits the legacy that DuBois left us for thinking the relation between religion and race. It further develops the argument that, in the context of European modernity, the categories of religion and race became conceptually intertwined in a way that goes beyond discussions on ‘religion and race’ or ‘religion as a ground for racialization’. This conceptual argument is further explored through empirical examples of how “the Muslim Question” emerges and plays out in Europe today.

# Notes

# Parallel Sessions: Wednesday 12<sup>TH</sup> July, 15.30

	<u>Seminar Room 1.32</u>	<u>Seminar Room 1.33</u>	<u>Seminar Room 1.03</u>	<u>Seminar Room 1.04</u>	<u>Seminar Room 1.05</u>
	<p><b>Death and Dying</b> Chair: Rebecca Catto</p>	<p><b>Non-Religion and Secularity</b> Chair: Adam Possamai</p>	<p><b>Socrel Book Panel Alternative Sociologies of Religion: Through Non-Western Eyes</b> Chair: Rachel Shillitoe</p>	<p><b>Panel 1 Rethinking Diasporas</b> Chair: Sean McLoughlin</p>	<p><b>Panel 2 Prayer in Hospitals</b> Chair: Sonya Sharma</p>
<b>15:30 – 16:00</b>	<p>Definitional Boundaries of Spirituality in Palliative Care <b>Keelin Pringnitz</b></p>	<p>To Be or Not to Be?: Religious and ‘Non-Religious’ Definitions of Life in the Judiciary <b>Cory Steele</b></p>	<p>Author: <b>James V. Spickard</b></p>	<p><b>Sean McLoughlin Daniel Nilsson De Hanas David Harrison Reza Gholami</b></p>	<p><b>Sonya Sharma Christina Beardsley Melania Calestani Sylvie Collins-Mayo Andrew Todd</b></p>
<b>16:00-16:30</b>	<p>Death’s Marginal Centrality <b>Douglas Davies</b></p>	<p>Beyond the Margins: The Religious Normation of the Nonreligious as a Blind Spot in the Study of Religion <b>Petra Klug</b></p>	<p>Respondents: <b>Bryan Turner, Eileen Barker, and Veronique Altglas</b></p>		

<p><b>16:30-17:00</b></p>	<p>A Secular Body Politics: Spaces of Opposition between Religion and Medicine</p> <p><b>Zack Munro</b></p>	<p>Studying the Sunday Assembly through a Post-Christian Lens</p> <p><b>Josh Bullock</b></p>			
<p><b>17:00-17:30</b></p>	<p>The Fetishisation Effect: Manipulating Forces in the Perpetuation of Genocide</p> <p><b>Breann Fallon</b></p>	<p>From nonreligion to no religion: Exploring the existential as a new centre for the 'sociology of religion'</p> <p><b>Lois Lee</b></p>			

# Parallel Sessions: Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July, 9.00

	<u>Seminar Room 1.32</u>	<u>Seminar Room 1.33</u>	<u>Seminar Room 1.03</u>	<u>Seminar Room 1.04</u>	<u>Seminar Room 1.05</u>
	<p><b>Sacred Spaces and Workplaces</b> Chair: Stephen Pihlaja</p>	<p><b>The Quakers:</b> Chair: Thomas Sealy</p>	<p><b>People and Groups at the Margins</b> Chair: Emma Tomalin</p>	<p><b>Christianity and Society:</b> Chair: Catherine Loy</p>	<p><b>Definitions and Boundaries</b> Chair: Reza Gholami</p>
<p><b>9:00-9:30</b></p>	<p>Lighting up the Margins  <b>Peter Phillips</b></p>	<p>Everyday Means to Utopian Ends: How Quakers Negotiate their Religious Claims Within the Contemporary Work Organisation  <b>Mark Rea</b></p>	<p>The Amish in Transition: How Old Edges Become New Centres  <b>Fran Handrick</b></p>	<p>Legitimizing Grace: Sources of Authority in Contemporary Mission Work  <b>Katherine Robinson and Monika Krause</b></p>	<p>The Relevance and Recognition of Religion - Contested Definitions in Use  <b>Kristin Skarning</b></p>
<p><b>9:30-10:00</b></p>	<p>The 'Joyful Challenge' of Minority Congregations' Use of Anglican Church Spaces in a Diverse Urban Diocese  <b>Demelza Jones and Andrew Smith</b></p>	<p>Using Jürgen Habermas to Investigate Quaker Business Methods  <b>Stephen Brooks</b></p>	<p>Mormonism in Ireland: Faith on the Margins  <b>Hazel O' Brien</b></p>	<p>University Chaplaincy in the UK: Christian, Multi-faith, Marginal or Central?  <b>Kristin Aune and Mathew Guest</b></p>	<p>Myth and the Secular Sacred  <b>Luke Doggett</b></p>

<p><b>10:00-10:30</b></p>	<p>Evolution and Marginal Religion: Boundary Work in the Life Sciences and its Implications for the Sociological Study of Science and Religion</p> <p><b>Rebecca Catto, Stephen Jones and Tom Kaden</b></p>	<p>The Application of Management Theory in a Study of Church Governance</p> <p><b>Penelope Cummins</b></p>	<p>Mol on the Margins: Locating Enigmas in the History of International Sociology</p> <p><b>Adam Powell</b></p>	<p>The Perception of God through an Area Specific, Faith-based, Socialization Process. A Pedagogical Reflection on Personal Bias and an "Image" of God, Inculcated into the Individual Doxa of M. Grzegorzewska University Students</p> <p><b>Anna Odrowaz-Coates</b></p>	<p>Common Devotion and Border Crossing at Shrines Across Indian and Pakistani Punjab</p> <p><b>Virinder Singh</b></p>
<p><b>10:30-11:00</b></p>	<p>Inside the Bubble</p> <p><b>Ellie Hill</b></p>		<p>Cleansing Physical and Spiritual Dirt: Women's Experiences of Working in Magdalene Laundries in Twentieth-Century Ireland</p> <p><b>Chloe Gott</b></p>	<p>Religion and/in Christianity: a New Chapter of a Long History</p> <p><b>Luca Diotallevi</b></p>	<p>Mapping or Re-adjusting the Boundaries of Social Sciences: Locating Sociology of Religion</p> <p><b>Ojo Joseph Rapheal</b></p>

# Parallel Sessions: Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July, 14.30

	<u>Seminar Room 1.32</u>	<u>Seminar Room 1.33</u>	<u>Seminar Room 1.03</u>	<u>Seminar Room 1.04</u>	<u>Seminar Room 1.05</u>
	Panel 3 Chair: Alp Arat	Panel 4 Chair: Ruth Sheldon	<b>Gender and Sexualities</b> Chair: Lois Lee	<b>Panel 4</b> Chair: Claire Dwyer	<b>Panel 5</b> Chair: Tim Hutchings
<b>14:30 -15:00</b>	<b>Whither the Spiritual</b>	<b>Reconfiguring Ethical Monotheism</b>	Reshaping the Gender Debate: Why Men are more Religious than Women <b>Abby Day</b>	<b>Religion and Creativity</b>	<b>Material Religion: Lived Experience of Age and Class</b>
<b>15:00- 15:30</b>	Being, Presence, and Stillness: 'Consciousness' and the New Spirituality: <b>Alp Arat</b>	The Ethics of Neighbouring: A Marginal Perspective <b>Ruth Sheldon</b>	Men of Faith: Intersections between Religion, Masculinities and Citizenship <b>Line Nyhagen</b>	Spiritual Flavours: A film about biographical narratives on food and faith. <b>Laura Cuch</b>	No Direction Home: New Frontiers for Research on Muslims in Britain <b>Carl Morris</b>

<p><b>15:30-16:00</b></p>	<p>The Transmission of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction <b>Matt Drage</b></p>	<p>Interfaith Youth Activism and Identity Formation: A Psychosocial Approach <b>Lenita Törning</b></p>	<p>The Emergence of Ethno-Sexuality and Critical Interventions through the Life Story of a LGBTQI Activist in a West-European Context <b>Nella van den Brandt</b></p>	<p>“The Song is a Form of Worship”: Song, Voice and Spirituality in a West London Suburb <b>Natalie Hyacinth</b></p>	<p>Between Margin and Middle? Material Expressions of Some British Older Women Atheists <b>Janet Eccles</b></p>
<p><b>16:00-16:30</b></p>	<p>Rethinking the Social Study of Spirituality <b>Galen Watts</b></p>	<p>Intercultural Encounters in the Secular-Christian City <b>Ben Gidley</b></p>	<p>Lifting the Veil: Conservative Religious Responses to Bill C-16 in Canada <b>Amy Clanfield</b></p>	<p>Transforming and Transformative Spaces: UK Minority Religions Adapting the Built Environment <b>Caroline Starkey and Emma Tomalin</b></p> <p>‘My life is but a weaving’: reflections on a textile-based arts project <b>Claire Dwyer, Nazneen Ahmed and Katy Beinart</b></p>	<p>Chips and Peas or Cheese and Wine: Food Practices and Class Distinctions in Lived Evangelicalism <b>Joanne McKenzie</b></p> <p><b>Roundtable Discussion</b></p>



# Parallel Sessions: Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July, 9.15

	<p><u>Seminar Room 1.32</u></p> <p><b>Religion, Media and the Internet</b></p> <p>Chair: Adriaan Van Klinken</p>	<p><u>Seminar Room 1.33</u></p> <p><b>Religions and Ethnicities in Plural Britain:</b></p> <p>Chair: Sean McLoughlin</p>	<p><u>Seminar Room 1.03</u></p> <p><b>Panel 5</b></p> <p>Chair: Mathew Guest</p>	<p><u>Seminar Room 1.04</u></p> <p><b>Theory, Politics and Power</b></p> <p><b>Chair:</b> Rachael Shillitoe</p>
<p><b>9:15-9:45</b></p>	<p>On the Margins and in the Limelight. How Media Representations of Islam and Muslims in Britain Reflect Social Inequalities</p> <p><b>Laurens de Rooij</b></p>	<p>Modelling Sikh Activism in Britain</p> <p><b>Jasjit Singh</b></p>	<p><b>Material Religion: The Study of Sacred Times and Places</b></p> <p>New Sacred Spaces and the Green Christian's Year: From the Eco-Retreat to the Greenbelt Festival</p> <p><b>Maria Nita</b></p>	<p>'I Developed a Model that Feels Comfortable for Me': The Role of Individualization and Vicarious Belief in Perceptions of Science and Religion</p> <p><b>Stephen H. Jones, Rebecca Catto, Tom Kaden and Fern Elsdon-Baker</b></p>

<p><b>9:45-10:15</b></p>	<p>Double Articulation: Why we Need Sociologies of Religion and the Media to Understand the Post-secular World</p> <p><b>Michael B. Munnik</b></p>	<p>Living in the Double Margins: Construction of a Diasporic Religious Community among the Leicester Jains</p> <p><b>Anja Pogacnik</b></p>	<p>Movable Parts: Distributed Persons and Their Pilgrimage Here</p> <p><b>Timothy Carroll</b></p>	<p>Where is Religion's Moral Voice? Third-Wave Marketization and the Growth of Neo-Liberal Ideology</p> <p><b>James V. Spickard</b></p>
<p><b>10:15-10:45</b></p>	<p>Hyper-Real Religion and the Pygmalion Effect; The Participatory Culture on the Internet</p> <p><b>Adam Possamai</b></p>	<p>Muslim Women in Britain c. 1890 to 1948: Historical Grounding for Contemporary Debates</p> <p><b>Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor</b></p>	<p>Digital Materialities of Memory and Mourning</p> <p><b>Tim Hutchings</b></p>	<p>Pathways and Power: Applying Bourdieu in the Study of Class and Religion</p> <p><b>Joanne McKenzie</b></p>
<p><b>10:45-11:15</b></p>	<p>Dear Mr Muslim, Dear Mr Atheist: Evangelical Christian Positioning of the Other in Social Media Discourse</p> <p><b>Stephen Pihlaja</b></p>	<p>The Economic Inactivity of Muslim Women in Britain: Patterns across Generations</p> <p><b>Asma Khan</b></p>	<p><b>Roundtable Discussion</b></p>	<p>Transformative Citizenship: Thinking about Islam and Secularism through Cosmopolitanism</p> <p><b>Reza Gholami</b></p>

# Parallel Sessions: Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July, 11.30

	<u>Seminar Room 1.32</u> <b>New Religious Movements and Conversion</b> Chair: Caroline Starkey	<u>Seminar Room 1.33</u> <b>Schools and Institutions</b> Chair: Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor	<u>Seminar Room 1.03</u> <b>Panel 6</b> Chair: Jelle Wiering  <b>Where Centres and Margins Meet</b>	<u>Seminar Room 1.04</u> <b>Turkey and the Turkish Diaspora</b> Chair: Stephen Pihlaja
<b>11.30-12.00</b>	Ethnicity in Religious Switching <b>Nadia Beider</b>	Doing Religion on Campus: Minority Faith Experiences in Higher Education <b>Sandra Maurer</b>	Negotiating religion in pursuit of sexual well-being among sub-Saharan African migrants in the Netherlands <b>Amisah Zenabu Bakuri</b>	Social Context and Religious Attitudes among the Turkish-background Population in Denmark <b>Ahmet Onay</b>
<b>12.00-12.30</b>	From the Margins to the Centre: The Social Mobility of New Religions <b>Eileen Barker</b>	‘Why are we Talking about Religion?’ Reimagining Non-religion in Collective Worship <b>Rachael Shillitoe</b>	Gender, leadership and living (not-so) holy in African/ Dutch churches in the Netherlands <b>Brenda Bartelink</b>	“The Mystery of the Sultan”: Arts, Religion and Politics in Contemporary Turkey <b>Nevin Şahin</b>

			<p>The Curious Case of the Condom: Sexual Enchantment in the Netherlands</p> <p><b>Jelle Wiering</b></p> <p><b>Respondents: Emma Tomalin and Adriaan Van Klinken</b></p>	<p>Critical Praxis in the Sociology of Religion: A Case Study of Collaborative Research with a Marginalised Transnational Ethno-faith Community</p> <p><b>Celia Jenkins and Umit Cetin</b></p>
12.30 – 1.00	<p>Music Studies and New Religious Movements: A Case Study from Scientology</p> <p><b>Tom Wagner</b></p>	<p>At the Edge of Professionalism: Muslim RE Teachers' Negotiation of Personal Faith in RE Classrooms</p> <p><b>Matthew Vince</b></p>		
1.00-1.30	<p>Constructing Continuity and Change: Religious Identity and British Converts to Islam</p> <p><b>Thomas Sealy</b></p>	<p>Political Irrationality and Perspectives from 'Methodological Religion': the Case of the British Labour Party post-2015</p> <p><b>Siobhan McAndrew</b></p>		

# Abstracts

## (Parallel Sessions)

### **University Chaplaincy in the UK: Christian, Multi-faith, Marginal or Central?**

***Kristin Aune and Mathew Guest***

In the context of a recent upsurge in academic and political interest in religion in higher education, the role of university chaplains emerges as especially interesting. This paper presents new data from the first stage of the two-year project *Chaplains on Campus: Understanding Chaplaincy in UK Universities* (funded by the Church Universities Fund), comprising 250+ telephone interviews with chaplains and faith advisors working in UK universities. The project takes stock of the diverse work undertaken by chaplains and assesses its impact, taking account of the experiences of students and the perspectives of university managers who mediate between national policy agendas and localised circumstances. Of special interest is the question whether the heightened political concern about religion in higher education (evident in the government's 2015 Preventing Violent Extremism guidance) means that chaplaincy is moving from the margins of the university to the centre. Has the role of chaplains acquired new status as its purpose is conceived less in terms of pastoral care and more in terms of the management of religion as an issue of contention within university contexts? Building on comparisons with data from a smaller project collected a decade ago (Clines 2007), this paper will explore the extent and nature of this shift, alongside a related transition from Christianity-centric to multi-faith models of chaplaincy.

#### **Biographical Note:**

Kristin Aune is Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University. Her research explores religion, gender and higher education. Her books include *Religion and Higher Education in Europe and North America* (co-edited with Stevenson, Routledge, 2017), *Christianity and the University Experience* (with Guest, Sharma & Warner, Bloomsbury, 2013).

Mathew Guest is Reader in the Sociology of Religion in the Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University. His research focuses on the evangelical movement and on religion in university contexts. His books include *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture* (Paternoster, 2007) and *Christianity and the University Experience* (with Aune, Sharma and Warner, Bloomsbury, 2013).

## **From the Margins to the Centre: The Social Mobility of New Religions**

*Eileen Barker*

New religious movements almost invariably find themselves on the margins of society. Indeed, in their early days many of them use various means of making sure that they are on the margins, separating themselves from mainstream with an elitist pride. With the passage of time, however, they can start to 'denominationalise', dropping several of their more sectarian features and becoming both more accepting of and accepted by the wider society. This paper charts some of the ways in which the movements may consciously or unconsciously change from an explicit or implicit statement of 'we are right and you are wrong' to one of 'we are no different from anyone else'. Among the examples of such 'centralising mobility' will be the Mormons, Soka Gakkai International, the Children of God / The Family International, and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Comparisons will be drawn between the different methods and different responses by different societies such as North America, parts of both Western and Eastern Europe and China.

Eileen Barker, FAcSS; FBA; OBE, is Professor Emeritus of Sociology with Special Reference to the Study of Religion at the London School of Economics. Her main research interest is minority religions and the social reactions to which these give rise. She is the founder and Chair of Inform ([www.Inform.ac](http://www.Inform.ac)).

## **Ethnicity in Religious Switching**

*Nadia Bieder*

My research focusses on the role played by ethnicity in the process of religious switching; be it conversion between religions or denominational switching. Both ethnic and religious identities are identity markers which may serve to reinforce each other or compete for salience. Given that religious and ethnic identity in contemporary America often overlap; it seems to be crucial to try to untangle some of the ambiguity of ethno-religious expression and identity construction. Although some attention has been devoted to this issue with reference to American Jews, I would like to broaden such an approach to include a number of other religious traditions which may occupy positions at the margins of American religious life rather than at its centre. I make use of data from the Pew religious Landscape Survey of 2014.

I will seek to borrow from an understanding of identity grounded in theories of ethnicity and migration in order to shed light on the process of religious switching and its effect on religious practices and beliefs. Religious switching is most often conceptualized as an immediate transition across a binary divide, which ignores the complexity of negotiating identity reconstruction. Switchers' religious commitment can better be understood by taking into account the multiplicity of competing identities involved and their fluid salience, as well as the possibility of creating new, hybrid, personalized forms

of religious identification. These theoretical insights will help in gaining a fuller understanding of religious switching in general, not limited to denominations in which ethnic and religious identities overlap.

### **Biographical Note:**

Nadia Beider is a doctoral student in Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. Her research takes a quantitative approach and focusses on religious switching in Israel and the United States, its determinants and effects, both on religious commitment and political attitudes.

### **Using Jürgen Habermas to Investigate Quaker Business Methods**

#### ***Stephen Brooks***

For the majority of his career, Jürgen Habermas was considered primarily a political philosopher who has written extensively in a variety of disciplines and widely considered as a secularist in the tradition of the Enlightenment, following and expanding the work of Marx, Weber and Durkheim. Therefore, religion and religious discourse was not expected to survive the on-going rationalization and secularization of modernity.

However, over the past two decades or so, Habermas has been reconsidering the role of religion within what he terms as a “post-secular” age, in particular the impact and uses of religion within the realm of public sphere. It is these revisions and the dialogues that they have opened up with contemporary scholars that this paper will use to consider and investigate the business methods as used locally by The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in their church governance.

Although the Quaker business method can be seen as fulfilling the need for unity via discernment without making a decision reached by majority vote, while Habermas’s ideal model emphasizes rational-critical debate to reach a consensus, this paper will argue that the Quaker practices reflect a microcosm of the current debates around Habermas and the role of religion in the public sphere. It is in this way that Habermas' thinking can be brought to bear on both centre and edges of the sociology of religion.

### **Biographical Note:**

Stephen Brooks is a PhD Student of Quaker Studies through the Department of Theology and Religion at University of Birmingham. He is a member of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and lives in Brighton.

## **Studying the Sunday Assembly through a Post-Christian Lens**

*Josh Bullock*

My research follows the Sunday Assembly (SA), a secular (godless) congregation that celebrates life, with the motto: “live better, help often and wonder more.” The Sunday Assembly entered the non-religious market place in January 2013 with their flagship London congregation. Now, over 70-franchised chapters exist in eight countries, attempting to provide belonging, community, and secular-enchantment to the religiously unaffiliated market.

I draw upon a 15-month ethnographic study of the London SA and 35 semi-structured interviews to better understand lived non-religion. The central question addressed in this paper is: what does the growth of the Sunday Assembly as a secular community tell us about the relationship between religion and secularisation?

To answer this question a novel framework has been developed to study the SA through a post-Christian lens. I present the argument that the SA is a visible and notable display of an element of post-Christian culture. This current transitional phase from Christian to non-religion has harboured ideal conditions for the SA to take flight as an idea and organisation. Therefore, with their current structure the SA will seemingly only find success in societies that have transitioned or are in this process.

This paper offers findings in two ways. Firstly, I unpack the demographics of an ‘Assembler’ through an ideal type and detail their motivations for attending. Secondly, with evidence of non-religion on the rise, I reach beyond the sociology of religion and move beyond description to unfold the impact of non-religious beliefs, wonder and spirituality (“Wonder more”) through organised unbelief.

### **Biographical Note:**

Josh Bullock is completing his PhD in Autumn 2017 at Kingston University London. His PhD considers the Sunday Assembly (a secular congregation) as a post-Christian manifestation of non-religion that can help to explain the changing nature of belief, belonging, community and wonder.



## **Evolution and Marginal Religion: Boundary Work in the Life Sciences and its Implications for the Sociological Study of Science and Religion**

*Rebecca Catto, Stephen Jones and Tom Kaden*

“So in science, I agree with Dawkins that to be a really good scientist, to actually have a scientific thinking, you...it’s very incompatible if you’re religious.” Female cell biologist, Canada

As the sociology of religion has been intermittently significant to ‘mainstream’ sociology, so has the study of science and religion, to the sociology of religion as well as ‘mainstream’ sociology. In this paper we explore these oscillations through presentation of findings from interviews and focus groups conducted with life scientists in Canada and UK as part of the project ‘Science and Religion: Exploring the Spectrum’.

We focus upon the scientific workplace as a site of boundary work (Gieryn 1983). Religious and non-religious scientists report that religion is not significant in their daily work. Religious scientist respondents in both countries tend not to feel discriminated against because of their religiosity. However, they do discuss remaining circumspect about their faith at work, reconciling the two, and moments of challenge and conflict. Similarly, non-religious scientist respondents are open to having religious colleagues in principle, but sceptical about their scientific credibility and quick to take Christianity and Creationism as synonymous.

These scientists work to defend the boundaries between science and non-science, protecting the former’s power and authority, as Victorian writers like Thomas Huxley and John Draper sought to establish Science’s cultural authority independent from and superior to the Anglican Church’s. Given sociology’s intersecting disciplinary origins, this empirical case thus also has consequences for thinking through religion’s place, or lack thereof, within this social science.

### **Biographical Note:**

Rebecca Catto is an Assistant Professor in the Sociology Department at Kent State University in Ohio, USA. Stephen Jones is a Research Fellow at Newman University, UK, and Tom Kaden is a Research Associate at York University, Toronto.

## **Muslim Women in Britain c. 1890 to 1948: Historical Grounding for Contemporary Debates**

*Sariya Cheruvallil-Contractor*

This paper draws upon the findings of a British Academy / Leverhulme Trust funded project that is using archival material linked to the earliest British Muslim communities, to examine the everyday lives of women in these historical communities. The histories of early British Muslim communities are being recovered, but little is known about the roles and lives of women in these communities. The few insights into these women's lives that are available provide valuable evidence of the ways in which these women (and the British Muslim communities they were part of) attempted to, not always successfully, negotiate conciliations between the British and Muslim aspects of their identities, values, families, communities and loyalties – discussions which continue in modern Britain. By uncovering historical responses to issues that remain topical in British Muslim communities today and then collaborating with modern community stakeholders for knowledge exchange, this research will provide historical grounding to shape current debates about Islam in British society.

From a methodological perspective this paper will consider the role and relevance of historical approaches within the Sociology of Religion. In both contemporary and historical contexts, Muslim women's life experiences are shaped by their diversity identity positions and social contexts - race, social class and economic status all intersect in the formation of their religious identities and experience of religious life. A feminist-intersectional lens is an essential aspect of this project. Through discussions of its findings, this paper will consider the significance of this lens within the Sociology of Religion.

### **Biographical Note:**

Sariya is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University. She specialises in the Sociology of Religion with particular emphasis on methodologies that work with and for participants. She is currently researching Muslims and adoption, Islam on British Campuses and urban Indian women's Sufism.

## **Lifting the Veil: Conservative Religious Responses to Bill C-16 in Canada**

*Amy Clanfield*

On May 17, 2016, the “International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia,” Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced Bill C-16 in support of transgender rights, and proposed extending the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (CHRA) to protect “gender identity and gender expression.” Creating legal safeguards for transgender and non-binary individuals has become a hot-button topic, and can be definitively linked to institutional, national, and international conversations regarding gender expression and protection.

However, when religious views and personal beliefs regarding normative sexual identities and gender expression conflict with the policies of an institution or laws of the state, opposing views are brought to the forefront. In particular, conservative religious groups in Canada have reacted to this bill since its introduction with vitriol. These conservative groups have responded to this legislation with numerous publications, blog posts, and newspaper articles spouting pseudoscience, “pray the gay away” conversion therapy for LGBTQ youth, and what can arguably be called hate speech, though thinly veiled in religious rhetoric. Therefore, this paper seeks to highlight just one of the many instances in the last several months in which religious groups in Canada have mistaken freedom of religion for religious lobbying. Using the theoretical framework provided by Frank Ravitch, this paper will examine the response from one of these groups: a Reformed Christian organization known as “ARPA,” and how they deploy transphobic rhetoric in their online publications.

### **Biographical Note:**

Amy Clanfield is a first-year PhD student at the Department of Classics and Religious Studies at the University of Ottawa, Canada. Her dissertation research is focused on the intersection of gender identities, religion, spatial theory, federal law, and administrative policy in Canada.

## **The Perception of God through an Area Specific, Faith-based, Socialization Process. A Pedagogical Reflection on Personal Bias and an "Image" of God, Inculcated into the Individual Doxa of M. Grzegorzewska University Students**

*Anna Odrowaz-Coates*

The paper consists of an analysis of faith-based socialization processes in diverse social spheres and leads onto a small case study of Polish students in the Maria Grzegorzewska University. The study was carried out with over 250 respondents in small working groups of 20-30 students, in the Institute of Educational Studies (2014-2016). Students were asked anonymously to write a short description of how they perceive God. The study showed that the majority of Polish students in this sample, used a physical description of God drawn from the Roman Catholic Church's historical iconography and early childhood religious education, depicting God as an older man with white beard and 'special powers' (and occasionally resembling Jesus). Amongst these answers, many were focused on the features of God, such as being an omnipotent, all knowing, powerful being. Many wrote that God is good and merciful. Only ten percent of responses differed, showing either: a deeper understanding of spiritual and philosophical matters, a relativist approach, a feminist approach to the image of God, a higher degree of reflexivity or conviction that God does not exist. It must be noted that the students were Polish, declared Christians that chose to study to become teachers, pedagogues, councillors, therapists and carers in educational facilities. The repetitiveness of the answers reflected the dominant view of God, allowing the author to draw some preliminary conclusions about the process of socialization in a religious context and how it may affect one's personal worldview.

### **Biographical Note:**

I am an MA in sociology, PhD in Social Politics, dr. hab. of Pedagogy and a Professor in the Social Pedagogy Department, Institute of Educational Studies, M. Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw. My main areas of expertise include: social inequalities (religion, ethnicity and gender), reproduction of social systems and critical theories.

## **The Application of Management Theory in a Study of Church Governance**

*Penelope Cummins*

For more than three hundred years the main decision-making body within the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) was the large annual gathering, the 'Yearly Meeting'. But a review of the Yearly Meetings over the past thirty years indicates that the locus of authority has shifted, especially within the past decade, from the larger group, with its collectivised responsibility and socialised accountability, to a small group of trustees, in keeping with the secular requirements of the Charity Commission.

This is a process of social and functional change within a faith group; so in that respect the study sits firmly within the discipline of Sociology of Religion. However, a particularly fruitful way of interrogating these changes has been through recourse to the techniques and insights of management theorists such as Bob Monks and Charles Handy. Their work helps to show that the cumulative effects of the changes have been significant, although at least some of these effects have been inadvertent.

This example highlights the value of drawing upon theorists from beyond the edge of sociology of religion to better interrogate concerns which are central to our discipline. It is suggested that management theory might be sensibly applied in many other studies of faith organisations within the sociology of religion; perhaps particularly looking more widely at the effects of the Charity Commission requirements on the internal affairs of faith-based organisations.

### **Biographical Note:**

Penelope Cummins is a PhD student in the Department of Theology & Religion at the University of Birmingham. She has served in the past as a trustee and a board member of local Quaker bodies, and has been a member of their national Property & Finance Committee.

### **Death's Marginal Centrality**

#### *Douglas Davies*

Though death has, in the last ten years or so come onto the agenda of numerous arts, humanities, and social science agendas, this paper will take the period 1960--2016 to sketch how sociologists with a major interest in religion have, earlier, tended to ignore the topic of death while the few who have focused on death have tended to ignore key topics in the sociology of religion. In this sense 'death' seems to have furnished its own form of conceptual barrier to intellectual interplay. It will consider the role of distinctive conferences, journals, gender-specific interests, and organizations in fostering 'death studies' as its own emergent field, and point the way for an interdisciplinary future in which sociology has a major part to play.

### **Biographical Note:**

Prof. Douglas J. Davies, Professor in the Study of Religion and Director of Durham University's Centre for Death and Life Studies, is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, and of The Learned Society of Wales. Of twenty monographs and joint-authored books ten focus on death; of sixty essays fifteen are death-focused.

## **Reshaping the Gender Debate: Why Men are more Religious than Women**

*Abby Day*

Every world religion is headed by a man, apart from the Church of England, headed by a woman. Queen Elizabeth is in that position because she is the monarch, but she does not exert any influence on the running of the Church. All Catholic priests and most Protestant ones are men: the possibility of a woman being a priest or a bishop has been tearing the Anglican Communion apart. Imams and rabbis are mostly men. Most monks of every religious persuasion, from Buddhist to Christian are men. Saviours and prophets are men. Most gods, and certainly the most powerful, are men. Almost all religious terrorists are men. Religious rituals are performed by men.

And yet, within the sociology of religion, there persists a theory at odds with the evidence: women, we are usually told, are more religious than men. Such counter-intuitive, startling conclusions must be based on evidence, however thin. This paper critiques the evidence and offers a more robust theory, explaining the perception of gender imbalance and providing a counter narrative where men, not women, are more religious.

### **Biographical Note:**

Dr. Abby Day is Reader in Race, Faith and Culture in the Department of Sociology, Goldsmiths, University of London, where her teaching, research, writing and supervisions cover sociology of religion, media, culture and critical criminology. Past Chair of the Sociology of Religion Study group in the British Sociological Association, her work focuses on improving the academic and public understanding of complex religious and non-religious identities.

## **On the Margins and in the Limelight. How Media Representations of Islam and Muslims in Britain Reflect Social Inequalities**

*Laurens de Rooij*

Media narratives are used to conceptualise Islam in Britain and define its place and role in society. The existing protocols of religion, media, and public space of a given context characterise that environment, as well as dictating the participation of members in those spaces. This paper discusses how media constructions of Islam, are inherently paradoxical. It does so by discussing: (1) how media highlight minority religious expressions, thereby bringing those operating on the margins (numerically) into the public eye, (2) how the media protocols of public discourse affect the framing of those religious identities in relation to mainstream values, and (3) how the media representations of minority religions are used to regulate their practices. This study utilized a content and discourse analysis of media frames, as used in articles discussing Islam or Muslims appearing in three newspapers and 3 television channels over a 75-day period, to examine these issues. Findings suggest that media representations of Islam and Muslims, regulate Islam and Muslims, by exploiting unequal access to social resources, status, power, that reflect their position on the margins. However, by overrepresentation in

media discourse(s), those on the margins are brought into the limelight and engaged as equals by the dominant actors, yet are simultaneously unable to engage equally themselves because of their position on the margins. Sociology of Religion offers us the critical tools to analyse these contexts.

### **Biographical Note:**

Laurens de Rooij is a research fellow at Grey College, Durham University. His research focus is media representations of Islam and Muslims. He successfully defended his PhD in July 2016. His research examined: Understanding the reception of media representations of Islam in the British press. He holds a Masters of Arts degree in Theology and Religious Studies (Cum Laude) from the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Catholic University of Leuven), a Bachelors of Arts degree in Theology and Religious Studies from the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Catholic University of Leuven). His supervisors were Joanildo Burity, Douglas Davies, Chris Insole, and Matthew Guest of Durham University.

### **Religion and/in Christianity: a New Chapter of a Long History**

*Luca Diotallevi, Roma TRE University*

A current trend makes religion margins and centers less easily identifiable. You can call that trend a rising of postwestphalian religion (Beyer) or a spread of a low intensity religion (Turner). The same happens also due to effects of the so-called spiritual revolution (Woodhead Heels). The current and significativeley advanced deconfessionalization of Christianity makes the religion / extra-religion divide once again cross and cut the Christian field. In fact now we are better equipped to understand the confessional phase as a period during which the reduction of Christianity to just its religious dimension reaches its historically documented peak. Probably the best case-study is provided by the observation of the religion / politics relationship institutionalized – respectiveley – on the one hand in Euro-continental confessionalized Christendom (XVI-XX) and on the other hand in pre-confessional (XI-XIV), non confessional (Early modern and modern anglosaxon Christianity) and post-confessional (e.g. Vatican II Catholicism) Christianities. The religion / politics cut within the same tradition provides an unusual chance to observe more easily what religion has been or is and what it has not been or is not. From an analytical point of view the luhmannian version of the social systems theory can also help in carrying out this job. The aim of the paper is to show that religion has to do with contingency, but “grounding” contingency or saving contingency from itself are just ways to do this and not necessarily the Christian ones. All this becomes more evident in analyzing non-confessionalized Christian religious rituals (or better *liturgies*).

### **Biographical Note:**

Luca Diotallevi (1959) is full professor in sociology at the University of Roma TRE. He was (1998) senior fellow at the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard Divinity School (Harvard University). He presently serves as II Level Master in Culture & Religion Sciences' director (Univ. of Roma TRE). Contact: [luca.diotallevi@uniroma3.it](mailto:luca.diotallevi@uniroma3.it).

## **Myth and the Secular Sacred**

### ***Luke Doggett***

This paper draws upon Gordon Lynch's articulation of a sociology of the sacred, attempting to extend this work in the direction of myth. In the light of the considerable work illuminating the context-bound nature of constructions of religion –and indeed of the potent social constructionist challenge to sui generis accounts of religion more generally –a sociology of the sacred serves as a helpful means of retaining analytical focus. Moreover, this approach permits the elaboration of a wide range of sacred phenomena beyond the contested religious boundary. This project can be developed through engagement with existing scholarship on myth understood as a distinct symbolic form: Lynch's use of Emile Durkheim in treating the sacred as a collective, symbolically-structured experience provides the point of departure here. Specifically, the mythic symbol may be distinguished on the basis of its concealment of what it signifies, so that the process of symbolic representation is rendered unconscious. Applying the theory of myth in this way provides a means of clarifying the embodied nature of sacred experience; and it establishes the basis for an exploration of myth which enriches and extends the sociology of the sacred. Roland Barthes' work exemplifies this approach to myth, while also illuminating its applicability in the context of secular experience.

### **Biographical Note:**

Dr. Luke Doggett is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Kingston University. He is currently working on the a collection entitled *Foundations and Futures in the Sociology of Religion*, co-edited with Dr. Alp Arat.

## **The Fetishisation Effect: Manipulating Forces in the Perpetuation of Genocide**

### ***Breann Fallon***

Attempting to understand the decimation of a particular group of people is, for some, an inherent part of doing the persecuted ultimate justice. Why does a community allow mass murder, perpetuating the demise of an "other"? Genocide as a topic of religious or sociological study is not new as it is inherently connected to both, however, this paper presents an investigation into the implicit religious aspects that influence the formulation of genocidal ideals, communities, and actions - do perpetrators form a spiritual connection to what is going on around them? Do perpetrators form a spiritual



connection to what is around them? If present, how does this spiritual connection affect their actions? Does this spiritual connection affect genocidal community formation? Using the sociology of religion discipline in a new manner, this paper combines theories of “totemism” (Durkheim 1915), “fetishism” (Ellen 1988), and the “imagined community” (Anderson 1982) with investigation into primary perpetrator accounts from both the Holocaust (1933-1945) and the Rwandan Genocide (1994) to answer these questions. In both of these cases, a fetishisation of a communal revered object, thing, or person takes place. In this fetishisation, a "spirit" (Ellen 1988, 221) is conflated with the revered object, thing, or person. This "spirit" is thus able to manipulate the individual as well as the "community" (Anderson 1982) around that which it is shaped. This paper not only sheds light on the formulation of genocide, but it also displays the practicality of sociology of religion methodology in this particular area. The use of sociology of religion methodology here creates a space for atypical religious/spiritual patterns and behaviours amongst *genocidaire* to arise, altering the comprehension of genocidal social settings as well as the influence of religion/spirituality on the subjectivities of *genocidaire*.

### **Biographical Note:**

Breann Fallon is a teaching fellow in the Studies in Religion department at the University of Sydney. Her research interests include religion and violence, religion and aesthetics, and contemporary paganisms, having published in all of these areas. Fallon is also an active member of the Religious Studies Project (RSP), being the Asia-Pacific podcaster for the RSP.

Transformative Citizenship: Thinking about Islam and Secularism through Cosmopolitanism

### ***Reza Gholami***

This paper examines social/political participation/action in light of increasing tensions between Muslim and non-Muslim positions. It does so by exploring functions of and attitudes towards the idea of Islam in contemporary Western consciousness. I argue, firstly, that in the West today, Islam oscillates between two problematic (but expedient) positions of ‘toleration’ and ‘problematization’; and secondly that ‘the secular’ itself has shifted such that it no longer aims to either ‘privatize’ or eradicate religion. By the same token, religious (including Islamic) positions often take a negative stance towards secularity, dismissing it as irrelevant, an essentially incompatible ‘other’, or even as potentially morally corrupt. Far from facilitating conviviality and socio-political engagement, these positions and attitudes fan the flames of division and impede modes of citizenship that are fit for purpose in the contemporary world. I argue, therefore, that two aims have to be achieved in the public arena: 1) we must develop a set of educational discourses and practices for ‘critical secular studies’. 2) It is vital that religious and secular subjectivities commit to a broader understanding of citizenship that includes truly transformative experiences of ‘otherness’ as a matter of course in everyday living. The concept of cosmopolitanism provides valuable insights in pursuit of these aims.

### **Biographical Note:**

Dr Reza Gholami is Lecturer in sociology of education in the School of Social Science and Public Policy at Keele University. He is also the author of *Secularism and Identity: Non-Islamiosity in the Iranian Diaspora* (2015, Routledge) and co-editor of *Education and Extremisms: Re-thinking Liberal Pedagogies in the Contemporary World* (2017, Routledge).

### **‘Cleansing Physical and Spiritual Dirt: Women’s Experiences of Working in Magdalene Laundries in Twentieth-Century Ireland’**

***Chloe Gott***

Since the 1990s, there has been significant re-evaluation of the role of Catholic institutions in 20th century Ireland. As well as public scandals over the neglect of children in residential schools, the experience of women within Magdalene institutions has generated significant interest, raising questions about interactions between Church, State and women’s welfare.

However, academic work on this has been hindered by a lack of publicly available data as the religious orders have yet to open their archives to researchers or the public (Smith, 2007). To counter this, in 2012 Justice For Magdalenes Research conducted an oral history project, collecting around eighty interviews with survivors and other key informants. My work draws on this archive, representing some of the first extensive analysis of this data.

This paper will explore the experiences of women confined in Magdalene institutions in 20<sup>th</sup> century Ireland, with particular focus on formation of subjectivities within the specific context of a religious carceral institution and the re-negotiation of these identities upon leaving. My work focuses on the words of the women themselves, prioritising their narratives and exploring the ways in which they worked with and resisted processes of inscription, as well as how their perceptions of these experiences altered over the years.

The voices of survivors remain at the edges of discourse on the Laundries, side-lined in government reports on the institutions (Yeager and Culleton, 2016) and obscured by a continuing culture of stigma. This project centres their narratives to better understand the nature of women’s experiences within the Magdalene Laundries.

#### **Biographical Note:**

Chloe Gott is a PhD candidate at the University of Kent. Her research focuses on the intersections of religious experiences with gender, class and conceptions of sexuality and morality, particularly in the context of marginalised social groups.

### **The Amish in Transition: How Old Edges Become New Centres**

### ***Fran Handrick***

The four characteristics traditionally used by Amish to determine someone as Amish are, firstly, use of Pennsylvania Deutsch as their first language, secondly, rejection of motor car ownership and travelling by horse and buggy, thirdly wearing Plain dress and lastly, rejecting the use of electricity from the grid (Hostetler 1963).

However, Amish life is changing in terms of occupation and, in places, degrees of control over individual life choices. The symbol of the Amish travelling in their buggies is solidly and centrally an Amish symbol. Now, due to occupational changes away from farming to a range of work, some Amish are collected by car every day to be driven to their place of work, if, for example, they are working in a construction crew in the next state because using a horse and buggy for that distance would be impractical.

In this paper, I consider these four characteristics at the centre of Amish life and, using Zygmunt Bauman's terms 'liquid' and 'solid' modernity, locate their (changing) nature between the solid centre and the liquid edge of Amish society. The paper argues that each of the four defining characteristics now has a liquid edge and that Amish identity is more flexible than it has ever been. In turn, what has been 'edge' Amish practice becomes more 'centre' as new practices become normative.

### **Biographical Note:**

Fran Handrick is in my last year of a part-time PhD working on Amish Women; Work and Change. She spent 32 years working in Career Management and towards the end of that, she completed an M.Sc in Change Agent Skills and Strategies at the University of Surrey. My PhD combines a 40-year interest in the Amish people with my study of the impact of change on individuals and groups. Her fieldwork was with Old Order Amish women in the Lancaster County settlement in Pennsylvania, which is the oldest Amish settlement and Old and New Order women in the Holmes County, Ohio settlement which is the largest and most diverse Amish community in the world.

### **The Liverpool Yemeni Community: The Intersection of Religion, Diaspora, Ethnicity and Class**

#### ***David Harrison***

This paper will primarily address questions surrounding the intersection of Arab ethnicity and Muslim identity in the in the case of a well-established diaspora which has received little attention. Until recently, studies on British Muslim communities have often used the basis of Islam as a 'minority ethnic group' rather than an over-arching pluralistic ideological framework (Abbas, 2015:2386). The extent to which ideas of a 'global Islam' (or global umma) is displacing and transcending the 'domesticated' Muslim community as understood in terms of ethnic minority groups will be a key question.

The dynamics of a majority Arab Muslim community within the larger British Muslim diaspora provide a new angle to further examine how supranational ideologies, often imported from the Arab world such as Wahhabism, have competed with, or ‘complemented’, Arab-Muslim identities originating in previous nationally-based forms.

Given the history of Liverpool as a port-city with high levels of migration and several other well-established diaspora groups, the paper will also touch upon how the relationship with the wider Liverpool communities and formations of identities have impacted the Yemeni community, particularly with reference to class identity and political activism. As fieldwork has yet to be undertaken, the paper aims to present some initial findings. The study is by its nature multi-faceted—the interaction of religion, ethnicity, diaspora identity, and class in this community presents the opportunity for discussion of the conference themes.

### **Biographical Note:**

David Harrison is a current PhD student at the University of Leeds. He is researching the Liverpool-Yemeni community and their relationship with Islam and the wider Muslim community, with reference to notions of a ‘global *umma*’ and transnationalism.

### **Inside the bubble**

#### ***Ellie Hill***

This paper reports on alumni’s experiences of religion and belief, stereotyping and prejudice while studying at university. Post-Brexit and in an era of ‘Fundamental British Values’, what is it like to be an undergraduate studying from inside the ‘university bubble’? Reports such as RE for REal (Dinham and Shaw: 2016) consider the views of parents, teachers and Year 10 students. This research project, using 1:1 interviews, is an opportunity to explore and understand the views of tomorrow’s educators.

Phillips (2016) calls the range of race and faith in Britain - ‘superdiversity’. In a super-diverse society how do we include all religions and beliefs? And how do we include those who profess to have no religious belief? This paper considers the perspectives of alumni and their experience of diversity both on campus and in wider society during their degree.

What are their views on social media as a conduit for knowledge and understanding of religion and belief? The media portrayal can contort the reality and lead us to the thought that the largest religion in Britain is Islam. In fact, there are less than 10% of the population identifying as Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs (Butler-Sloss: 2015).

With clarity and confidence, the responses of participants show an insight into the broad mindedness of young people. In a time of controversy and political change, this portrays the positivity of those ‘inside the bubble’.

### **Biographical Note:**

Ellie works as Senior Lecturer in Religious Education within the Centre for Education and Inclusion at the University of Worcester. Her expertise and interest is in Religion and Values Education, Inclusion, School Leadership and Classroom Observation. She leads the Education Studies degree and the Religion and Values MA pathway.

### **Critical Praxis in the Sociology of Religion: A Case Study of Collaborative Research with a Marginalised Transnational Ethno-faith Community**

#### ***Celia Jenkins and Umit Cetin***

This paper briefly describes an action research project with the transnational Alevi community and evaluates its impact on the sociology of religion and our teaching of it. The Alevis are an ethno-faith community which has migrated to the UK since the 1980s, following a long history of religious persecution in Turkey. Cetin (2014) researched the high rates of suicide amongst second generation Alevi young men within the community, identifying a sense of anomie, which tallied with the community’s concern over the perceived negative identity of the second generation, for which they sought our help. Through discussion with the youth membership, they reported feeling isolated at school because no one knew about their religion and asked if it could be taught in RE. Through collaboration between the Alevi community, University and two local schools, lessons were designed and trialled in the schools, proving successful beyond our expectations.

This project raises wider concerns about religious identity and the interface of religion and sociology at a multi-ethnic university, where the majority of our students are Muslims of South Asian heritage. As a result of this project, a sociology of religion module was introduced, using a case study as the main assessment, enabling students to contextualise their religious identities with the wider social milieu. In this respect, the paper reflects upon the interface of transnational migration and religious identity and research and pedagogy in the sociology of religion and its implications for its place in sociology more generally.

**Biographical Note:**

Drs Umit Cetin and Celia Jenkins lecture in Sociology at the University of Westminster and have been doing research with and for the transnational Alevi community in London and Turkey around issues of suicide, gangs, identity, education and community settlement. This case study won the British Educational Research Association prize for collaboration between universities and schools in 2014.

**The 'Joyful Challenge' of Minority Congregations' Use of Anglican Church Spaces in a Diverse Urban Diocese**

*Demelza Jones and Andrew Smith*

Drawing on ongoing collaborative research between Aston University and the Anglican Diocese of Birmingham, the proposed paper explores relationships between the 'mainstream' Anglican Church and migrant or minority ethnic congregations who use Anglican church spaces in the diverse urban diocese of Birmingham. Through a survey of clergy, the project mapped forty 'minority congregations' meeting in Anglican church spaces across the city; revealing among these congregations a large diversity of languages, ethnicities and nationalities, as well as relationships (often transnational and globalised) to other church institutions within and beyond Anglicanism. A second, qualitative stage of the project has involved in-depth interviews with Anglican clergy whose church spaces are used by these congregations. The paper will explore these clergy's perceptions of the nature of the relationship between their 'mainstream' church and minority congregations (which ranged from landlord/tenant to sharing communion), and the opportunities and challenges these relationships pose, which will be framed as a process of dynamic interaction between the 'centre' and the 'margins'. Paying particular attention to an illustrative case study of an Eritrean Orthodox congregation's use of an Anglican church, the paper will explore the (joyful) challenges which emerge in interactions between a liberal, self-consciously inclusive Anglican clergy and congregation - in the local context, the 'centre' - and an Orthodox, mono-cultural and encapsulated Eritrean congregation - in the local context, the 'margin', but conversely, the 'centre' within an Eritrean worldview based as much on transnational and globalised relationships as networks of local propinquity.

**Biographical Note:**

Dr Demelza Jones is Lecturer in Sociology at Aston University, Birmingham

Canon Dr Andrew Smith is Director of Interfaith Relations for the Bishop of Birmingham and an Honorary Fellow in the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Birmingham

## **‘I Developed a Model that Feels Comfortable for Me’: The Role of Individualization and Vicarious Belief in Perceptions of Science and Religion**

*Stephen H. Jones, Rebecca Catto, Tom Kaden and Fern Elsdon-Baker*

Social scientific research into perceptions of science and religion has grown in the last ten years, but it remains predominantly focused on the USA (especially American creationism) and based on quantitative methods. Theories popularized predominantly in Europe and/or grounded in qualitative approaches have thus had relatively little influence on the field. Based on 120 interviews and 16 focus groups conducted with mixed religious and non-religious publics and scientists in the UK and Canada, this paper seeks to show how sociological theories concerned with individualization, lived religion, belief and belonging and ‘vicarious’ belief can shed light on the ways in which people understand the relationship between science and religion. First, the paper argues that the influence of theories of secularization and of the religious economy – both of which typically define religion substantively in terms of the ‘supernatural’ – have acted as a barrier to the sociological analysis of science and religion, while more recent theories, and the growth in non-religion studies, have opened up a space of possibility for this area of study. It then goes on to illustrate: 1) the functions of ‘science’ in negotiating religious individualization; 2) cases of the personalized integration of religious and scientific claims; and 3) how the theme of ‘vicarious’ belief can be applied to people’s orientations toward scientific *and* religious authority.

### **Biographical Note:**

Rebecca Catto is an Assistant Professor in the Sociology Department at Kent State University in Ohio, USA. Stephen Jones is a Research Fellow at Newman University, UK, Tom Kaden is a Research Associate at York University, Toronto and Fern Elsdon-Baker is Director of the Centre for Science, Knowledge and Belief in Society, Newman University, and Primary Investigator on the project Science and Religion: Exploring the Spectrum.

## **Mapping or Re-adjusting the Boundaries of Social Sciences: Locating Sociology of Religion**

*Ojo Joseph Rapheal*

This study seeks to investigate what can be considered as the scope and boundaries of disciplines that constitute social sciences and how their connectivity or inter-relatedness can be established for the benefit and development of the society. However, Sociology of Religion as another major sub-discipline or an emerging discipline in social sciences with its main focus in not only studying religion in the human society but also projecting the place of religion in promoting meaningful development and human dignity has either been deliberately or ignorantly mapped out by some scholars in

the social sciences. By engaging in some forms of boundary re-adjustment or mapping in the social sciences through sociological, analytical and historical methodologies, it is quite obvious that sociology of religion has suffered some setback either through marginalization or exclusion, thus preferring other sociological sub-disciplines like geography, politics, anthropology, history, e.t.c. above religion in the contemporary discourse on societal development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Without any doubt, through a critical analysis, this study has argued that Sociology of Religion is not only a discipline in the social sciences on the basis of classification or mapping, but also more in their global-context level and relevance. It is a discipline that affects everyday life and engages in the meaning and implication of religion in the human society for a meaningful and sustainable development even as religion is taking the centre stage in the global discourse.

### **Biographical Note:**

Mr. O.J. Rapheal hails from Nigeria. He has B.A. degree in Christian Religious Studies (First Class Hons.), M.A. degree in Comparative Religious Studies and he is currently on his PhD programme (in Comparative Religious Studies). He is a Lecturer with the Department of Religion and African Culture, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Nigeria. He has to his credit some publications at reputable outlets both locally and internationally.

### **The Economic Inactivity of Muslim Women in Britain: Patterns across Generations**

*Asma Khan*

This paper presents the empirical findings of a mixed methods study that aims to understand and explain the economic inactivity of Muslim women in Britain. Muslim women are more than twice as likely as women from other religious groups in Britain to be economically inactive and the existing literature suggests that this is the result of a religious penalty. The paper offers a unique insight into the socio-economic experiences of Muslim women in Britain.

The EMBES is an authoritative dataset which contains a nationally representative, clustered, stratified random sample of the largest ethno-religious groups in Britain. Significant statistical findings from multivariate analysis of this dataset were used to inform the qualitative phase which included interviews with first generation and second generation Muslim women.

We find that being of migrant generation has a significant impact on the educational and labour market experiences of Muslim women. Qualitative research sheds light on how this negative impact is experienced differently for those of the second and subsequent generations.

The qualitative data suggests that migrant and British-born Muslim women have significantly different socio-economic experiences, not only because of differences in fluency in English and possession of foreign qualifications but also due to experiences of transnational marriage, access to education and social networks. The paper will discuss how religiosity, gender, social class and migrant status intersect in different ways for migrant and British-born Muslim women but result in the same outcome of exclusion from the mainstream labour market.



**Biographical Note:**

Asma Khan is a PhD student, based at the Centre for the Study of Islam at Cardiff University. Supervised by Professor Sophie Gilliat-Ray and Professor Ralph Fevre, her project is a mixed method study entitled 'Beliefs, Choices and Constraints: Understanding and Explaining the Economic Inactivity of British Muslim women.

**Beyond the Margins: The Religious Normation of the Nonreligious as a Blind Spot in the Study of Religion*****Petra Klug***

Religion creates power relations, especially when it is implemented in political processes or when majorities stand against minorities, be they religious or nonreligious. Even in modern secular societies religion has an impact on society as a whole and therefore for nonconformists and nonbelievers, too. I want to call that *religious normation* in the sense that religion norms society and individuals. But definitions of religion – no matter if functional, substantive, or working with dimensions – define religion exclusively or primarily through its meaning for believers, practitioners or adherents of religions. What religion might mean for the nonreligious – or for those *beyond the margins* of the religious field – was not included, and remains a blind spot in the understanding of religion. Even scholars who worked with etic definitions (as opposed to the emic definitions that the believers themselves have about their religions) still define religion through the lens of the believer. I'll refer to this as an implicit emic perspective—which means that it is an etic attempt to define what religion is on the emic level of its followers, instead of defining it in terms of its role in society and culture. As this creates a lack of clarity about what counts as religion (especially when it comes to conflicts) and arguably a bias in the sociology of religion, I will call for a critical reflection on this perspective and propose a new definition which is able to encompass religion's role in society in a more comprehensive way.

**Biographical Note:**

Petra Klug obtained a MA in Sociology and Cultural Studies, as well as a MA in Religious Studies. A recipient of the dissertation scholarship of the German Research Foundation and current Research Associate at Bremen University, she is completing her dissertation on the religious normation of atheists in the US.

## **From Nonreligion to no Religion: Exploring the Existential as a New Centre for the ‘Sociology of Religion’**

*Lois Lee*

The sociology of nonreligion is, by its nature, peripheral to the sociology of religion: it concerns phenomena understood in relationships of otherness to religion (Lee 2012; 2015; Quack 2014), external to religion but not entirely removed from it. In exploring these peripheries, however, the decade-old sociology of nonreligion has contributed to new work exploring ways of recentring the sociology of religion so that, amongst other things, coverage of the nonreligious find a place at its heart. Drawing on new conceptual work as well as the activities of the Understanding Unbelief research programme, the paper explores different ways of reconceiving of the sociology of religion around concepts such as ‘worldview’, ‘anthropologies’ and, in particular, ‘the existential’. The paper also considers how recentring the sociology of religion around the existential may help draw the subfield closer to the sociological mainstream.

### **Biographical Note:**

Lois Lee is Research Fellow in Religious Studies at the University of Kent and Principle Investigator on the £2.3m [Understanding Unbelief](#) programme. Her books include [Recognizing the Non-religious: Reimagining the Secular](#) (OUP, 2015), [The Oxford Dictionary of Atheism](#) (with Stephen Bullivant; OUP, 2016), and the co-edited volumes *Secularity and Non-religion* (Routledge, 2013) and *Negotiating Religion: Cross-disciplinary Perspectives* (Routledge, 2017). [@loielee](#)

## **Doing Religion on Campus: Minority Faith Experiences in Higher Education**

*Sandra Maurer*

Recent news stories on Islamic societies and particularly David Cameron’s Extremism Taskforce to ‘stop extremists radicalising students on campuses’ reveal public concern with the position and responsibilities of universities in Britain as to how they should engage with their religious students. Despite the atmosphere of safety concerns, minority faith students are also increasingly seen as a fast-growing lucrative recruiting market in the name of diversity and equality. A key objective of many neoliberal higher education institutions is therefore to diversify student populations and become more attractive to different faiths. Existing literature on campus experiences of religious students shows that they often feel invisible at best, and receive hostile treatment at worst. In my paper, I consider relevant research that shapes our knowledge of policy needs, chaplaincy and worship facility provision. I then contextualise the ambivalent status of minority faith religious student identities on campus by discussing the social significance of sacred texts in student activism. I will draw on key findings from my doctoral research, a multi-sited ethnography with Hindu, Muslim and Sikh student societies on campuses across the South East of England. Much of the literature shows that universities rarely engage with minority faith students directly and key third sector involvement by umbrella faith organisations that invest in religious societies is almost entirely absent from the discussion. I emphasise why we need to pay attention to resulting political activism among religious societies as influences of umbrella associations such as *Federation of Student Islamic Societies* and *National Hindu Student Forum* grow across the HE sector.

## Biographical Note:

### **Political Irrationality and Perspectives from ‘Methodological Religion’: the Case of the British Labour Party post-2015** *Siobhan McAndrew*

We are living during turbulent political times, and apparently irrational political attitudes and behaviours have been likened on numerous occasions to being quasi-religious. There has been an apparent surge in conspiracy thinking, polarised thinking, and incivility at political rallies and online. The term ‘cult’ has been used with particular reference to supporters of Donald Trump and Jeremy Corbyn. The memoirist J.D. Vance noted of his rustbelt town during and after the Great Recession that ‘there was almost something spiritual about the cynicism of the community at large, something that went much deeper than a short-term recession’ (Vance 2016: 188). From a very different starting point, sociologists Charlotte Ward and David Voas wrote in 2011 on the rise of ‘conspirituality’: a synthesis of a New Age focus on the self with conspiracy theory and negative focus on global politics. Essayist Jeff Sharlet noted of a Trump rally that ‘Politicians have long borrowed from religion the passion and the righteousness, but no other major modern figure has channeled the tension that makes Scripture endure, the desire, the wanting that gives rise to the closest analogue to Trumpism: the prosperity Gospel, the American religion of winning’ (Sharlet 2016: online). In the summer of 2016, sociologist of religion Gordon Lynch wrote of a local Labour Party meeting that support for Jeremy Corbyn was ‘impervious to any critical reflection... I have never experienced an atmosphere like that Party meeting anywhere before outside of conservative religious groups who are deeply convinced of the truth of their way of seeing the world’ (Lynch 2016: online). The extent of turbulence currently being experienced was arguably unforeseen by political scientists, some of whom have engaged in disciplinary soul-searching recently (see, for example, Jennings and Lodge 2016: online). I suggest that political irrationality can partly be understood in terms of ‘methodological religion’, and contributed an account based in the ‘club good’ theory of religion. Drawing on the influential work of economist of religion Laurence Iannaccone (1992), religion is understood as a club good that displays positive returns to ‘participatory crowding’. Strict behavioural standards, dramatic conversions, and lower-status or minority appeal all emerge as formal consequences of a high-cost/high-commitment strategy. His point that these mechanisms also apply to secular clubs has been less influential: I take up this point to explain current political irrationality. I suggest that support for irrational positions can be understood in terms of signalling, and belief as arising from commitment to a community rather irrational belief itself driving such commitment. I argue that this perspective provides an important complement to existing accounts of economic anxiety and value divergence. Following Lynch, I use the changing character of the British Labour Party as a case study, examining the differences in attitudes, values and beliefs between old members, new members and former members, and assess the extent to which an interpretation grounded in methodological religion explains these differences.

## **Pathways and Power: Applying Bourdieu in the Study of Class and Religion**

*Joanne McKenzie*

As the work of Karl Marx and Max Weber demonstrates, sociological reflection upon the nature of the dynamic at work between religion and social class is as old as the discipline of sociology itself and a path 'well-trodden' in the sociology of religion (Nelson 2009: 45). Despite this, class has arguably been neglected in recent sociology of religion (Sean McCloud 2007). Taking the sociology of evangelicalism as a case study, I outline how concerns for engagement with theories of secularization have dominated the research agenda, leading to the overlooking of other important ways that class and religion interrelate. Drawing on the work of Sean McCloud and Timothy Nelson, I propose that the conceptual framework of Pierre Bourdieu opens up fresh possibilities for the study of class in the sociology of religion. I conclude by suggesting particular ways that Bourdieu's 'thinking tools' have the potential to both enrich understanding of how class shapes everyday lived religion and also contribute to recent work on classed subjectivities within the wider discipline of sociology.

### **Biographical Note:**

Joanne McKenzie is undertaking doctoral study in the Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University. Her research explores how class shapes contemporary English evangelicalism. She is the co-editor, with Tim Hutchings, of the volume *Materiality and the Study of Religion: The Stuff of the Sacred*, forthcoming from Routledge 2016.

## **Double Articulation: Why we Need Sociologies of Religion and the Media to Understand the Post-secular World**

*Michael B. Munnik*

In this paper I argue that sociology of the media plays a vital and complementary role in explaining phenomena to which sociology of religion is applied. Journalism in the late twentieth century has proved inadequate to fathom and report the public significance of religion. Trends which alerted Casanova (1994) to the 'deprivatisation of modern religion' surfaced in the news, yet news workers have been exposed for their inability to recognise and explain these events and transformations in religious terms. Media narratives are essentialist or, conversely, gloss over the salience of religion, substituting

political or ethnic factors. The sociology of religion has proved adept at interrogating theories of secularisation and the construction of the post-secular in contemporary society. The media are significant as a vessel for transmitting and in some cases shaping stories about society, and these stories emerge through a distinct set of practices. We need a sociology of the media to enrich our understanding of the society in which we have witnessed this ‘so-called “resurgence of religion”’. I look at three events as nodes in the trajectory of the post-secular, carried and shaped by the media: the Islamic revolution in Iran; the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington, DC; and Donald Trump’s campaign promise to ban Muslims from entering the United States. From these, I will illustrate the necessity of making sociologies of religion and media speak with each other – that neither sub-discipline is marginal in explaining contemporary society.

### **Biographical Note:**

Dr Michael Munnik is Lecturer in Social Science Theories and Methods at Cardiff University, with the Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK. He researches journalism practice, relations between journalists and Muslim sources, and journalists of faith. Prior to postgraduate study, he worked as a broadcast journalist in Canada.

### **A Secular Body Politics: Spaces of Opposition between Religion and Medicine**

*Zack Munro*

Research into substantial secularity has emerged in recent years to address conceptual reinventions within the fields of sociology of religion and religious studies. The theoretical transition to a substantial secular, as an object of analysis that can be disaggregated and deconstructed into its component parts, has been accompanied by a variety of scholars stressing its approach being best accomplished indirectly. In doing so, the secular emerges in spaces of encounter with religion, which are often characterized by oppositions, tensions, and negotiations. This paper argues for the development of a secular body politics through the tensions revealed in encounters between religion and medicine, or more specifically between discourses over medicalized bodies and religious bodies. This space of encounter has often been characterized by ethically charged debates regarding end-of-life decisions, abortion, circumcision rights, and other medical acts and (non)interventions on the body. These tensions work to reveal particular attitudes, values, and perceptual sensibilities that reveal not only a secular body politics but opens up spaces for secular action. While scholars of lived secularity, commonly approached through the empirical lens of non-religion, work to identify spaces of investigation, these spaces of encounter not only work to theorize an understanding of the secular body, but open new spaces in which lived secularity plays out in substantial and meaningful ways.

### **Biographical Note:**

Zach Munro is currently a PhD student in the department of Sociology & Legal Studies at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada. His doctoral research is focused on non-religion and substantial secularity in twelve-step addiction recovery support groups.

### **Men of Faith: Intersections between Religion, Masculinities and Citizenship**

#### ***Line Nyhagen***

Academics as well as politicians and other public figures are increasingly calling for men to engage in politics and everyday practices that promote gender equality. Moreover, the relationship between religion and gender is under increasing scrutiny. Yet, religion is often more associated with women, femininity and the private sphere than with men, masculinity and the public sphere. At the same time, religious authorities and institutions are often characterized by unequal gender relations and patriarchal forms of masculinity. ‘Ordinary’ religious men are thus situated within a complex and often contradictory framing of religion as both feminine and ‘soft’, and masculine and ‘hard’.

This paper addresses this conundrum by examining how heterosexual Christian men talk about and understand their own faith, masculinities and citizenship practice. The paper discusses how ‘ordinary’ middle-class Anglican men live and negotiate their own religious and masculine identities, their thoughts on and experiences of citizenship, how they view the relationship between their own religion and calls for gender equality, and how they negotiate their own role within the nexus of religion, gender and citizenship. The paper thus addresses the current research gap on men, masculinities, citizenship and religion and pushes forward theoretical and empirical knowledge.

#### **Biographical Note:**

Dr Line Nyhagen is Reader in Sociology at Loughborough University, UK. Her research focuses on gender, religion, citizenship, feminism and women’s movements. Her most recent book, *Religion, Gender and Citizenship: Women of Faith, Gender Equality and Feminism* (with Beatrice Halsaa), was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2016.

### **Mormonism in Ireland: Faith on the Margins**

#### ***Hazel O’ Brien***

This paper explores Irish Mormons’ experiences of their religious identity as a dialectical negotiation between the majority society and their minority religious community. This paper is based on the first in-depth study of Mormonism in Ireland, and is informed by work which examines the intersections of ethnic, religious, and national identities (Eade 1997; Brubaker 2009; Tyler 2012; Garner 2012). Building on this previous research with religious and

ethnic minorities in the UK, this paper will argue that as the majority of Mormons in Ireland are White Irish, they view themselves and are viewed by others, as both insiders and outsiders within their own country.

Research which examines the position of minority religions in Ireland reveals that stigma, stereotyping, and discrimination towards religious minorities is commonplace (Cosgrove 2013), often interacting with concepts of ethnic and national identity (Ugba 2006; Carr 2011; Maguire & Murphy 2012). As most Mormons in Ireland are White Irish, their differences from the majority are not readily apparent. This is in contrast to 'migrant' religions whose racialized religious identities are marked as Other (Ugba 2009; Scharbrodt 2011).

Within this social milieu, Mormons in Ireland consciously 'conceal' or 'reveal' (Cosgrove 2013, p.243; 275) their religious identity depending on the context. They are acutely aware of the ways in which their religious experiences remain on the periphery of a society in which Irishness and Catholicism are intertwined (Lentin 2000; Garner 2005; Inglis 2007). These experiences reveal that any sociological study of religion in Ireland must intersect with sociologies of ethnicity and nationality in order to meaningfully add to the scholarly literature on the sociology of religion.

### **Biographical Note:**

Hazel O' Brien is a final year PhD candidate with the University of Exeter. Her research incorporates an ethnography of two Mormon congregations in Ireland. Hazel is a lecturer in Waterford Institute of Technology, where she lectures in Sociology and Social Policy across several programmes in the School of Humanities.

### **Social Context and Religious Attitudes among the Turkish-background Population in Denmark**

#### ***Ahmet Onay***

In this conference, I am hoping to present results of field-work related to social context and religiosity among the Turkish-background population in Denmark. This study take into account social factors (independent variables) in the Danish context such as the church and the mosque organisations, the means of formal and informal religious education, other relevant social factors. religiosity is investigated in three dimensions in terms of cognitive, behavioural and affective. Some individual factors such as age, gender etc. are also considered.

Religiosity is explored both using a questionnaire (Religious Attitude Scale, RAS-2012) and semi-structured in-depth interview. Initial findings are assessed and discussed by inclusion of the relevant hosting academics in Denmark. Accordingly, further statistical tests are applied via SPSS, and findings are concluded.

### **Biographical Note:**

**Ahmet Onay** is a Professor in the Sociology of Religion and Head of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Burdur, Turkey. His research has focused on religiosity, mosques and religious groups in Turkey.

### **Lighting Up the Margins**

*Peter Phillips*

This paper explores the shifting and overlapping margins between sacred and sacril. It is a micro study of the practice of candle lighting in extreme locations. It explores the ambivalent agency of prison chaplains as mediators between the overtly "religious" and the broader spectrum of faith and no-faith in responding to loss and other significant life events. The paper argues that in extreme situations on the margins of quotidian society religious symbols are consciously both de-invested and reinvested. The comparator in less extreme situations is the memorialising of loss in impromptu roadside shrines.

The data are derived from my ethnographic study of the rôles and identities of Anglican prison chaplains, drawing largely on semi-structured interviews contextualised by email extension and observation (occasionally as unintended participant!) The paper is informed by classic studies, including Bell (1997) and Turner (2009). It attempts to synthesise these with findings from studies in prisons and other extreme locations, including Norwood (2006), Swift (2009), Becci (2012), Todd (2013) and Thériault (2014).

The paper should contribute to an epistemology of religious and quasi religious practice in constrained and marginal locations.

### **Biographical Note:**

The Revd Dr Peter Phillips is an honorary research associate at the Cardiff Centre for Chaplaincy Studies and in the School of History, Archaeology and Religious Studies at Cardiff University. He was a full time chaplain in HM Prison Service and is now a part time chaplain in his local prison.

**Dear Mr Muslim, Dear Mr Atheist: Evangelical Christian Positioning of the Other in Social Media Discourse**

*Stephen Pihlaja*



The internet and social media sites in particular offer access to diverse audiences, but for religious users, conflict can occur when attempting to make videos which are viewed by communities of believers who share the same faith, at the same time as users who are openly hostile to their beliefs. This presentation focuses on a discourse analysis of interaction among Christians, atheists, and Muslims on YouTube. I present a case study of responses to one particular Evangelical Christian Facebook preacher, Joshua Feuerstein, by a Muslim YouTuber and an atheist YouTuber, using a corpus of 67 video pages (including 6 hours and 47 minutes of talk and 60,888 comments). My analysis shows how user interaction, particularly hostile interaction around issues faith and belief, is affected in online contexts. I focus on three main findings. First, given the open nature of public social media interaction, users are compelled to respond to a broader social contexts and this engagement requires some adaptation at least in the presentation of belief. Second, the content and themes of the arguments are not especially unique and are the result of ongoing interaction among people of different faiths. Third, talk about religious issues which is driven by and oriented towards popular personalities did not seem to support the growth of tangible affiliation among users or communities.

### **Biographical Note:**

Stephen Pihlaja is Senior Lecturer in Stylistics at Newman University (Birmingham). Stephen is interested in the use of language in religious interaction, in both online and offline contexts, particularly descriptions of and arguments about religious experience and expression among Evangelical Christians, Muslims, and atheists.

### **Living in the Double Margins: Construction of a Diasporic Religious Community among the Leicester Jains**

#### ***Anja Pogacnik***

Leicester, a diverse town in the East Midlands of England, is the site of the first Jain temple in the ‘Western’ world and home to approximately 1,500 Jains. Being a diasporic religious community of Indian origin, the Leicester Jains find themselves on the edges of two communities – the global Jain community, which finds its centre of activity in India, and the British society, which centres around historic ideas of equating Britishness with Whiteness and Christianity. The diasporic Jain community is therefore on the margins of their global religious community as well as their British surroundings, two spheres where they are seen as not part of the hegemonic centre.

In this paper I will explore how the Leicester Jain community draws on the two ‘centres’ to create a distinctly English Jain community – what elements from the two ‘centres’ are accepted, which adapted, and which rejected? I will present examples of how the Leicester Jain community is rejecting the sectarianism prevalent in India and emphasizing a pan-Jain identity, yet continues to prioritise a particular style of image-centred practice. On the other hand, the community draws from its surrounding British society by emphasizing doctrine and intellectual understanding of practice, and paralleling religious celebrations to Christian patters of worship. By combining elements from the two ‘centres’, the Leicester Jains are creating a distinctly English practice of Jainism and a distinctly Jain way of being British.

**Biographical note:**

Anja Pogacnik is a PhD student at the University of Edinburgh examining how the practice and interpretation of religion change through the process of migration and life in diaspora. She is broadly interested in topics of religion and migration, religious change, South Asian diaspora, and Jainism.

**Mol on the Margins: Locating Enigmas in the History of International Sociology**

*Adam Powell*

With the sociology of religion as a distinct academic sphere, there has been a tendency to create and to sustain internal classificatory schemes and theoretical debates. Historically, then, theoreticians who borrowed heavily from other disciplines or who had more in common with sociologists outside of the sociology of religion caused some degree of confusion as their colleagues attempted to 'locate' the theoretical ideas on offer. This paper contends that the identity theory offered by sociologist of religion Hans Mol in the 1970s is one such example. Not only does the theory defy the easy categorization of 'functionalism' originally attributed to it by those who found its interdisciplinary approach confounding, but it is perhaps better situated alongside the ideas of sociologists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who were operating outside of the sociology of religion. Paying particular attention to the overlapping notions of the individual 'self' explicated by the theories of Erving Goffman, Jacques Ellul, and Alberto Melucci, it is argued that Hans Mol was and is on the margins of the sociology of religion because his ideas elude simple classification and have more in common with other enigmatic figures from the international sociological scene.

**Biographical Notes:**

Adam Powell is Junior Research Fellow in Durham University's Department of Theology and Religion. His research involves sociological theories of identity, particularly the work of Hans Mol, and the application of such theories to Mormonism. He is the author of *Hans Mol and the Sociology of Religion* (Routledge, 2017).

**Definitional Boundaries of Spirituality in Palliative Care**

*Keelin Pringnitz*

Recent research in the field of palliative care (PC) has emphasized the importance of spirituality in models for end-of-life care. ‘Spirituality’ in these models is often poorly defined and is frequently an amalgam of traditional religious and new age beliefs and practices. Conceptual difficulties challenge those developing spiritual care models to include individuals with non-religious identities. This paper employs a discourse analysis on PC research, with a focus on these identities (atheists, agnostics, religious nones), and outlines how PC research operates with an assumptive normative idea of ‘spiritual needs’. This assumption undergirds part of a larger ‘will to religion,’ whereby having a religious or spiritual identity is set as the norm institutionally, and those who do not fit in within this category are seen as lacking a presumed essential component of identity. What becomes evident in my analysis is that the field of PC is levying spiritual needs as the norm, and in doing so relegates religious nones, and atheists onto the periphery, while also functioning as part of a larger institutional bias. The concerns outlined by Lori Beaman in her work: “The Will to Religion: Obligatory Religious Citizenship” hold salience when exploring developments in the PC field, and this paper will build off Beaman’s commentary.

### **Biographical Note:**

Keelin Pringnitz is a second year PhD student in Religious Studies working under Lori Beaman at the University of Ottawa. She is a student team member on the Religion and Diversity Project, as well as a research assistant. Her primary interests include sociology of religion, religion and sport, and non-religion.

### **Hyper-Real Religion and the Pygmalion Effect; The Participatory Culture on the Internet**

#### ***Adam Possamai***

Hyper-real Religions (e.g. Jediism and Matrixism) are inspired from popular culture and have developed since the advent of Web 2.0. Although they have existed for some time, the new forms of communication that the Web has allowed to develop have made this religious phenomenon become more mainstream. This is part of the participatory culture, or the Internet meme phenomenon, that is currently spreading through new social media. Adapting the theories of Jameson on the cultural logic of late capitalism, I will propose the new theory of the cultural logic of digital capitalism and discuss not the only the effacement between art and popular culture, but between real life and popular culture: what I call the Pygmalion effect.

### **Biographical Note:**

Adam Possamai is Professor of Sociology and Director of Research at the School of Social Sciences and Psychology at Western Sydney University. He is the former President of ISA’s Research Committee 22 on the sociology of religion. His forthcoming book, ‘The I-zation of Society, Religion, and Neoliberal Post-Secularism’ will be published by Palgrave MacMillan.

## **Everyday Means to Utopian Ends: How Quakers Negotiate their Religious Claims Within the Contemporary Work Organisation**

***Mark Read***

Based on qualitative PhD research, this paper examines how affiliates of the Religious Society of Friends regard their participation in the contemporary workplace. Quakers frame their engagement primarily in individualised terms and what counts as Quaker is seen as subsidiary to their overall religious enterprise.

Quakers convert to the church during adulthood, in Snow and Machelek's (1984) terms, as 'alternators', a process which leads them simply to 'have religion' (Carrothers, 2007). Quakers also seek to make better the world from within the contemporary work setting. Affiliates imagine that their utopian horizons are harmonious with those espoused by the work organisations. However, work in everyday terms is also framed by affiliates in discordant terms.

Quakers, then, negotiate a careful workaday path between both their organisationally ascribed job roles and their Quaker self-concept. But, when organisational and religious aspirations are conflicted, how do Quakers manage these two competing conceptualisations of the work setting?

By drawing upon the work of Martin Parker and other Critical Management theorists, I frame Quakers in the workaday in euphonious terms, as avoiders of organisational transgression in preference to moving the everyday peaceably towards a harmonious horizon. Moreover, Quakers work in contexts which tend to support their utopian means and ends: so workaday boundaries which entail transgression for Quakers are exceptional. However, it is these exceptional contexts which reveal the incongruity as well as the coherence of Quakers' engagement with contemporary work.

### **Biographical Note:**

I am current part-time doctoral candidate at the University of Birmingham with an interest in how the work setting highlights the boundaries of what counts as religious. A 50 year old secondary school teacher with HE pretensions, I enjoy writing and speaking to all manner of captive audiences.

### **Legitimizing Grace: Sources of Authority in Contemporary Mission Work**

***Katherine Robinson and Monika Krause***

Scholars discussing international NGOs tend to focus on organizations - secular or religious - that pursue secular aims. But missionary agencies continue to play a significant role in facilitating transnational exchanges. Drawing on 40 in-depth interviews with regional managers in evangelical mission agencies in the US and the UK, and the analysis of documents and agency reports, this paper investigates how mission agencies legitimize intervention in different geographical regions and thematic areas. We examine the role of scripture, individual and collective prayer, management procedures and maps.

International mission agencies focus their resources on delivering spiritual message and material aid to regions of the world which are considered to be home to ‘the least reached and the most in need.’ We argue that maps and processes of mapping are key to defining where these people are, and present material and spiritual need in an authoritative form. For mission agencies, maps serve as differentiating tools which order and re-order the world according to different logics, help them to prioritise need and distribute resources, as well as to describe their work in a concrete form.

### **Biographical Note:**

Monika Krause teaches at the London School of Economics and is a Core Fellow at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies. Her research addresses comparative questions about specialised practices as well as issues in sociological theory. She is the author of “The Good Project. Humanitarian Relief NGOs and the Fragmentation of Reason” (Chicago University Press 2015).

Katherine Robinson teaches Sociology at Goldsmiths College. Her research is concerned with questions of urban and public space, and organisational life. She has worked on an ethnography of urban public libraries in London and Berlin, and is researching prioritisation practices of international NGOs on the ‘Triaging Values’ project with Monika Krause

### **“The Mystery of the Sultan”: Arts, Religion and Politics in Contemporary Turkey**

#### ***Nevin Şahin***

Looking into the history of Mevlevi Sufism in Anatolia provides a better understanding of different interpretations on secularism in the Republic of Turkey. The close connections between Mevlevi Sufism and the state during both the Sultanate of Rum and the Ottoman Empire periods had its reflections in the secular state of contemporary Turkey, which put the Mevlevi order in a privileged position despite the ban on religious orders. The ties between religion and politics in the contexts of the past and present were re-interpreted in the 2010 movie titled “Sultanin Sirri (The Mystery of the Sultan)”, which was funded both by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Agency of Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture, and which was released on the day of Wedding Night ceremony attributed to Rumi’s demise, December 17. With all the controversies attached to its production, the movie managed to relate to the power struggles between religious orders and the state in the Turkish context several years after its release, putting arts in an appertaining position in the debates on religion and politics. To understand the significance of sociology of religion in analyzing the dynamics of state and society in contemporary Turkey within the experience of political turmoil, this paper digs into the impressions of this movie by integrating the data collected throughout an ethnographic field research among Sufi circles in Turkey, discourse analysis of the movie, and a focus group with sociologists of religion, members of Sufi circles and cinema majors.

### **Biographical Note:**

Nevin Şahin is a research assistant at the Department of Sociology in Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University, Turkey. She received her PhD degree in 2016 with her dissertation on Mevlevi Sufism in contemporary Turkey. Her fields of interest are sociology of religion, ethnomusicology, migration and transnationality, and qualitative methodology.

### **Constructing Continuity and Change: Religious Identity and British Converts to Islam**

*Thomas Sealy*

This paper draws on analysis of narrative interviews with British converts to Islam. I bring together readings from the sociology of conversion literature with that on multiculturalism. Both of these literatures have conceptual overlap with regard to how these converts and conversions are understood and positioned. Yet both are inadequate in this understanding as they leave them liminal in both identity and place. Often converts are positioned as ‘double strange’ and ‘double marginal’, decentred as no longer of the majority, but also separate from ‘cultural’ minority communities. Islam and Muslim thus retain a conflation between religion, culture and ethnicity that converts do not fit into. Converts thus serve to construct a tension between what, how and who are thought of as being ‘British’ and ‘belonging’.

In this paper I look at how through the analytical lenses of continuity and change converts (re)construct their sense of identity and of place and belonging, and also where these are restricted. Through a reading of Simmel I argue for an ontological position that brings a critical perspective to existing concepts in both literatures. Subsequently, we can both better understand British converts to Islam and unsettle ‘the boundaries which selfhood, citizenship, nationhood, and community are defined’ (Viswanathan, 1998). To do this I trace relations between the personal, including to biography and God, and the social, including local, institutional and wider societal relations. By so doing, a centremargins framework can be challenged.

### **Biographical Note:**

Thomas Sealy is PhD candidate at the University of Bristol in the School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies, and part of the Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship. His research focuses on multiculturalism and British converts to Islam.

### **‘Why are we Talking about Religion?’ Reimagining Non-religion in Collective Worship**

*Rachael Shillitoe*

Collective worship has been a compulsory feature of maintained schools in England and Wales since the 1944 Education Act. This legal requirement has caused decades of confusion and controversy, with many questioning its educational suitability and appropriateness within an increasingly diverse society (Hull, 1975; Cheetham, 2000). With organisations and policymakers calling for collective worship to be abolished, coupled with the wider place of religion in schools coming under increasing media and political scrutiny, attention to this under researched topic is timely. However, relying on political rhetoric and adult-generated conceptualisations of religion, such discussions often fail to address the everyday lived reality of religion in schools and how children encounter and experience practices such as collective worship. Drawing on theoretical approaches from both the sociologies of religion and childhood, this paper will focus on the perspectives of children, whose experiences are often disconnected and marginalised from such discussions.

Using ethnographic research from a range of primary schools (faith and non-faith) which foregrounds the agency of children, this paper will explore the salience of both religion and non-religion in collective worship. In considering children's experiences of collective worship, I explore how existential cultures are expressed through such rituals and how religion and non-religion are reimagined in such contexts. By focusing on the voices of children, which are often marginalised in the study of religion, we can move beyond some of the the adult-centric assumptions which dominate this discourse and avoid reproducing the essentialised ways in which both childhood and religion are understood.

### **Biographical Note:**

Rachael Shillitoe is a PhD student at the University of Worcester, researching collective worship in schools as part of a wider Leverhulme funded project investigating religion and education. Rachael is the final stages of her PhD and is also working as a Research Fellow at York St John University undertaking an evaluation project on Prayer Spaces in Schools.

### **Modelling “Sikh radicalisation” in Britain**

#### **Jasjit Singh (University of Leeds)**

In the lead up to the November 2015 visit of the Indian Prime Minister to the UK, Indian media claimed that the India Prime Minister would be asking for strong action to be taken against British Sikh groups trying to revive the demand for a separate Sikh state, Khalistan (Yadav 2015). These reports claimed that a dossier would be presented naming gurdwaras where Sikh youths were being radicalized and being trained to make explosive

devices. Alongside this, a number of protests have taken place in Britain involving young British Sikhs, indicating for some, rising levels of 'British Sikh radicalisation'. Numerous protests against mixed faith weddings in gurdwaras, and against instances of 'disrespect' to the Guru Granth Sahib (R4G) have taken place in recent years following the violent protests against the *Behzti* (dishonour) play at the Rep Theatre in Birmingham in 2004.

This paper will present a model of Sikh radicalisation in Britain based on ethnographic fieldwork and a literature review to examining the realities and framing of 'Sikh radicalisation' in Britain. What is meant by 'Sikh radicalisation / fundamentalism' in its various forms? Who or what are targets of radical activity? How do those involved in Sikh activism legitimise violence? Are the various different types of Sikh activism all linked?

### **Biographical Note:**

Dr Jasjit Singh is a Research Fellow based at the University of Leeds. His research focuses on processes of religious transmission among British South Asians. He is particularly interested in the intersection between traditional arenas of transmission and newer arenas including camps, University faith societies and the Internet.

### **The Relevance and Recognition of Religion - Contested Definitions in Use**

#### ***Kristin Skarning Eriksson***

In this paper, I will discuss the various understandings of religion and of the role of religion in the public sphere based on an initial analysis of a key Norwegian policy proposal from 2013 and its many responses (consultation statements and media debate). The debate following publication showed an opposition to the proposal's definition and use of the concept of 'religion'. My line of inquiry will include the question of how religion is perceived as a part of identity and culture, and how the concept of social cohesion can be used to understand the role of religion.

As a consequence of the disestablishment of the Church of Norway from 2017, a proposal for a new governmental faith and belief policy was published in 2013. The proposal led to a rich debate in the public domain on the relevance, recognition and boundaries of religion. Norway can be characterized as a modern welfare state with low income inequality, a high level of generalized trust, and with a certain 'belonging but not believing' relation to religion. Questions of identities, Christian heritage and religion as culture is central to public debate. Governmental funding of all worldviews, including non-religious, and the conditions for funding, is increasingly questioned. The policy proposal and its responses constitute a useful case for developing the concept of social cohesion for the analysis of religion, and evaluating its use.

### **Biographical note:**



My name is Kristin Skarning Eriksson and I am based in Oslo, Norway. I am a second-year PhD student in Sociology of Religion/Religious Studies at MF Norwegian School of Theology. I hold a BA in Religion, Culture and Social Science and a MPhil in Religion, Society and Global Issues.

### **Common Devotion and Border Crossing at Shrines Across Indian and Pakistani Punjab**

*Virinder Singh*

A dominant means for understanding shrine rituals and performance practices has been to metonymize the common base of devotion to differentiated cosmologies of understanding which, we argue, produces representations of shrines as a defense of theology in relation to practice (Bigelow 2010). Objects such as the clay oil lamp which are ubiquitous in shrines regardless of religious affiliation are only understood in the discursive practice rather in their lives as object or as part of a ritual practice. This reductive approach avoids the affective nature of ritual performance and implies that theology itself can only be interpreted to produce communal difference (for example, a Hindu/Muslim world view). This article will develop its own alternative perspective that conceptualises borders as not merely geo-political, territorial or spatial but also symbolic in demarcating belonging, establishing separation and difference, representing influence and authority, and also setting up spheres of contestation and challenge. Nationalism, patriarchal gender ideologies, transgressive and disruptive acts to religious order, and 'heretical' interpretations are all dimensions of borders and border crossings which present themselves within our frame of popular religion. Our ontological foundation is that of national border crossing; across India and Pakistan, best represented by our selected sites in the region of Punjab (Bulleh Shah, Kasur Pakistan; Mian Mir, Lahore Pakistan; Naina Devi, Himachal Pradesh India; Bibi Pakdaman, Lahore Pakistan). Punjab is replete with sites and traditions of obeisance to figures who represent radical opposition to 'communalism' (Bulleh Shah, Bikh, Nanak, Kabir) as well as sites which continue to attract worshippers and pilgrims for their 'bending' of gender conventions through lore and demotic devotional practices (Ahmed 2004).

### **Biographical Note:**

### **Where is Religion's Moral Voice? Third-Wave Marketization and the Growth of Neo-Liberal Ideology**

*James V. Spickard*

Religions are more than organizations that affirm transcendent beliefs; they also claim the authority to evaluate the moral status of secular ideologies. This chapter explores the religious responses to the three waves of ideological ‘marketization’ that have shaken the Anglo-American world since the mid-18th century. Each wave increased social inequality. Each destroyed worker’s rights. Each led to one or another form of economic collapse. The first two also raised considerable religious opposition.

Though religious voices were crucial in combating these first two waves, they have been relatively unheard against the third. This article traces this to five current tendencies in religious life: secularization, conservative resurgence, individualization, localization, and the treatment of religious organizations as market entities. Not only do these tendencies diminish religions’ ability to put forth sustained social critique; the sociological narratives that identify these tendencies themselves reduce the cogency of religions’ moral stance.

### **Biographical Note:**

James Spickard is Professor of Sociology & Anthropology at the University of Redlands, where he teaches courses on social theory, research design, and inequality. He has published widely on the sociology of religion, human rights, social research methods, non-Western social theory, and the social foundations of ethics.

### **To Be or Not to Be?: Religious and ‘Non-Religious’ Definitions of Life in the Judiciary**

*Cory Steele*

Physician-assisted dying is a controversial and hotly contested issue in contemporary society. With an increasing number of countries and jurisdictions around the world legalizing the practice, more individuals have been advocating for the ability to take their own lives, with the assistance of a physician, in order to end a state of ‘intolerable suffering’. In 2015, a landmark case, *Carter v. Canada (Attorney General)*, was heard before the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC). The appellants primarily argued that their right to “life, liberty and security” under s.7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Charter) were infringed by the prohibition of physician-assisted dying. The SCC concluded that the prohibitions in place were unconstitutional and violated an individual’s rights under s.7 of the Charter - a decision that is considered controversial by many. While several religious groups objected based on their own concerns regarding religious definitions of “life”, it is the framing of “life” by the SCC and the “secular” in the context of the legal system that is of interest. This paper will utilize Lois Lee’s innovative theory of “non-religion” to illustrate the novel ways in which the concept of life is constructed and enacted by the Canadian state and the “secular” and how this concept of life resembles that used by judiciary systems in North American and Western Europe. This analysis challenges the notion of secularization by highlighting the transformation—not disappearance—of religion in select legal systems around the world.

**Biographical note:**

I am a first-year MA Religious Studies student at the University of Ottawa in Ottawa, Canada. I examine the changing nature of concepts (e.g., life, death) that were once at the core of religious doctrine in the context of the Canadian legal system.

**The Emergence of Ethno-Sexuality and Critical Interventions through the Life Story of a LGBTQI Activist in a West-European Context**

*Nella van den Brandt*

In this paper, I set out to critically explore various intersectional constructions of ethnicity, religion and sexuality. First, I conduct a short exploration of recent public controversies in Flanders (Belgium) about women's and (homo)sexual equality as set against religious authorities and religious-ethnic minorities. This exploration aims to reveal how dominant understandings of ethnicity, sexuality and religion are constructed, reinforced and, if needed, defended. To understand the discursive construction of boundaries between groups based on the *intersections* of ethnicity, religion and sexuality, I bring the work of sociologist Joan Nagel (2000) and feminist historian Joan Scott (2009) into conversation in order to conceptualise and think through, what I call, the discursive construction of *ethno-sexular boundaries*. As a concept, *ethno-sexularity* aims at tracing the intertwinements of ethnicity, secularity and sexuality. In the second part of the paper, I explore a counter-voice critically negotiating ethno-sexular boundary constructions. I foreground the life story of a volunteer of Merhaba, an antiracist LGBTQI organisation located in Brussels. Interventions into *ethno-sexularity* take place, I argue, through the claiming and embrace of ethnic hybridity; the narration of the development of a postsecular perspective; and the building of a queer critique and identification. Not only do these interventions 'talk back' (Bracke 2011) to ethno-sexular assumptions, they also insist on 'making a difference' (Roodsaz & van den Brandt 2017) through unexpected identifications and life-choices.

**Biographical Note:**

Nella van den Brandt started in September 2016 a postdoctoral research at the department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Utrecht University (NL). She completed her PhD thesis at Ghent University (Belgium). She is managing editor of the online journal Religion and Gender (<http://www.religionandgender.org/>).

**At the Edge of Professionalism: Muslim RE Teachers' Negotiation of Personal Faith in RE Classrooms**

*Matthew Vince*

Cadge & Konieczny (2013) highlight the need for sociologists to study religions 'hiding in plain sight' within institutional settings. Gilliat-Ray et. Al. (2013: 23), in their study of Muslim chaplaincy, push this narrative further, stating that Muslim religious professionals represent a 'new category of religious actor' that accommodates Islam within public institutions.

Interestingly such debates have been quasi-present within Religious Education (RE) for some time, around the place of RE teacher's personal faith within the RE classroom (Copley, 2008; Freathy et. Al, 2016; Grimmit, 1981). However, this discourse has tended to be highly theoretical (Bakker & Heimbrock, 2007), student-centred (Fancourt, 2007), and focussed on white Christian teachers. In contrast, Everington's (2013, 2015) recent work has opened up this discourse, highlighting how minority faith teachers' use of 'personal life knowledge' was integral to their classroom pedagogy. Yet such practice represents a grey area in both policy and professional practice (Everington, 2013: 170-171).

In this paper I explore Muslim RE teachers as professional actors who are at the "edge" of professionalism; actors who blur the lines between policy and personal faith. This exploration will focus on three aspects: the idea of a "Muslim RE teacher", being "role models", and maintaining "spiritual integrity" in the classroom. Rather than 'hiding in plain sight', I posit that these teachers have developed extremely sophisticated success strategies for negotiating their faith within the Christeo-secular British educational framework. This paper comes from my PhD research, based on interviews, lesson observations, and shadowing, with around twenty teachers.

### **Biographical Note:**

I am a second year PhD student at the Islam-UK Centre, Cardiff University, funded through the Jameel Scholarship scheme. The thesis has emerged from my own experiences as an RE teacher in Devon.

### **Music Studies and New Religious Movements: A Case Study from Scientology**

*Tom Wagner*

Music plays a prominent role in the transmission and maintenance of most religious traditions the world over. For example, it is used to transmit myth, order ritual, afford transcendent experiences, and as tool of evangelism and conversion. Music is inherently social, and thus the study of music and musical practice yields a wealth of sociological insights into the beliefs, rituals, structures, and societal orientation of a religious group. While a substantial literature exists on the music of established religions, very few serious (ethno)musicological studies have been conducted on New Religious Movements.

This paper discusses some of the promises of, and challenges in, a music-centric study of New Religious Movements through my continuing work with the Church of Scientology's music and musicians in the UK and USA. Through analysis of historical documents and recordings as well as interviews with current and former Scientologists, I suggest new ways to view, among other things, the church's philosophy and public engagement strategy. In doing so hope to show that Music Studies has much to offer the Sociology of Religion.

### **Biographical Note:**

Tom Wagner is an independent researcher living in London. His previous research focused on the ways that music, marketing and transcendent experiences interact in consumer culture. His current research focuses on the use of music in New Religious Movements.

### **Rethinking the Social Study of Spirituality**

#### ***Galen Watts***

The broad aim of this paper is to critically reflect on the normative foundations of the social study of spirituality. Drawing from qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews with Canadian millennials who self-identify as “spiritual but not religious,” I offer a critical review of the dominant approaches adopted in the literature on spirituality as both a religious construct and a cultural phenomenon. Using the question of sustainability and the reality of the ecological crisis as points of departure, I show how the understandings of the self and the natural world within such scholarship are in fact antithetical to spiritual self-conceptions of ecological flourishing. In unpacking the strengths and weaknesses of dominant modernist frameworks in tackling climate change, I seek to go beyond a mere critique and offer a more careful look into why the ecological crisis itself might require us to rethink why and how it is we study spirituality.

### **Biographical Note:**

**Galen Watts** is a PhD Candidate in the Cultural Studies Graduate Program at Queen’s University. He researches the basic values, belief-systems, and practices that inform contemporary spirituality among millennials in Canada in order to discern its ideological nature, as well as its social and political implications, broadly understood.

## **Panel list**

**Re-configuring ‘Ethical Monotheism’: Psychosocial Approaches to Interfaith, Intercultural Encounter and the Ethics of Neighbouring**

***Ruth Sheldon, Lenita Törning and Ben Gidley***

The empirical study of monotheistic communities has long been a central concern of the Sociology of Religion, as a discipline that has shared in – and is even born out of – a powerful narrative of Europe’s ‘monotheistic’ or ‘Abrahamic’ foundations. Within this framing, it can seem self-evident that to study relations between Christians, Jews and Muslims in contemporary Britain is to engage with the shared or opposed beliefs, values and practices of coherent religious communities. However, in this panel, we will draw on three research studies oriented around the theme of ‘Ethical Monotheism’ in order to de-centre and re-configure the study of monotheistic communities in various ways. Locating our projects within the somewhat marginal discipline of psychosocial studies, and so pushing against some mainstream sociological grammars, these papers will explore how seemingly coherent monotheistic identities, communities and traditions are shaped and transformed through encounters with the ‘other’. We will raise questions about how notions of ‘monotheistic religion’ do border-drawing work, and explore how psychosocial and ethnographic methods can be attentive to more complex interplays of identity / difference, the psychic / social, inclusion / exclusion within scholarly and political contexts.

**Ruth Sheldon, ‘The Ethics of Neighbouring: A Marginal Perspective’**

This paper draws on an ethnographic study of cohabiting Liberal, Orthodox and secular Jewish communities in London, in order to ask what it means to approach the ‘monotheistic’ question of neighbourly ethics from a seemingly marginal Jewish perspective. I will explore how relations of Jewish / non-Jewish neighbours are imagined, expressed and contested between communities that are often represented as homogeneous but are actually distinctly situated in relation to the secular-Christian landscape of post-Brexit Britain. I will conclude with some reflections on the role of ‘Jewish ethnography’ in opening up alternative framings of ethics and community within the Sociology of Religion.

**Lenita Törning, 'Interfaith Youth Activism and Identity Formation: A Psychosocial Approach'**

In this paper I will draw on my ongoing doctoral research on young Christians', Muslims' and Jews' interfaith activism in London and pay particular attention to the impact(s) being involved in interfaith projects might have on the formation of young people's religious identities. The paper will also explore interfaith youth projects as spaces of power, shaped by internal and external political and theological forces, and how a psychosocial narrative approach might open up opportunities not only to analyse how young people engage with these spaces but also help advancing the theoretical framings of young people's religious identities within the Sociology of Religion.

**Ben Gidley, ‘Intercultural Encounters in the Secular-Christian City’**

Drawing on research in East London, Ben Gidley will argue that an ethnographic focus on everyday interactions between Jews, Muslims and Christians in urban areas, seen in the context of the city’s normative secular-Christian landscape, brings into focus the shifting nature of borders between faiths

and the volume of mundane traffic across these borders, as well as the proliferation of boundaries within putative ‘faith communities’, thus revealing the inadequacy of the ‘methodological groupism’ which characterises much sociology of religion.

**Participants:**

**Ruth Sheldon**

Ruth Sheldon is a Research Fellow in the Department of Psychosocial Studies at Birkbeck currently researching Jewish ethical relations in Hackney, London. She holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of Kent and is the author of *Tragic Encounters and Ordinary Ethics: Palestine-Israel in British Universities* (2016).

**Lenita Törning**

Lenita Törning is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Psychosocial at Birkbeck. Her doctoral research focuses on interfaith youth activism in London. Prior to this she did an MA in Religion in Peace and Conflict at Uppsala University and a BSc in International Relations at the University of Gothenburg.

**Ben Gidley**

Ben Gidley is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Psychosocial Studies at Birkbeck. Publications include *Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe: A Shared Story?* with James Renton (2016) and *Turbulent Times: The British Jewish Community Today* with Keith Kahn-Harris (2010).

**Socrel Book Panel: Alternative Sociologies of Religion: Through Non-Western Eyes**

***Jim Spickard and Alp Arat***

This session is stimulated by the publication of Professor James Spickard’s *Alternative Sociologies of Religion: Through Non-Western Eyes* (NYU 2017). It will consist of a short presentation of the book’s content, followed by critical commentary from three fellow sociologists of religion: Bryan Turner, Eileen Barker, and Veronique Altglas. The session will then engage in a wider discussion on how best to expand the sociology of religion’s core concepts beyond those that ground the discipline at present.

*Alternative Sociologies of Religion* argues that the sociology of religion has long used Western Christianity as a model for all religious life, thus highlighting certain aspects of religions such as religious beliefs and formal organisations while paying less attention to others. In an effort to go beyond critique and offer more practical solutions for sociological practice, the book presents three non-Western alternative sociologies and applies these to different aspects of Western religious life. Based on such models of religion derived from the works of Confucius, Ibn Khaldun, and the Navajo, Spickard offers novel readings of a number of classical sociological themes including the communal underpinnings of social solidarity, the role of women in congregational life, religious experiences and miracles, as well as the recent growth of ISIS. While outlining the strengths and weaknesses of each of these non-Western approaches, *Alternative Sociologies of Religion* promises to offer substantive avenues beyond the poststructural impasse of much of sociology of religion today.

James Spickard is Professor of Sociology & Anthropology at the University of Redlands and has published widely on the sociology of religion, human rights, social research methods, non-Western social theory, and the social foundations of ethics.

#### **Respondents:**

##### ***Bryan Turner***

Bryan Turner is Presidential Professor in Sociology at City University New York. He has published extensively on social and critical theory and his current research involves the role of religion in contemporary Asia and the changing nature of citizenship in a globalizing world.

##### ***Eileen Barker***

Eileen Barker is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the Department of Sociology at LSE and Founder and current Chair at INFORM (Information Network Focus on Religious Movements). She has published extensively on new religious movements and the sociology of religion.

##### ***Veronique Altglas***



Veronique Altglas is Lecturer in the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work at Queen's University Belfast. Her main research interests lie in the globalisation of religion, new religious movements, religious exoticism, responses to cultural and religious diversity in Britain and France, and anti-Semitism.

### **'Religion and Creativity'**

While there has been much recent attention in religious studies on lived religions, particularly drawing inspiration from studies of religious material cultures, the relationship between religion and creativity is less explored. Studies of religion and creativity tend to focus on art or literature and individual professional artists, rather than the everyday, vernacular creativity of faith communities themselves. This panel explores the relationship between religion and creativity through two different lenses. First, it considers the role and significance of creativity for faith communities in the making of worship spaces and the sacred and in worship practices. Papers include those which explore the creative architectural transformation of buildings into new worship spaces (Caroline Starkey) and those which reflect on the creative work of religious congregations including music and religious textiles (Natalie Hyacinth; Claire Dwyer, Nazneen Ahmed and Katy Beinart). Second, the panel considers the use of creative methods to engage participants in the exploration of religious identity drawing on the work of photography and film in an exploration of food and faith ('Spiritual Flavours' by Laura Cuch)

#### Participants

Caroline Starkey and Emma Tomalin, University of Leeds

Claire Dwyer, Reader in Geography at UCL and PI of the research project [Making Suburban Faith Project](#); Katie Beinart, Artist, Lecturer at the University of Brighton, PhD student at UCL Bartlett <http://www.katybeinart.co.uk/>, Dr Nazneen Ahmed, Research Associate at Department of Geography UCL on the [Making Suburban Faith Project](#)

Laura Cuch, Phd candidate and photographer, Department of Geography, UCL, <http://www.lauracuch.com/>

Natalie Hyacinth, PhD candidate, Department of Geography, Royal Holloway, University of London

**Spiritual Flavours: A film about biographical narratives on food and faith.**

***Laura Cuch***

The film *Spiritual Flavours* is part of the collaborative arts project with the same name, in which members of different faith communities in an area of West London have been invited to contribute recipes that they relate to their spirituality and religious practices. Through interviews and cooking sessions, the project pays attention to affective relationships with food, as a vehicle to explore ideas about inheritance, tradition and belief. Alongside the film, these sessions are the basis of a forthcoming 'multi-faith' cookery photo book. The project *Spiritual Flavours* is part of my practice-led PhD, with the provisional title '*Food, Faith, Home: A visual exploration of religious and domestic material culture*', where I use photography and film to comparatively explore the relationship between home and religion, by paying attention to domestic material culture that is related to food, cooking and eating. As part of [Making Suburban Faith](#), my research is focused on seven different faith communities. These include a Synagogue, a Sri Lankan Hindu Temple, a mosque, a Sikh Gurdwara, an Anglican church, a multicultural Roman Catholic church and an ethnically diverse Pentecostal church. In the film, biographical narratives and spiritual accounts from Betty, Aziz and Ossie (who belong to a Catholic church, a mosque and a liberal synagogue, respectively) are interwoven with the experiences of cooking in their homes. The chosen recipes thread the narratives of past, present and future aspirations, spirituality and the everyday. A five-minute preview of the film is available at [www.spiritualflavours.com](http://www.spiritualflavours.com)

### **'My life is but a weaving': reflections on a textile-based arts project**

**Claire Dwyer (UCL), Nazneen Ahmed (UCL), Katy Beinart (University of Brighton and UCL)**

In this paper we explore the role of religion and creativity through a textile-based arts project undertaken with women from diverse religious backgrounds in West London. The project emerged from our wider research on the role of vernacular religious textiles, and particularly the significance of embroidery in the creation of objects used in both community spaces and domestic religious practice. Inspired by the church kneelers in one West London parish, our arts project brought together women to create a piece of work around the theme of prayer to contribute to a shared arts installation curated by Katy Beinart. This paper reflects on the role of religious creativity for diverse faith communities and the process of using creativity as a research method to explore questions of faith, migration and home.

### ***"The Song is a Form of Worship": Song, Voice and Spirituality in a West London Suburb***

***Natalie Hyacinth***

The sacred songs of faith communities are often central to their religious activity and practice. 'Singing one's faith' is regarded as strengthening an individual's relationship to God and to their community. This paper explores the important role both song and voice play within three faith communities

in the West London suburb of Ealing; St Thomas Anglican Church, Ealing Christian Centre and Shri Kanaga Amman Hindu Temple. In all three faith communities song is central to worship practices and ritual and is often viewed as worship itself. As one devotee stated to me: “the song *is* a form of worship”. Thus through music’s close relation with a sense of the divine, devotees rarely distinguish song from spiritual practice. As further exploration of this, the paper will foreground the findings of an interfaith community choral event I co-organised at St Thomas Anglican Church in May 2016 as part of my ethnographic research into song called “*Come and Sing!*”. Through detailing this event, I will demonstrate how song provides an interesting framework through which music and its important relation to a religious community can be understood. I will explore this framework in two ways; first I will discuss the unique sonic characteristics concerning song and voice each faith community exhibits. Second I will focus on the ways in which the performance and practice of song produces a unique spiritual sociality within a congregation in which a diverse range of voices can be heard.

### **Biographical Note:**

Natalie Hyacinth joined the *Making Suburban Faith* team as a PhD student in January 2015. Natalie’s research focuses upon the relationship between sound and spirituality in three diverse suburban faith communities. Her research employs a variety of ethnographic methods such as observation, interviews and creative participation.

### **A Muslim Atlantic?: Diasporic Consciousness Among American and British Muslims**

#### ***Daniel Nilsson DeHanas***

In this paper I investigate the dynamics of diasporic consciousness among Muslims living in North Atlantic contexts. Paul Gilroy’s book *The Black Atlantic* (1993) set in motion an original understanding of Black ‘diaspora’ as a transnational space of hybridising cultural and political exchange. Gilroy broke from conventional notions of diasporas as being linked through a common ethnogeographic point of origin, arguing instead that the collective memory of the transatlantic slave trade served as the crucible of Black diasporic consciousness. In this paper I consider the extent to which Muslims in the North Atlantic societies of Britain and the United States are participants in an analogous ‘Muslim Atlantic.’ Since the mid 1990s, various American and British Muslims have become engaged in mutual interests and interlocking networks. Their transatlantic sharing of ideas and sentiments heightened in the Bush-Blair years, amidst perceived common challenges from their governments’ foreign policies, curtailments of civil liberties, and the worsening of public opinion on Islam – issues which are likely to heighten in the coming years of Brexit and President Donald Trump. While Bassam Tibi and Tariq Ramadan have propagated particular notions of ‘Euro-Islam,’ these each have significant limitations in being closely associated (rightly or wrongly) with calls for Muslims to theologically reform and integrate. My aim in this paper will be to lay the conceptual groundwork for an alternative geography of collective Muslim experience.

### **Material Religion and the Study of Sacred Times and Places**

### ***Tim Hutchings, Maria Nita and Timothy Carroll***

Material culture has emerged in recent decades as a significant theoretical concern for the study of religion, moving from the margin to the centre of the discipline. This panel brings together three of the contributors to the new volume *Materiality and the Study of Religion* (Routledge 2016, edited by Tim Hutchings and Joanne McKenzie), an edited collection in the SocRel book series which began at the study group's 2013 Annual Conference in Durham.

This panel engages with the materiality of sacred times and spaces, moments set apart from everyday life. All three papers share an interest in travel and movement, and in the vernacular and sometimes unexpected locations of Christian practice outside the confines of church buildings and worship services. These are studies of exceptional religion, analysing moments of heightened emotion and intense experience taking place in locations often overlooked by academic studies of Christian communities.

Our first speaker, Maria Nita, will discuss “New Sacred Spaces and the Green Christian's Year: From the Eco-Retreat to the Greenbelt Festival.” Dr Nita’s paper argues that many of the events in which green Christians take part today do not take place in churches, because these environmentally-conscious religious practitioners are also participating in other communities of choice. Nita will present her new findings from the analysis of data gathered at the Greenbelt festival 2016 and will draw on theoretical models of sacred space as well as insights from communication practices to explore how group relationships are reconstituted or changed in outdoor settings. Festivals are becoming new sacred times and spaces on the modern Christian calendar and landscape, and Dr Nita’s paper will look at the relevance of these changes for individuals, communities and traditions.

Our second speaker, Timothy Carroll, will discuss “Movable Parts: Distributed Persons and Their Pilgrimage Here.” Dr Carroll’s paper looks at the dispersal and circulation of highly mobile objects such as relics, icons, and blessed substances (water, oil, etc.) within Eastern Orthodox Christianity. The paper focuses on the role of relics and other *evlogia* (‘blessings’) in pilgrimage, bringing Turner’s work on centres and peripheries into dialogue with notions of distributed personhood and distributed objects arising from the work of Alfred Gell. Examining the ways such objects relate to each other and are dispersed through the global Orthodox community, the paper revisits the place of the ‘centre’ in religious practice.

Our third speaker, Tim Hutchings, will discuss “Digital Materialities of Memory and Mourning.” Dr Hutchings’ presentation will examine a different kind of ‘pilgrimage’, considering the journeys made by bereaved individuals to memorials and gravesites. Death in contemporary society is mediated and mediatized, remembered through social media, online support groups, online memorials and digitally-augmented gravestones. This paper will draw on David Morgan’s typology of material analysis (introduced in the book *Materiality and the Study of Religion*) to explore the materiality of these mediations, while considering how they can illuminate the boundary between religion and non-religion.

Chair: Joanne McKenzie, Durham University.

### **Participants:**

**Maria Nita**

Maria Nita is a lecturer at the University of South Wales. She is the author of *Praying and Campaigning with Environmental Christians: Green Religion and the Climate Movement* (New York: Palgrave 2016). Maria's current research interests include: Christian festivals and retreats, green spirituality, religious identities and constructions of sacred spaces.

### **Timothy Carroll**

Timothy Carroll (UCL) is a social anthropologist of Orthodox Christianity and is currently designing new research looking at Eastern and Oriental Orthodox mortuary and memorial practices. He is coeditor and contributor to *Material Cultures of Failure* (Bloomsbury 2017) and the *New BioEthics* Special Issue on *Delimiting the Body* (July 2016).

### **Tim Hutchings**

Tim Hutchings is a postdoctoral fellow in Media and Communication at Stockholm University (Sweden). He is a sociologist of religion, media and culture, and his current work focuses on death, grief and digital media. He is the coeditor (with Joanne McKenzie) of *Materiality and the Study of Religion* (Routledge 2016).

## **Panel: Material Religion and the Lived Experience of Age and Class**

### ***Joanne McKenzie, Carl Morris and Janet Eccles***

Consideration of material culture has become increasingly salient to the study of religion in recent years. As scholars have begun to pay greater attention to how religion is lived and embodied in the everyday, examination of the ways that religion is expressed materially have been critical in deepening understanding of this.

This panel focuses on the intersections of class and/or age in lived religion. It brings together three studies in the British context, two exploring class in studies of Islam and evangelical Christianity and one exploring age and atheism. Two of the panel, Janet Eccles and Carl Morris, are contributors to the recent volume *Materiality and the Study of Religion* (Routledge 2016), co-edited, with Tim Hutchings, by the third panelist, Joanne McKenzie.

Our first speaker, Carl Morris, will discuss 'No Direction Home: New Frontiers for Research on Muslims in Britain'. Dr Morris's paper examines a recent change in scholarship relating to Muslims in Britain, which has shifted the focus of academic research from categories of ethnicity and nationalism to culture, class and everyday experience. This presentation will aim to map the current trajectory of the sociological study of British Muslims, engaging with the conference's interest in 'the boundaries and borders of the sociology of religion'. Dr Morris will pay particular attention to the place of

materiality in this new class-conscious study of Islam.

Janet Eccles will discuss 'Between Margin and Middle? Material Expressions of Some British Older Women Atheists'. Holding a non-religious/indifferent worldview is becoming increasingly common in the UK according to demographers Voas and Bagg (2010). In that respect the non-religious, in their various and varied manifestations, including (the non-New) atheists, could be regarded as mainstream, in the middle. So how might such an atheist be distinguished? This paper argues that the concept of embodied secular sacred space as elaborated by Knott (2005, 2010) can help to show where material expressions of atheist identity may be visible. Knott sees places as gathering things with an emphasis on the bodily; body, place and space are all relational, whether religious or non-religious. Dr Eccles' presentation will focus on older atheist women and the manifestations of their atheist identity within (presumed) secular space, an identity which otherwise lies hidden while yet being mainstream. Paradoxically, when this identity is embodied in particular spaces and at particular times older women can feel more marginalised.

Our third speaker, Joanne McKenzie, will present 'Chips and Peas or Cheese and Wine: Food Practices and Class Distinctions in Lived Evangelicalism'. Drawing on data from 36 semi-structured interviews with English conservative evangelical leaders, this paper will discuss leaders' reflections on the role of food practices in the (re)production of class boundaries (Bourdieu 1984). This paper suggests that attention to the theme of food in the narratives illuminates how evangelical leaders conceptualize and theologize class and demonstrates an orientation towards class culture which is reflective of evangelicalism's nature as an 'engaged-orthodoxy' (Smith 1998: 10).

Chair: Tim Hutchings, Stockholm University

### **Participants:**

#### **Carl Morris**

Carl Morris is a Lecturer in Religion, Culture and Society at the University of Central Lancashire. He is a member of the Socrel committee and also General Secretary for the Muslims in Britain Research Network. His research interests include Muslims in Britain, popular culture and music.

#### **Janet Eccles**

Janet Eccles gained her PhD on Christian and disaffiliated women in 2010, as a mature student at Lancaster University UK, then worked as research associate on the Young Atheists Project, based at Lancaster. Now an independent researcher, she has published work on Christian women affiliates and disaffiliates, forms of non-religion, multi-faith chaplaincy, Anglican monasticism and insider/outsider issues.

## **Joanne McKenzie**

Joanne McKenzie is currently undertaking doctoral study at the Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University. Her PhD focuses on how class shapes English conservative evangelical Christianity. She is the co-editor, with Tim Hutchings, of *Materiality and the Study of Religion* (Routledge 2016).

### **Panel on Spirituality: Whither the Spiritual - Revolution, Reform, or Retreat?**

#### *Alp Arat*

Towards the end of the 20th century the emergence of the moniker spiritual-but-not-religious marked a major turn in expressions of religious identity. While mirroring transformations taking place within society at large, this pivotal shift towards heightened individualism meant that contemporary engagements with religion became increasingly personal, practical, and experiential in character (Fuller 2001; Heelas and Woodhead 2005; Lynch 2007).

Over the years however, this identifier has gradually collapsed into its more generic, shortened, and thus more easily transposable variant of *spirituality* as such. Indeed more recently, many have argued for a greater expansion of the analytic category of spirituality to encapsulate its former opposites in both religious and secular domains (Heelas 2012; Ammerman 2013; Mercadente 2014).

In an effort to provide a timely re-appraisal of the classical era of spirituality around the turn of the century, this panel brings together perspectives from sociology, religious studies, cultural studies, and anthropology to assess the current veracity of the category of spirituality. Focusing in particular on millennial spirituality in Canada, the Emergent Church in the UK, and the recent growth of the mindfulness movement across the western world, this panel aims to shed light on the empirical and theoretical foundations of the conceptual applications of spirituality today, and aims to offer a renewed assessment of the following key questions:

- To what extent are the spiritual-but-not-religious best understood as an epochal cohort constrained to a particular historical context?
- Has spirituality been overshadowed by the return of religion to the public sphere?
- In what ways does the spiritual ethos continue to express itself within contemporary nonreligious settings?

### **Being, Presence, and Stillness: 'Consciousness' and the New Spirituality:**

#### *Alp Arat*

From silent dating sites to slow eating restaurants, quiet reading parties to mindful protests, highly abstract notions of being, presence, and stillness are gaining considerable currency in today's cultural landscape. While the roots of such dispositions can easily be traced back to the original spiritual milieu, I claim that these trends are better understood as representing the latest culmination in the forces of secularisation. In contrast to standard retorts to the secularisation thesis however, I argue that these shifts ought to be read not as morphologies of the religious or the spiritual as such, but rather as transformations taking place within the 'epistemic capacity' of the secular itself (Caputo). Based on personal interviews with qualified mindfulness teachers in the UK, I show how the subject of 'consciousness' now presents itself as a standalone category that allows for engagements with the transcendent without any recourse to more typical discourses around religion or indeed spirituality.

### **Rethinking the Social Study of Spirituality**

*Galen Watts*

The broad aim of this paper is to critically reflect on the normative foundations of the social study of spirituality. Drawing from qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews with Canadian millennials who self-identify as “spiritual but not religious,” I offer a critical review of the dominant approaches adopted in the literature on spirituality as both a religious construct and a cultural phenomenon. Using the question of sustainability and the reality of the ecological crisis as points of departure, I show how the understandings of the self and the natural world within such scholarship are in fact antithetical to spiritual self-conceptions of ecological flourishing. In unpacking the strengths and weaknesses of dominant modernist frameworks in tackling climate change, I seek to go beyond a mere critique and offer a more careful look into why the ecological crisis itself might require us to rethink why and how it is we study spirituality.

### **The Transmission of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction**

*Matt Drage*

The mindfulness movement is perhaps the archetypical example of recent currents in mass cultural, quasi-secular spirituality. In this paper, I focus on the history of one of the movement's most important nodes: the healthcare intervention known as “Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction” (MBSR). MBSR was conceived in New England of 1979 amidst, and on the basis of, a peculiar constellation of New Age theology, Buddhist soteriology, psychotherapeutics, and a burgeoning biopolitical infrastructure. I describe how MBSR's early proponents, situated within this institutional, bureaucratic, technical and discursive constellation, were able to conceive of an ambitious salvific project: they strove to “transmit the essence” of mindfulness to whole populations through existing biomedical institutions; and with it, a “direct experience” of transcendental reality. I examine the ways early MBSR practitioners worked to create, consolidate and reinscribe the religious and biopolitical authority they needed to achieve this goal. In the process, I hope to show how MBSR – in spite of its fervently salvific tendencies and complex metaphysical rubrics – became legible as “secular”.



## **Participants:**

### ***Alp Arat***

Dr Alp Arat is a sociologist of religion specialising in secularisation and postsecular theory with a particular focus on contemporary practices of meditation. He is currently Committee Member at Socrel, Social Science Section Editor at Open Theology, and Sociology Analyst at Mouseion Encyclopedia.

### ***S Francesca Po***

S Francesca Po is a doctoral student at the University of Oxford, under the supervision of the Very Revd Prof Martyn Percy and Dr Donovan Schaefer. Her primary research interests are in religious change, nonreligion, and new religious movements. For more information, go to [www.francescapo.wordpress.com](http://www.francescapo.wordpress.com)

### ***Galen Watts***

Galen Watts is a PhD candidate in the Cultural Studies Graduate Program at Queen's University. He is presently researching the basic values, belief-systems, and practices that inform contemporary spirituality among millennials in Canada in order to discern its ideological nature as well as its social and political implications, broadly understood.

### ***Matthew Drage***

Matthew Drage is a fourth year PhD student at the Department of History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Cambridge, UK. His doctoral thesis, entitled "The Transmission of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction", combines ethnographic, historical and sociological methods to investigate the (re)production of authority within the mindfulness movement.

## **Transgression in the Study of Prayer in Hospitals: Emerging Findings from a Canada/UK Study**

***Sonya Sharma, Sheryl Reimer-Kirkham, Christina Beardsley, Melania Calestani, Sylvie Collins-Mayo, and Andrew Todd***

In this panel, we explore how prayer, as one expression of religion in public settings, can be understood as "transgressing" or challenging institutional norms in some situations, and accommodating and even enforcing norms at other times. We define transgression as the ability to go beyond limits and

conventions, to deny and affirm differences, and to move against and beyond boundaries. Prayer can create connections between individuals or can be a flashpoint for conflict, discrimination, or religious inequalities. Prayer can also be enacted in impositional ways, as with the assumption that prayer is meaningful to everyone or with the unwelcomed power of institutionalized religion.

Drawing on data that has been collected from research in Canadian and British hospitals, we show how these healthcare settings are complex social systems and microcosms of broader society where an interdisciplinary examination is needed to understand the complexities of prayer and religion (e.g., allocation of spaces to specific faith groups or social cohesion among different ethnic and faith groups). Social relations and negotiations of religion and spirituality between healthcare professionals and patients, administrators and chaplains are not straightforward and often rely on intersectional and multilevel analyses that require crossing of disciplinary borders to make sense of everyday social and religious life. Utilizing the concept of transgression to examine prayer, we note that as researchers we move beyond the disciplinary edges of the sociology of religion to include anthropological, health, theological, postcolonial and feminist readings of prayer.

Through an introduction to the project and five ten-minute papers that address emerging findings from a three-year study, 'Prayer as transgression? Exploring accommodation of and resistance to prayer in public spaces' funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (Canada 2015-2018) and with research sites in Vancouver and London, we attend to the limits that prevent prayer from happening, but also the limits that prayer transgresses and potentially transforms within Canadian and British hospitals. At the same, time we make note of the disciplinary edges that we are standing at, in between and crossing, to make sense of prayer within these public spaces.

**Participants:**

**Sonya Sharma**

**Christina Beardsley**

**Melania Calestani**

**Sylvie Collins-Mayo**

**Andrew Todd**

**Where Centres and Margins Meet: Researching Cultural Encounters in the Netherlands**

***Jelle Wiering, Brenda Bartelink, Amisah Bakhuri, Adriaan van Klinken, Emma Tomalin***

With reference to sociological and anthropological debates on religion and secularism in contemporary societies, this panel will explore what a post-secularist approach could mean to the sociology of religion, in particular in secular contexts. We take up the example of the Netherlands, one of the most secularized societies in the world, as a starting point to explore the interaction between secular and religious practices regarding sexual well-being. The alleged return of religion in the Dutch society is tied to the arrival of migrant populations in various periods and roles. In the case of Sub-Saharan African migrants, part of making a home in the Netherlands are religious forms of placemaking by establishing churches and religious organizations (Knibbe 2009). Yet, these developments do not correspond with the stubborn Dutch conviction of having said a final farewell to religion in the 1960s – and confronts the Dutch with a religious past, which many Dutch, hence, experience as a step backwards (see e.g. van de Veer 2006). At the same time, public health organizations, while being aware of the importance of religion to African migrants, have struggled with accommodating religious (and cultural) diversity in their practice of sexual health. While all of this has resulted in a number of projects particularly focused at religious actors and communities, so far, it has not reflected on particular Dutch practices and understandings regarding sexual wellbeing.

This panel will first present preliminary findings from three projects that focus on sexual well-being in the Netherlands. However, each of these projects has done so from a very different angle as they all have selected a different research population: African religious 2 leaders and organisations, individual African migrants and sexual health organisations. Hence, the three divergent views on the very same topic include perspectives from those at the centre of the Dutch society (sexual health organizations), those at the margins (sub-Sahara African migrants), and those whose social position is, in fact, hard to determine (migrant religious leaders). As each of the first three presentations in this panel will illustrate, the cultural encounters between the actors and groups are strongly shaped by interactions of the religious and the secular, as well as the implicitly attached assumptions and understandings of modernity. Hence, the focus of this panel on sexual well-being in the Netherlands provides us with an interesting lens through which we can (1) observe and analyse different understandings of sexual well-being but also (2) the struggle of (post-)secular societies in facing the difficult task of coming to terms with the continued existence of religion in an increasingly secularized environment, and how this plays out in practice.

This panel aims at developing adequate frameworks for sociological research informed by empirical research that can help advance post-colonial and post-secularist approach to the intersections of religion, secularism and modernity. Taking cultural encounter as its points of departure, the panel will explore what post-secularist intersectional approach can mean for research that incorporates centres and margins and how these interact.

### **Negotiating religion in pursuit of sexual well-being among sub-Saharan African migrants in the Netherlands.**

*Amisah Zenabu Bakuri*

Using ethnographic methods, this study explored how the predominantly Christian people of Ghanaian descent and the predominantly Muslim individuals of Somali background in the Netherlands negotiate with religion in pursuing their sexual well-being. Many people use religion as a way of promoting self-awareness in the public domain and negotiating concerns of their well-being and sexuality. In this regard, religion is multi-faceted in

the sense of acting as a support system for achieving their sexual or relationship goals, finding job opportunities, social networking and companionship, counselling and motivation whilst simultaneously promoting a positive image of the migrant community's moral standing in the Netherlands. However, as important as religion is for many of the study participants, individuals often draw on past experiences, embodied routines, and advice from friends and experts in order to find an appropriate solution in pursuit of their sexual well-being. Therefore, seeking sexual well-being is often approached as a particular way of consuming, experiencing, and relating, which are not necessarily determined by religious belongings, but on social contacts, second-hand knowledge, and ad hoc trial and error.

### **Gender, leadership and living (not-so) holy in African/ Dutch churches in the Netherlands**

*Brenda Bartelink*

This paper explores how the leadership of church leaders from African backgrounds in the Netherlands throws up question on how and by whom margins and centres are defined and challenged. Informed by on-going ethnographic research in churches in the city of The Hague and the broader Randstad area, I outline three lenses through which these different understandings of margins and centers become visible. The first lens is mission/migration and offers a perspective on how missionary ideals of (re-)converting the dark continent of Europe meets with the experience of being a migrant in Dutch society (cf. Knibbe 2009, Knibbe & van der Meulen 2009). The second lens is gender and offers a perspective on how aspirations towards equality between men and women in leadership intersect with the gendering of female leadership as wives and mothers (cf. Maier 2012). The third lens sheds light on the necessity for a religious leader to be exemplary in 'holy' lifestyle rooted in rigid moral narratives, while having to engage with, and respond to, the 'not-so holy' lives of church members who often find themselves in uncertain if not precarious positions as migrants in the Netherlands.

### **The Curious Case of the Condom: Sexual Enchantment in the Netherlands**

*Jelle Wiering*

Many sexual health-care organizations in the Netherlands consider the condom a crucial contraceptive, which helps to prevent all kinds of sexual problems, and which is therefore in need of spread among people. The findings from my fieldwork among such organizations illustrate however that some religious people that these organizations encounter in their work, maintain different views. These people, who themselves or their (grand)parents have a background in Syria, Eritrea, Morocco, or Turkey, rather perceive this object as a representative of secular perceptions of sexuality, and hence as an unwanted 'gadget' that actually stimulates people to urge their engagement in sex. Inspired by this notion of the condom,

this paper analyzes the object as a manifestation of the secular, as a secular material form. In doing so, it illustrates that this disapproval of the condom is in fact part of a larger dismay among some Dutch about what they take as an ongoing violation of the enchanted status of sex. This dissatisfaction, the paper argues, is one side of a largely implicit Dutch debate going on, which is shared by people of different geo-historical backgrounds and worldviews. This debate about the enchanted status of sex becomes particularly clear in sexual educations: on the one hand, sex educators are required to 'break taboos', explicitly pointing out all physical details of sex. On the other hand, the educations are to be taught cautiously, not unraveling the beautiful mystery of sex, which might, for instance, happen as a consequence of an incorrect introduction of the condom. Highlighting this paradox, the paper illustrates the importance of examining secular materialities for religious studies.

### **Participants:**

#### **Jelle Wiering**

Jelle Wiering is trained both as an anthropologist and a scholar of religious studies, and he has previously conducted ethnographic research on Dutch pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela, and Dutch Navayana Buddhists. Currently, he is working on his PhD research that focuses on the triangulation of secularism, religion and sexuality among sexual healthcare organizations.

#### **Brenda Bartelink**

Brenda Bartelink is a scholar in the anthropology and sociology of religion with a PhD-degree in Theology and Religious Studies . She works on the intersections of religion, secularity, gender, sexuality and health. Her current research at the University of Groningen focuses on the practices and understandings around sexual well-being of religious leaders and communities with African backgrounds in the Netherlands.

#### **Amisah Bakhuri**

Amisah Bakuri currently is a PhD candidate in Anthropology at the Amsterdam Institute of Social Science Research (AISSR), University of Amsterdam. Previously, she studied Modern History and International Relations at the University of Groningen (RUG) where she also took part in the Honours Masters programme in Leadership. Currently, she researches Ghanaian migrants in the Netherlands, and their practices and notions of sexual wellbeing.

#### **Adriaan van Klinken**

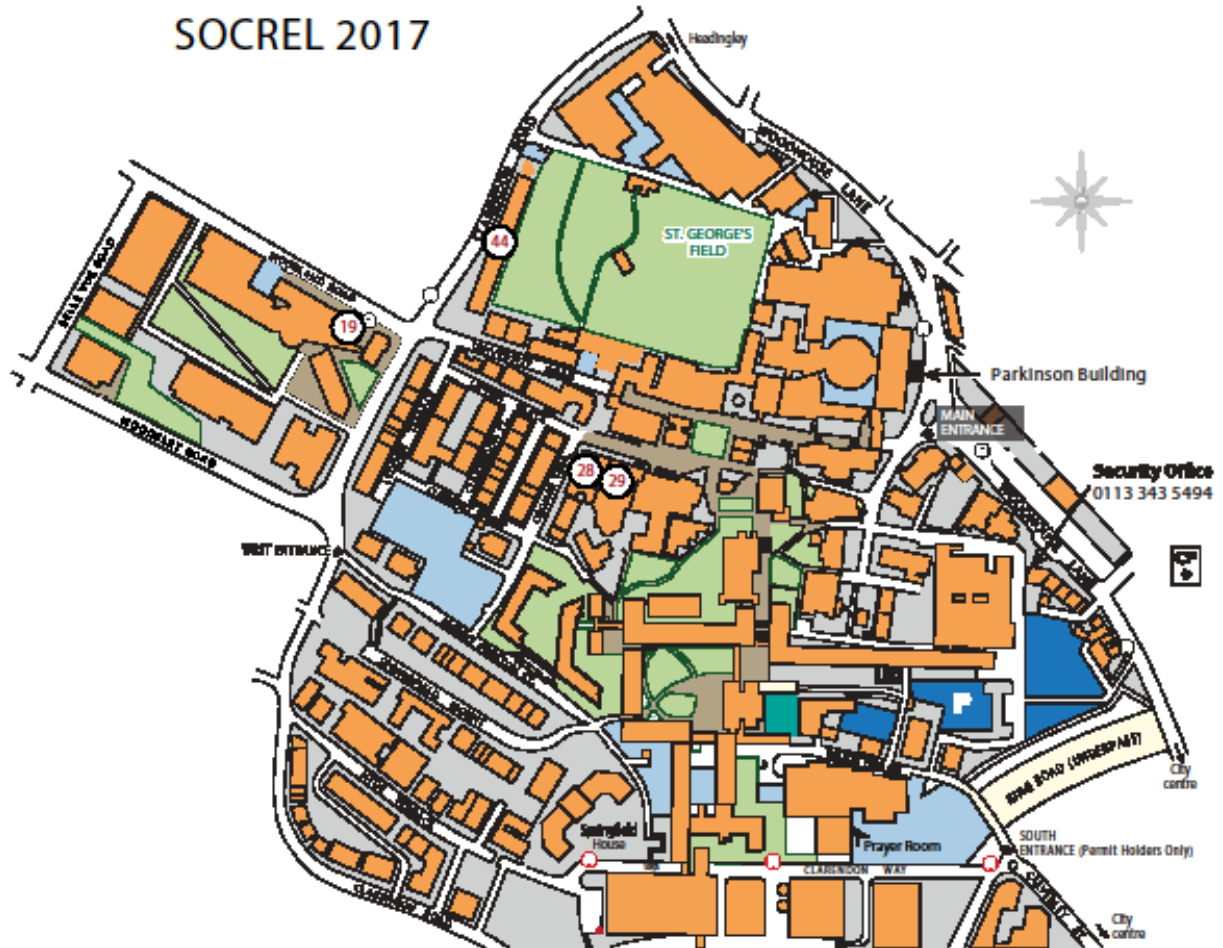
Adriaan van Klinken is Associate Professor of Religion and African Studies at the University of Leeds. He has a broad interest in the social, public and political roles of religion in African societies today. The particular focus of his research is on issues of gender, sexuality and public life in contemporary African Christianities including Pentecostalism.

### **Emma Tomalin**

Emma Tomalin is the director of the Centre for Religion and Public Life and a senior lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Leeds, United Kingdom. She has been a member of the American Academy of Religion's Committee for the Public Understanding of Religion since 2014. Her main research interests are focused around religions and global development and religion, gender, and society.

# Map

## SOCREL 2017




### Key


Registration, Conference & Refreshments


Maurice Keyworth Building (Business School) 

Accommodation 

Henry Price Residences 

Breakfast Service in Refectory 


Conference Gala Dinners 


University House, Great Woodhouse Suite 

### Other useful information

CityBus Stop  Bus Stop 


Taxi Rank 

Pedestrian Only Area 

Lawns 

### Car parks

University visitors' car parks (pre book only) 

Public multi-storey car park 

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# Notes



# Notes